



The year 2010 was especially significant for the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO), the competent authority for IP administration, since we reached the milestone of granting the one millionth patent in Korea. It took only 62 years since the granting of the first patent in 1948, which recorded the shortest period in the world for reaching that mark.

Over the past year, we did our utmost to contribute to Korea's economic growth and achieve our vision of becoming a first-class IP country through innovative IP administration. We have foremost endeavored to provide prompt and solid IP rights to our customers. Further, we have concentrated our policy efforts on creating and utilizing more valuable IPs at the national level.

Last year, we averaged 18.5 months for the first action pendency period for patent and utility model examinations and 10.6 and 10 months for trademark and design examinations, respectively. With the aim of providing examination services with a more competitive edge, we have strengthened our examination infrastructure in various ways. We plan to recruit about 300 new examiners by 2015. And we are now in the second year of developing the third generation of KIPOnet, an upgraded automation system for the management of on-line filing and examination, to ensure the smooth opening of the system in 2012.

Message from the Commissioner

We have also extended the Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) system from six to eight countries, adding the IP offices of Finland and Germany. Accordingly, Korea has become the third largest country in terms of the number of bilateral PPHs under implementation, after Japan and the US.

Furthermore, we made another important step forward on IP protection last year. In September 2010, we launched the Special Judicial Police Squad to more effectively crack down on the production, circulation and sales of counterfeit goods. We also introduced a service of certifying the original documents on trade secrets to minimize leakages of enterprise technologies in December 2010.

In addition, we have endeavored to bridge the development gaps around the world. To this end, we have furnished appropriate technology to developing and least-developed countries and have actively promoted IP sharing campaigns, such as the One Village One Brand project. By cooperating with international organizations, such as the World Intellectual Property Organization and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, we are now focusing our efforts into broadening such IP-based support initiatives around the world.

We were able to achieve a lot of fruitful results in 2010 thanks to the enthusiasm and concerted efforts of our staff and continued support from our customers. I hope this annual report will serve as a valuable reference for overseas customers in better understanding KIPO's vision and activities throughout the past year.

Lee Soowon
Commissioner