

Draft: General Statement of Japan at the 55th Series of Meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in 2015

1. Opening remarks

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to offer my hearty congratulations to His Excellency Ambassador Duque for your important role as the chairman of the General Assembly. Also, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Francis Gurry, Director General of the WIPO, and all the WIPO staff, for their tremendous efforts in holding this Meeting of the Assemblies.

2. Expectations for the WIPO and Japan's Contributions

At the outset, when we consider the fact that WIPO is a special organization, supported by fees paid by users, Japan would like to emphasize that the draft Program and Budget for 2016/2017 must be approved in this Meeting through constructive discussion among our Member States, responding to users' expectations towards the implementation of all programs of WIPO.

Mr. Chairman, Japan would like to contribute to increase WIPO's value, with a particular focus on areas that will bring common benefits to all stakeholders. I would like to touch upon some of the priorities that Japan is working on.

(1) Enhancing the PCT, Madrid Protocol, and Hague systems

As we know, in the Convention Establishing the WIPO, the objective of the WIPO is: "to promote the protection of intellectual property throughout the world." Therefore, all activities by and at the WIPO should be carried out in conformity with this basic principle. When we consider the fact that the WIPO is a special organization, supported by fees paid by users for their international applications and registrations, the most important activities at the WIPO should be ones that enhance global intellectual property services such as the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), the Madrid Protocol, and the Hague Agreement. Japan believes that enhancing these global services can make the WIPO an even more attractive organization for users. Japan would sincerely like the WIPO, based on its original principles, to lead discussions in order to promote the protection of intellectual property.

(2) Establishment of IT infrastructure

Japan also believes that it is essential to improve the IT infrastructure that supports the intellectual property system. Providing useful information on intellectual property to users in advance will support them in terms of their filing more sophisticated applications and advancing the spread of technology. In addition, sharing examination results among IP offices will contribute to

improving the quality of examinations and improving the efficiency of business operations.

Japan is committed to continue making contributions, in order to improve the operability and user-friendliness of the IT infrastructure for users around the world, with a focus on enhancing the global databases and the WIPO-CASE network. In fact, recently, Japan started providing information to the global brand database and the global design database, and formally has started participating in WIPO-CASE. I believe that Japan's contributions significantly increased the amount of information now available in the WIPO's IT infrastructure and greatly enhanced its usability.

I feel that making improvements in the IT infrastructure is one area in which we can enhance user-friendliness more flexibly and easily than norm-setting. Japan hopes that the WIPO will focus more on investments in IT infrastructure, making it a priority, in order to return its fee-based income to users in the form of even further enhanced services. Also, Japan kindly requests IP offices to cooperate with the WIPO by proactively providing their intellectual property information to the databases at the WIPO, in order to further enhance user-friendliness.

(3) Formulating treaties (the Design Law Treaty and the Treaty on the Protection of Broadcasting Organizations)

Normative work is also a valuable mission of the WIPO. Under the aim of convening diplomatic conferences as early as possible on agendas, such as the Design Law Treaty (DLT) and the Treaty on the Protection of Broadcasting Organizations, Japan would like to make active contributions to advancing discussions on such agendas.

(4) Cooperation programs for developing countries organized through Japan's voluntary contributions (Assistance for human resources development in Asia and African countries)

Japan also believes that one of the important roles of the WIPO is providing assistance to developing and least developed countries based on improving the international intellectual property system and appropriately providing protection of intellectual property. To achieve this, Japan has made and continues to make a variety of voluntary contributions to developing the intellectual property systems around the world. I am proud to say that the Government of Japan makes the largest contributions at the WIPO in this regard. To date, in making use of our contributions, Japan has welcomed about 1,700 trainees, sent its experts to numerous countries, and held various forums and workshops.

Japan sincerely looks forward to the WIPO's efforts in making effective use of the funds based on the intentions of donor offices, so as to implement more effective and efficient technical assistance.

3. Japan's Initiatives

Finally, I would like to close my statement by introducing major initiatives being implemented in Japan. Japan is now working on three pillars, that is, advancing three major policies

to promote innovations. The first one is to achieve the fastest and highest quality intellectual property system in the world. The second one is to expand the effective use of intellectual property by broadening the base for the utilization of intellectual property by SMEs and venture companies and enhancing their knowledge on intellectual property. The third one is to promote globalization of the intellectual property system.

In regard to the third pillar, in May 2015, Japan started accepting international design applications under the Geneva Act of the Hague Agreement. In addition, Japan revised its laws and regulations in order to accede to the Patent Law Treaty (PLT) and the Singapore Treaty on the Law of Trademarks. I have high expectations that, thanks to these initiatives, Japanese users will be able to implement effective intellectual property strategies under more user-friendly circumstances.

4. Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, this year 2015 marks the 130th anniversary of the industrial property rights system being established in Japan. In concluding my statement, let me reiterate Japan's strong intention of continuous contribution to further encourage innovations in the global intellectual property system by making use of the experiences gained in its history.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.