

Meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO
September 2008

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,

This is my last official statement at WIPO, and I will soon be returning with great anticipation to my grassroots, to a civilization that dates back to the 4th and 5th millennium BC.

Before I leave, I wish to express my gratitude to you, the Member States, for your support and unfailing commitment to WIPO. I sincerely hope that this partnership will continue in the years to come.

It has been a privilege and an honor for me to serve as Director General of this Organization which has benefited so much from the active collaboration and involvement of its Member States. My interactions with you over the past years have been warm, cordial and respectful. I shall cherish the memories of these interactions.

It is a privilege and an honor to work with you, Ambassador Martin Uhomoibhi, both in your capacity as Chair of the General Assembly as well as Permanent Representative of your distinguished country. You have brought with you all the desired qualities of a diplomat. You have been a bridge builder and a seeker of consensus, and have proved yourself to be a worthy and exemplary Chair of the General Assembly.

I would also like to take this opportunity to convey my gratitude and appreciation to the staff of this Organization. I wish to say an immense thank you to all of you. Without your dedication, support and hard work, all that has been achieved in this Organization over the past years would not have been possible. The energy, high quality and professionalism you have demonstrated over the years have been of immeasurable value in furthering our common goals in the IP field.

To my successor, Francis Gurry, I wish to express my sincere and heartfelt congratulations on his appointment today, which takes place later this morning. I salute his commitment and dedication to this Organization which span more than two decades. It is my conviction that in his capable and experienced hands, the Organization will continue to achieve notable results in the years to come. The many positions of responsibility that he has held have no doubt prepared him to assume the leadership of WIPO.

And to all those who have supported me during my tenure of office, I say a big thank you. To all those who did not support me, I say an even bigger thank you. You have helped to forge my experience and my determination to continue to work for consensus and political good will as much as is humanly possible.

Upon taking up my term of office, I had a vision to open up the Organization and to make it increasingly relevant to users and beneficiaries of the IP system as well as the public at large. Central to this vision was the need to forge close cooperation with Member States. The concrete results of that vision are clear for all to see, and I think we can all be proud of how far WIPO has come in the past decade.

Several significant achievements have been recorded during the past decade, and mentioning them all here is not possible. An Annex has been attached to this statement in which some of these achievements have been outlined.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to convey my appreciation and thanks to all Member States for their support during my tenure of office. I also wish to thank the other constituencies of WIPO, namely the users of the IP system – industry groups and civil society members and NGOs – for their fruitful contributions during these years. I sincerely hope that they will extend that same level of cooperation to my successor.

Thank you all for your attention.

[Annex follows]

ANNEX

WIPO – 1997 to 2008

New Initiatives, Highlights and Trends

Since 1997, WIPO has been transformed, both in the range and depth of its core substance and in its organizational and physical infrastructure.

In managing this considerable expansion and change, the Organization's goal has been a strengthened and expanded international intellectual property (IP) system that is inclusive and well-grounded; that facilitates universal access; and that provides a platform for all those who wish to have their voices heard in the debate on its future development.

The following schema indicates the key developments in the main areas of the Organization's activities during this period.

STRENGTHENED NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK

- Continued development of a strong, efficient, stable framework of international IP norms to assist Member States in protecting and commercializing their IP assets, specifically
 - entry into force of the so-called WIPO Internet treaties – the WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT) and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty WPPT (2002)
 - adoption of the
 - Singapore Treaty on the Law of Trademarks (2006)
 - Patent Law Treaty (2000)
 - Geneva Act of the Hague Agreement (1999)
 - increased membership of WIPO treaties
 - WIPO Convention +19
 - Paris Convention +30
 - Berne Convention +37
 - PCT +45
 - Madrid Protocol +54

ENHANCED SERVICES

- Global protection services (patents, marks and industrial designs) rendered simpler and more efficient through in-house automation and online filing
 - strong increase in the use, and reduction of the cost, of these more user-friendly and accessible services

