

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF KOREA
General Statement under agenda item 5
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Mr. Chair,

On behalf of the Delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), I would express my gratitude to you, Ambassador Mr. Omar ZNIBER, Director General Dr. Francis Gurry and the Secretariat of WIPO, who have made sincere efforts to ensure the successful proceeding of the 61st series of Assemblies of WIPO in the time of crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Daren Tang, the new Director General who was appointed at the extraordinary meeting of WIPO General Assembly last May.

Mr. Chair,

The DPRK Delegation commends the successes attained in WIPO activities to develop the Global Intellectual Property (IP) Protection System and strengthen cooperation among its Member States over the past year.

This year, “Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement on Appellations of Origin and Geographical Indications” and “Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances” have entered into force, which will actively contribute to simplifying the international framework for the protection of appellations of origin and to extending the IP rights of actors and other performers.

We also appreciate the efforts being made by WIPO Secretariat to ensure its regular service operation and activities despite a series of difficulties in implementing its program due to the spread of COVID-19.

In recent years, WIPO has also proposed a method for timely and qualitative management of IP applications such as patent and trademark in line with increased interest in IP rights and WIPO activities and has introduced a new AI application for meeting records and translations.

Mr. Chair,

The DPRK Delegation would like to brief some points of view in relation to the activities of WIPO.

First, we believe that IP protection should be directed to substantially contributing not only to the development of science & technology but also to human civilization and socio-economic development.

Science & technology are the keys decisive to tackling global challenges such as climate change, food crises and pandemic diseases facing humanity at the present time.

Although remarkable sci-tech findings have already been achieved in these fields, those are not practically being utilized in settling such challenges.

WIPO should, in pursuit of the SDGs set by the United Nations, not only drive science & technology and innovation in accordance with its mandate but also play a catalytic role so that the sci-tech achievements are actively introduced into reality.

Second, we recognize that ethical issues are to be duly considered in the field of IP protection and WIPO activities.

Currently, many countries around the world are developing vaccines and therapeutics for COVID-19, while some countries and pharmaceutical companies attempt to monopolize vaccines and drugs by using patent rights and negative tendency appears to use the global health crisis as a space to make a fortune.

If such tendency is actualized, it might lead to immoral and unethical problems in which life and death are weighed by the economic power of certain countries and people's ability to pay, which could result in the misery of badly trifling the lives of many people with money.

This reality demands establishing an IP system in which sci-tech achievements, particularly in the health sector, can contribute substantially to the common well-being of mankind while protecting the rights of inventors.

WIPO could devise an institutional mechanism to ensure that IP rights are not abused for unethical and commercial purposes in the health sector which is dealing with human lives.

Third, it is necessary to establish an IP system in which the developed and developing countries could share the benefit.

Convening of a Diplomatic Conference for the adoption of "Design Law Treaty" (DLT) has been postponed for several years by some countries opposing the article on technical cooperation for developing countries in the treaty. Besides, the adoption of new norms to guarantee the interests of the developing countries like the protection of traditional knowledge and genetic resources is also in a state of stagnation without progress.

In creating new international norms for the protection of IP rights, our Delegation affirms that international cooperation among the Member States should be further strengthened so as to reduce the knowledge gap between

developed and developing countries, and practical measures be taken in order to establish a fair global IP system.

Mr. Chair,

Comrade **KIM JONG UN**, Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea said, at the historic 5th Plenary Meeting of the 7th Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea last December, that the inexhaustible strategic assets we should rely on are science & technology, and science & technology should be a beacon light that illuminates the path ahead and take the lead in the national development.

The government of our Republic, upholding the slogan "Let us make a leap forward by dint of science and guarantee the future by dint of education!", maintains the policy of attaching importance to talents and science & technology, while paying great attention to strengthening the national IP system as well.

In our country, under the cares of the government, practical measures are now being taken to further refine the national IP strategy and complete the IP system, and various activities including advocacy on IP rights are being undertaken.

Material and technical foundation is being strengthened in order to disseminate advanced science & technology and activate technology exchange through the nationwide distribution network down to the grass-root level, centered on the Sci-Tech Complex with multifunctional information services, the grand palace of learning for the whole people.

Meanwhile, the government of our Republic looks forward to furthering cooperation with WIPO in establishing a sound national IP system corresponding to the international IP system.

We have so far ratified or acceded to 18 treaties, conventions and agreements administered by WIPO and, in addition, this year we have submitted the Instruments of Accession to Nairobi Treaty on the Protection of the Olympic Symbol and WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT).

This indicates our government's unwavering commitment conducive to international activities for IP protection.

The DPRK government will continue to fully promote the national IP system, thus actively encourage the national sci-tech and cultural development, and, to this end, it will work closely with WIPO Secretariat and its Member States.

Thank you.