

OPENING REMARKS

by

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First and foremost, I bring warm greetings from the Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Dr. Kamil Idris. He wishes you all and this Conference great success.

My colleagues, Mr. Pushpendra Rai, Deputy Director, and Ms. Gao Hang, Head of the Policy Training Section of the WIPO Worldwide Academy and I are most pleased to be here amongst you all. I take this opportunity to thank you all for having accepted our invitation to explore together the issues pertaining to this all time important Conference. We look forward to your deliberations and to learning from you the state of IP teaching and training in your respective countries and regions.

The time is indeed of the opportune for convening this Conference here today. It is most evident that the Government of this great nation has amply demonstrated its quest for education in all fields of human endeavor and in particular, the intellectual property field. Due to this zealous effort and resolve of the Government of India, we are living witnesses to the surge of interest among the Indian scholars, scientists, the business community and those in the literary and artistic field in embracing the promotion of the protection of intellectual property. The subject of intellectual property is not only being taught as a matter of routine in Indian Universities and schools of higher learning, but is widely being promoted among the general public. The decision to hold this conference jointly with WIPO on this all-important topic of the teaching and training of IP, bears testimony to the resolve of the Indian Government to create an intellectual property culture in India. Mr. Secretary, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, WIPO, the premier institution for the promotion of the protection of IP, the Organization for the future, is indeed pleased to co-sponsor this conference with the Government of India and the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi.

The question we should pose for ourselves is why at all, should we be debating the issue of the teaching and training of IP in our Universities and higher schools of learning today? What has changed as to warrant giving special attention to the teaching of IP in our schools? Should it be taught at all? In fact, as most of us will confess, IP was hardly taught, but a few years ago as a subject in our University curriculum. We simply tumbled upon it in the course of the study of other disciplines, such as commercial law, company law and even land law in some cases.

Why therefore should this subject be given heightened attention in the curriculum of our universities at this time?

As you all well known, intellectual property has become better understood as a great tool for wealth creation. We shall see in the course of this Conference how IP can in fact be used as a facilitator, a catalyst for economic, social and cultural development. Suffice to state here and now that a nation that participates in the promotion of the protection of IP is surely bound to prosper. This is even so true in this century that has been branded the century of the knowledge-based economy.

As you are all aware, with the conclusion of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS Agreement) in 1995, intellectual property issues became subsumed with issues of world trade. All Member States of the World Trade Organization are obliged to comply with the provisions of the TRIPS Agreement. But that is not the reason why we must study this subject. Rather, it is for the reason that promotion of IP protection inures in every nation that has a strong IP infrastructure, the potential to create wealth for its economic and social and cultural development for the well being of its people.

We in the WIPO are committed to assisting Member States in the achievement of the promotion of IP and its protection. Within the WIPO Worldwide Academy, we are committed to assisting Universities and schools of higher learning, *inter alia*, in training of human resources who can teach IP in those institutions, development of curricula for the teaching of IP and the development of teaching materials. The ultimate objective is to foster a healthy IP culture around the world.

On behalf of the Director General of WIPO, Dr. Kamil Idris, my colleagues, Mr. Rai and Ms. Gao Hang and indeed myself, I wish you all a great success in your deliberations in this Conference, which we hope will help in fostering a strong and healthy IP culture in your Universities and schools of higher learning in your respective countries.

Thank you.