



Message from the Commissioner

While working in the midst of the global economic downturn in 2009, the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO) considered a key question: how can we offer more useful service to our clients? As a result of those considerations, our policy paradigm became more pragmatic.

Our examination policy changed. Instead of focusing on a shorter examination period, we broadened our objectives to provide customers with timely, high-quality services. We improved our examination and trial systems with a customer-oriented approach. Specifically, we introduced a three-track patent examination system, a similar three-track system for trials as well as a two-track examination system for trademarks.

The current era of expanded international cooperation has enabled us to undertake various activities that facilitate interoffice work-sharing on patent examinations. We currently have arrangements in place with seven countries for the implementation of a Patent Prosecution Highway: following the successful implementation of the scheme with Japan and the US, we formed similar partnerships with Denmark,



the UK, Russia, and Canada in 2009 and with Finland in 2010. We have also held meetings with the heads of intellectual property offices from China, Japan, the UK, Russia, Canada, Europe, the US, and so on and agreed to jointly cooperate on examinations, exchanges of patent information, and the automation of intellectual property administration. Another example of international cooperation was our active involvement as a member of the five major intellectual property offices, IP5. Following our hosting of the IP5 heads of offices meeting at Jeju in 2008, we successfully hosted the inaugural IP5 Examiners Workshop in 2009.

In a positive contribution to the global community, we have begun disseminating patent information on appropriate technologies to the world's developing and least developed countries and offering them support in the areas of trademarks and brands. For example, in 2009 we established a database of appropriate technologies and provided a fair trade brand to the YMCA of Korea for its imported East Timorese coffee. In the same vein, we have formulated plans to assist the African nation of Chad in 2010. Other recent contributions to the global community include the activities of the Korea Funds-in-Trust at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO); the One Village One Brand project, which we are undertaking in cooperation with APEC; the implementation of an intellectual property automation system in Indonesia; and the development of an Arabic version of the KIPO-WIPO e-learning program IP Panorama.

One of our major achievements in 2009 was the strengthening of domestic and international intellectual property protection. In particular, we were successful in our efforts to seek special judicial police authority for our own team of investigators; the new authority takes effect in October 2010. Our office is also striving to enhance the intellectual property capacity of customers and to foster a culture of respect for intellectual property rights. For example, we provide intellectual property consultation services for small and medium-sized enterprises; we help local governments with intellectual property policies and infrastructure; and we collaborate with the public and private sectors on awareness campaigns to eradicate counterfeit goods.

These days the international community is facing a slew of global intellectual property challenges. Climate change, sustainable use of biological diversity and the United Nations' millennium development goals require the attention and cooperation of intellectual property specialists from around the world. In 2008, the Korean government voiced its vision of the future with a call for 'low carbon, green growth'. In 2009, Korea became a member of the OECD Development Assistance Committee. And in 2010, Korea will host the G-20 Summit. To keep pace with these trends, we are promoting various innovative policies in the areas of intellectual property and international cooperation.

Hopefully, this Annual Report will be a helpful introduction to our achievements of the past year and shed light on our goals and vision for the future. We will continue to work hard and cooperate closely with the international community to resolve global issues and develop the global intellectual property system.



Lee Soo-won
Commissioner

