



International cooperation

- KIPO-WIPO cooperation
- Bilateral and trilateral cooperation
- International IPR discussions
- IPR issues and free trade agreements



International cooperation

KIPO-WIPO cooperation



Designation ceremony of the IIPTI as a WIPO partner international intellectual property training institute

A WIPO delegation, headed by Director General Kamil Idris, visited Korea on March 15, 2006, to acknowledge the country's contribution over the past 20 years to IPR education in developing and underdeveloped countries. During the visit, the International Intellectual Property Training Institute (IIPTI) was designated as the first WIPO partner international IP training institute.

The Korea Funds-in-Trust at WIPO was established following a 2004 agreement to strengthen multilateral cooperation with developing countries in areas such as IP education and technology transfer. From July 2004 to June 2005, we successfully implemented eight projects, including the development and distribution of PCT software. In the second year of operation, from July 2005 to June 2006, we implemented an additional seven projects, which included consultations on patent management. In July 2006, we began implementing another seven projects for the third year of operation, including an IPR workshop for the least developed countries.

The e-learning course operated jointly by the IIPTI and the WIPO Worldwide Academy since 2004 was opened again in the spring and autumn of 2006. Another 167 local IPR experts completed the two courses in 2006, bringing the total number of participants to 255.

Bilateral and trilateral cooperation

The bilateral and trilateral heads meetings of 2006 were highly productive. The fourth heads meeting with the German Patent and Trademark Office (Daejeon, April 27, 2006) produced an agreement on the exchange of two patent examiners for the purpose of conducting joint prior art searches. The agreement took effect in the second half of 2006.

At our sixth heads meeting with the French National Institute of Industrial Property (Paris, September 22, 2006), we agreed on the electronic exchange of priority documents and exchanged opinions on major areas of interest, particularly IPR protection and the issue of geographical indications.

We also hosted the seventh heads meeting with the European Patent Office (Seoul, November 14, 2006). At that meeting, both offices agreed to expand cooperation by organizing a conference for specialists in the field of patent processes and the automation of IP administration.

Cooperation with our neighbors has also been a priority. Hence, in December 2006, we held the sixth Trilateral Policy Dialogue Meeting in Beijing with the Japan Patent Office and the State Intellectual Property Office of the People's Republic of China, where discussions focused on the exchange of patent statistical data and the direction of the trilateral patent cooperation road map.

We also held the 12th commissioners meeting with the State Intellectual Property Office of the People's Republic of China (Beijing, December 2006). At that meeting, the commissioners agreed to dispatch IP liaison officers to make the cooperation between both countries more substantial; they also agreed to expand the details of the joint prior art searches and to hold regular meetings on patent systems.

With regard to the Japan Patent Office, we held the 18th commissioners meeting at Tokyo in November 2006. The commissioners agreed to start the Patent Prosecution Highway on April 1, 2007; they also discussed recent revisions to the IPR regulations of both countries and international trends in the patent field.

Finally, to ensure that patent examinations are conducted with swiftness and accuracy, and to promote the unification of patent systems, we engaged in various projects pertaining to joint prior art searches. We began the seventh such project with Japan, the fourth with China, and the first with Germany.



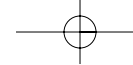
The seventh heads meeting with the European Patent Office



The fourth heads meeting with the German Patent and Trademark Office



The sixth Trilateral Policy Dialogue Meeting



International cooperation

International IPR discussions



The 42nd WIPO General Meeting

In 2006, we continued to actively participate in discussions on the formation of IPR norms governed by WIPO and state the Korean government's position. In particular, we contributed to the reform meetings of the Standing Committee on the Law of Patents; the Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications; and the Intergovernmental Committee on Traditional Knowledge, Genetic Resources, and Folklore.

At the 42nd series of meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO, which was held at the WIPO headquarters (Geneva) in September 2006, we highlighted the operational accomplishments of the Korea Funds-in-Trust at WIPO. We also emphasized that the economic growth of Korea over the past 30 years was aided by a growing awareness of the importance of IP. Moreover, we promised to actively share our expertise with regard to the promotion of IP awareness and our general accomplishments in the IP field.

Regarding the World Trade Organization's Doha Development Agenda, we actively participated in the IPR-related negotiations to establish international norms for public health, biotechnology, and the multilateral registration system of geographical indications.

In the APEC Intellectual Property Rights Experts Group, we successfully fulfilled our role as the chair country and actively participated in the IPR discussions of APEC. The group's 20th meeting was held in Seoul in February 2005. In February 2006, we handed over the role of chair country to Singapore.

IPR issues and free trade agreements

In IPR negotiations of free trade agreements (FTAs), which are aimed at the free movement of products between countries, we discussed measures to protect IPRs in line with international treaties such as the World Trade Organization's TRIPS Agreement.

The negotiations of the Korea-USA FTA, which began in February 2006, have given both sides an opportunity to understand each other's IPR laws and systems.

Since July 2005, Korea has also been negotiating an FTA with Canada. One of the major issues is the selection of guidelines for IPR cooperation and enforcement.

In March 2006, we commenced negotiations with India in relation to a comprehensive economic partnership agreement. The on-going discussions are aimed at improving the level of IPR protection and facilitating the acquisition of patents.