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**UNITED NATIONS
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WIPO and UNU to Hold Joint Symposium on the Economic Impact of Intellectual Property Systems

Event: Symposium on “The Economic Impact of Intellectual Property Systems”
Date/Time: 15 May 2007 (Tuesday), 2:00–5:00 PM
Venue: U Thant International Conference Hall, 3F, UN House, Tokyo
Organizers: World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and
United Nations University (UNU)
In cooperation with: United Nations Information Centre (UNIC)
With the assistance of: The Japan Patent Office (JPO)

Background information

- “Intellectual property” encompasses two categories of “creations of the human mind”: industrial property (including inventions/patents, trademarks, industrial designs, and geographic indications of source) and copyright (covering literary and artistic works).
- The Intellectual Property (IP) systems are generally acknowledged as an effective means of enhancing creativity, promoting technological innovations, enhancing competitiveness and improving trade. However, developing methodologies to measure accurately the economic impact of IP systems and their effectiveness as a means to achieve economic development is a major challenge.
- Emerging national policies related to the role of the IP systems in international trade have great impact on corporations that do business globally as well as on local companies. Multinational companies face increasing challenges in fulfilling their corporate and social responsibilities and complying with new IP rules and procedures. Furthermore, the relatively high costs of obtaining IP protection make it difficult for small and medium-sized enterprises to take full advantage of the IP systems. Analyzing the cost/benefit of doing so is also very difficult.
- Empirical data, verification and detailed information about the possible impacts of the IP systems on economic development are vital to help government policy makers and business leaders understand the systems and use them effectively to generate and support economic, social and cultural development.
- IP is a component of growing importance in many Asian economies, In 2005, for example, Japan, the Republic of Korea and China between them accounted for 24 per cent of all international patent applications filed under WIPO’s Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT). (Those countries were 2nd, 6th and 10th, respectively, on the list of patent applicants.) Foreign direct investment is increasing, but so are the pressures to adhere to international commitments that oblige countries to have effective and functioning IP systems and to properly enforce IP rights. The deadline for countries to meet their obligations under the World Trade Organizations’s Trade Related Intellectual Property (TRIPS) Agreement has been extended by 10 years, to 2015, which is testimony to the challenges that lay ahead.

MEDIA ADVISORY

About the event

- This symposium will present the results of the current research project that is being undertaken across the Asia-Pacific region and coordinated by the WIPO Japan Office. IP and economic experts from five countries of different economic size and capacity and with different industrial bases — China, India, Malaysia, Republic of Korea and Viet Nam — have independently undertaken this research using the same methodology, under the leadership of the Chief Expert from Japan.
- The symposium will begin with opening remarks by Mr. Geoffrey Onyeama, Assistant Director General, WIPO; Prof. Yozo Yokota, Adviser to the Rector, UNU; and a representative of the Japan Patent Office. This will be followed with presentations by the Director of the WIPO Japan Office, Mr. Allan Roach, and the Chief Expert on the Research Methodology, Prof. Hiroshi Kato of the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS).
- Representatives from the above-mentioned five Asian countries will then make presentations about their own research on the economic impact of IP systems. These country reports will be followed by an open panel discussion.
- Simultaneous English-Japanese interpretation will be provided.

Media representatives are cordially invited to attend this WIPO/UNU symposium, and the reception that will follow. Please contact Naoko Yano, UNU Office of Communications (tel: 03-5467-1311; e-mail: media@unu.edu) to confirm your attendance.