



Statement

by

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and
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at the

Mid-term Review Special Event on
“Intellectual Property and Development of LDCs”

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1. I wish to commend WIPO for co-organizing this event with us and for making other contributions to the on-going Mid-Term Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for LDCs. WIPO has been one of our closest partners not only in the mid-term review process, but also in preparation for the Third United Nations Conference on LDCs in Brussels in 2001.
2. In view of their structural weaknesses and vulnerabilities, the challenge for LDCs is how to tap the promise of intellectual property rights for poverty reduction and sustainable development while avoiding its pitfalls. Clearly, LDCs need to protect intellectual property rights to spur and nurture the creativity, skills, innovativeness and talents of its people. At the same time, this has to be done in a way that does not stifle the diffusion of knowledge and new technologies or the use of such knowledge and technologies to tackle major social and economic concerns.
3. Intellectual property can be used as a powerful tool to combat poverty because of its contribution to sustained economic growth, enhanced market efficiency and the creation of employment opportunities. In this context, the application of intellectual property in industry, agriculture and services is critical for the economic growth and development of LDCs.
4. In agriculture, for example, where many LDCs have a comparative advantage, tapping intellectual property could help increase food production through better soil management, efficient irrigation and high-yield crops with enhanced food value. Intellectual property could also play a pivotal role in meeting health-related development objectives, i.e. those relating to drugs, vaccines, diagnostic systems, access to medical information and systems for monitoring drug quality, all of which are indispensable in the fight against infant and maternal mortality, malaria, HIV/AIDS and other forms of diseases in LDCs as stated in the Brussels Program of Action and the Millennium Development Goals.
5. There is a major challenge in the LDCs of modernizing intellectual property norms and laws to conform with the realities of the global economy while, at the same time, maintaining the values of using knowledge for the benefit of the community and country at large. As has been said, protection of intellectual property rights is good for

both rich and poor countries, but poor countries should adopt or implement intellectual property rights in a way that benefits their needs.

6. In this regard, the commitment of LDCs to TRIPS (trade-related aspects of intellectual property), and the recognition of their special needs under the agreement by way of postponing their implementation of the agreement to 2016 for pharmaceutical patents and 2013 for other intellectual property is to be commended. For these exemptions to be beneficial, they must be backed by capacity building in the LDCs in the area of intellectual property.
7. Creating an intellectual property capacity that will allow LDCs to meet their social and economic challenges requires the participation of a range of players, including research and development centers, academic institutions, manufacturing enterprises, agricultural organizations, the service sector, financial institutions and other related government bodies. Some governments of LDCs have taken the first step towards addressing some of the challenges facing them in this respect by creating a policy environment that are supportive of creating a business environment for intellectual property development and information dissemination. Today 45 of the 50 LDCs are members of WIPO and most of them are members of the Paris Convention on Industrial Property and the Bern Convention on Copyrights.
8. For LDCs the challenges are huge for building IP institutions for the use of invention, innovation and promote technological development. Nevertheless, sound leadership, focused policies and hard work and support from their development partners will make the rewards very high and make development possible.
9. In this regard, I commend the various initiatives undertaken by WIPO to assist LDCs in building their intellectual property capacity, as detailed in WIPO's sectoral report on the implementation of the Programme of Action for LDCs. WIPO should continue assisting LDCs in this endeavor as creativity and inventiveness will be a major determinant in growth and development.
10. As I conclude, let me take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. Deputy Director-General, for the work WIPO has done for LDCs under your areas of responsibility. I

have learnt that you will be leaving WIPO to serve in your country. I wish you all the best in your new capacity and request that you keep the LDCs on your agenda in your new and future capacities. I would also like to thank Dr. Kamil Idris, the Director-General of WIPO, for his leadership especially on issues of interest to the LDCs.