- PCT
 - 156,000+ applications in 2007 (57,000+ in 1997)
 - 45 per cent fee reduction
 - 75 per cent fee reduction for least developed countries (LDCs)
- Madrid
 - 38,000+ applications in 2007 (19,000+ in 1997)
 - 90 per cent fee reduction for LDCs
 - automation of examination systems and electronic filing; addition of English and Spanish as working languages – membership in the Protocol increased from 22 to 76 since November 1997 (difference of 55)
- Speedy, cost-effective means of resolving domain-name conflicts created via the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP); 12,000+ cases handled by the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center under this procedure since December 1999
- Huge volume of IP information made available in on-line, searchable databases relating to applications and registrations under the PCT, Madrid and Hague systems (creation of PatentScope gateway)
- Collection of Laws for Electronic Access (CLEA) database set up, giving on-line, searchable access to the national legislation of over 120 countries, as well as to many IP treaties
- WIPO Worldwide Academy established, reaching out to all WIPO stake-holders and offering
 - targeted traditional programs for
 - policy-makers, IP professionals, government officials, academics and business executives
 - distance learning
 - introductory course (free) (seven languages; 70,000+ students to date)
 - specialized courses (fee-paying)
 - post-graduate courses, in collaboration with established academic institutions

STRONGER GOVERNANCE

- Creation of new fora to exchange information, intensify substantive discussion and prioritize work, specifically
 - four Standing Committees on
 - the Law of Patents

- the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications
- Copyright and Related Rights
- Information Technologies
- Advisory Committee on Enforcement (ACE) and the Enforcement and Special Projects Division
- Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP)
- Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC)
- development and fine-tuning of information technologies of the Organization, both internal and those related to WIPO's services to users under the PCT and Madrid systems
- development of the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center and domain name dispute resolution mechanism

INTENSIFIED DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

- Increased emphasis on bridging the development divide, including
 - addressing specific needs of Member States, focusing on
 - customized collaboration through Nationally and Regionally Focused Action Plans (NFAPs and RFAPs), targeting
 - human resource development
 - office automation, Internet connectivity and training and capacity-building (assistance given to 75+ countries/ 100+ IP offices)
 - updating legislation
 - least developed countries; LDCs Division set up
 - creation of Office of Strategic Use of IP for Development and initiatives launched through its divisions dedicated to creative industries,
 - Technical Assistance Cooperation Bureaus – evolution from Cooperation for Development, nationally focused action plans
 - Broader use of Portuguese, particularly in cooperation for development activities
 - Copyright Collective Management
 - public policy and development
 - IP and economic development
 - IP and new technologies
 - Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
 - resources channelled to areas of particular/evolving importance, including
 - traditional knowledge (TK), traditional cultural expressions (TCEs) and life sciences
 - enforcement (Third Global Congress on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy hosted by WIPO in 2007)

INCREASED SYNERGY

- Intensified dialogue with Member States including
 - consultation mechanism regarding Program and Budget
- Greater interaction on key issues with an increasingly diverse cross-section of interlocutors, including
 - holders of TK and TCEs, e.g., nine fact-finding missions regarding their IP needs and related consultations/study; voluntary fund for participation of indigenous/local communities in the IGC
 - civil society, e.g., various on-line fora; series of colloquia on selected patent issues
 - intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), e.g., collaboration with WTO on TRIPS obligations; increased number of observers in WIPO meetings
 - academia, e.g., collaboration on teaching of IP; Global Network of IP Academies
- Greater visibility and awareness of WIPO – and IP – globally through
 - sectors dedicated to public outreach, media relations and public affairs
 - multilingual, prize-winning website
 - World Intellectual Property Day (April 26)
 - extensive range of targeted information products, including multimedia
 - extensive program of visits and briefings
 - Visitors' Center
- Outreach – Opening up of the Organization to the outside world: Media Relations, WIPO Visitors' Center, Internet web site, WIPO electronic bookshop, observance of World Intellectual Property Day, involvement of NGOs

REVAMPED SECRETARIAT

- Heightened Accountability
 - a strategic, results-based Program and Budget, allied to an enhanced management and oversight mechanism
 - an annual Program Performance Report, with performance indicators
 - an Office of the Controller; an Internal Audit and Oversight Division (with an Internal Audit Charter); and an Audit Committee
 - a contracts review structure (with a Procurement and Contracts Division and a Contracts Review Committee)

