



Emergency Committee
for American Trade



U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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July 2, 2013

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Harry S. Truman Building
2201 C Street NW, Room 7226
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Michael Froman
United States Trade Representative
Office of the U.S. Trade
Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508

The Honorable Teresa Stanek Rea
Acting Director of the U.S. Patent
and Trademark Office
600 Dulany Street
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313

Dear Secretary Kerry, Ambassador Froman, and Ms. Rea:

We are writing to express support for the work of the Innovation Division at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) – and to express concern that it is not funded in the WIPO budget for the 2014/2015 biennium. This would effectively eliminate the Division, undermining WIPO’s ability to deliver cost-effective intellectual property (IP) services to small and medium enterprises (SMEs), university technology transfer offices (TTOs), and officials seeking to support innovators through the creation of supportive innovation ecosystems.

We understand there are plans to “mainstream” the work of the Innovation Division throughout WIPO, as opposed to eliminating it entirely. However, this risks scattering – or, more likely, losing entirely – the valuable knowledge and expertise that is currently centralized in the Innovation Division. This would have serious negative ramifications for WIPO and the IP system, as well as for WIPO customers.

The work program of the Innovation Division centers on the commercialization of intellectual property. The Division advises WIPO customers, such as SMEs, on intellectual asset management and trains them to use IPR strategically to achieve their objectives. The Division also briefs policy-makers on trends in innovation and the commercialization of new solutions, working with them to identify and enact IP and other policies that best support these processes. It provides targeted training, publishes studies and other materials, and supports the creation of IP hubs, R&D networks, and TTOs in different regions. The private sector contributes experts to the Innovation Division’s training sessions for SMEs, affording us the opportunity to witness firsthand the value that such activities provide to these WIPO customers.

The Innovation Division has an impact at the systemic as well as micro level. In addition to helping individual stakeholders, the Division is contributing to building emerging countries’ capacity to commercialize and participate in global technology development in the coming years, in a focused way. Dilution of this effort, by spreading it out across WIPO Divisions, will be less effective and will significantly increase the IP capacity-building timeline for developing countries.

The Innovation Division is critical in bridging the gap between WIPO and the real world, where IP rights are actually obtained and used by entities in many countries to create value, economic growth, and jobs. We consider it important to maintain the current structure, and to fund its activities fully.

We strongly encourage the U.S. Government to advocate for the retention of the Innovation Division.
We are available to discuss this letter at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Emergency Committee for American Trade
National Foreign Trade Council
U.S. Chamber of Commerce