

Establishing Global IP Cooperation

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Hahoe Byeolsingut Tallori (Mask Dance Drama of Hahoe)
Hahoe Byeolsingut Tallori is held in Andong Hahoe Village. The mask used for this performance is the oldest surviving mask in Korea and is designated as a national treasure. After this performance, young and old Koreans and foreigners have an exciting dance party.

Strengthening Cooperation with WIPO

The Republic of Korea (ROK) first became a member of the World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO) in 1979 which is the global forum for IP services, policy, information, and cooperation. Particularly in 2020, effort was focused on strengthening the long-standing relationship with WIPO as well as actively participating in global discussions during the COVID-19 epidemic.

On March 4th, 2020, the KIPO Commissioner, as head of the ROK delegation, participated in the Extraordinary Session of the WIPO Coordination Committee held in Geneva. The Coordination Committee nominated Mr. Daren Tang as the candidate for the post of the next Director General. Subsequently, due to the unprecedented global health crisis, the appointment of Mr. Daren Tang as the 5th WIPO Director-

General was confirmed through written procedure at the 28th Extraordinary Session of the WIPO General Assembly held from May 7th to 8th.

Further, the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO (Sixty-First Series of Meetings) was held from September 21st to 25th through a hybrid format to allow member states to participate physically or online in compliance to health and safety measures. The KIPO Commissioner delivered a General Statement which emphasized the necessity of R&D and IPR creation to overcome the COVID-19 crisis and highlighted the importance of promoting WIPO and IP Offices’ digital transformation for users’ accessibility and convenience.

In December, a bilateral video conference was held where the newly appointed WIPO

Director-General shared his vision for identifying new collaborations between the two institutions. The KIPO Commissioner in turn discussed cooperation projects using the WIPO-Korea Funds-In-Trust to promote sustainable economic development and help reduce the IP gap between developing and developed countries.

Meanwhile, KIPO, WIPO, and the Korea

Patent Attorneys Association (KPAA) collaborated to host a “WIPO Roving Webinar” in November 2020 for WIPO’s IP global service users in the ROK. Korean staff currently at WIPO were invited online to introduce the standard practices and procedures of the global IP systems, such as the PCT System (patent), the Madrid System (trademark), the Hague System (design), as well as WIPO’s global database of IP information.

RCEP Signing Among Nations of the Asia-Pacific Region

On November 15, 2020, the representatives of 15 countries including the ROK, Australia, China, Japan, and New Zealand and the ten countries of the ASEAN region gathered virtually to witness the signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) during the 4th RCEP Summit. The RCEP signing is significant as a trade agreement among Asia-Pacific nations to strengthen economic linkages and enhance trade and investment activities, thereby, creating the world’s largest trading bloc to date.

The RCEP will create a foundation for IPR

protection with a considerable market that accounts for 2.26 billion people or 30% of the world's population, USD 26.3 trillion or 30% of the world’s GDP, and USD 5.4 trillion or 28.7% of global trade. The Agreement contains 20 Chapters, 17 annexes and 54 schedules of commitments of which specifically defines a total of 83 provisions with respect to patents, designs, trademarks, etc.

While the Korea-ASEAN FTA which has been in effect since 2007 has only one declaratory clause regarding cooperation on IP rights, the RCEP has a total of





83 clauses which regulate trademark, patent, design in detail. The RCEP is therefore expected to help supplement and strengthen IPR protection in the Asia-Pacific region.

The provisions of the RCEP are expected to be in effect from 2022 after 60% of the member parties have completed the

ratification processes in their respective country. Member parties will be required to process trademark applications and registrations in accordance with the international classification of WIPO (Nice classification). Thus, as the RCEP comes into effect, there will be sufficient protection of IPRs for companies doing business in the local markets of the region.

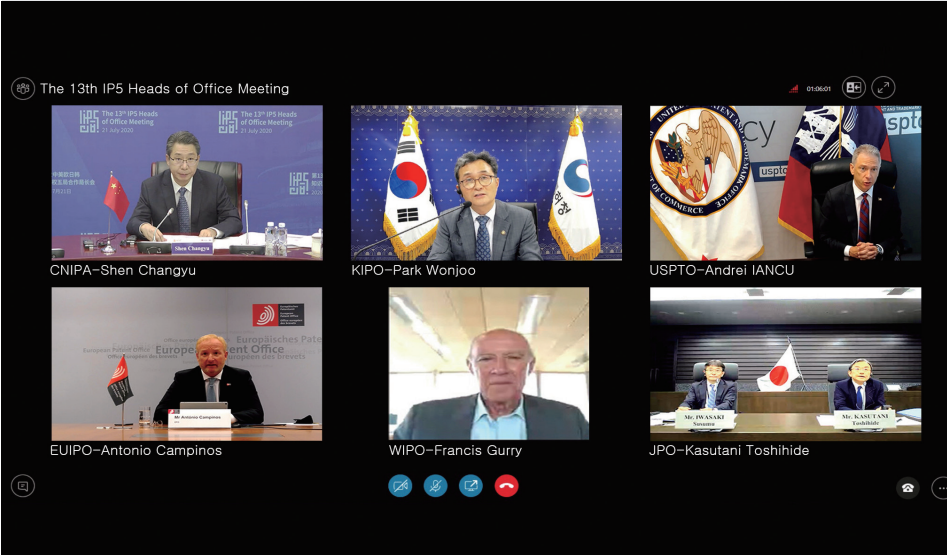
Major IP Offices to Enhance the Role of IP in Tackling Global Challenges

The forum of the world’s five largest IP offices (IP5), namely KIPO, the China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA), European Patent Office (EPO), Japan Patent Office (JPO), and United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), convened for the 13th Heads of IP5 Office Meeting on July 21, 2020. Since the launch of the consultative body in 2007, meetings have been hosted on a yearly rotation among the IP5 offices. However, this year, the meeting was held via video conference for the first time on account of the outbreak of COVID-19 and the WIPO Director-General attended in an observer capacity.

In addition to discussing ongoing collaborative activities, the five heads of office shared about the measures taken by the individual IP offices to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on applicants

and innovators as well as discuss IP5 cooperation for the post-pandemic times. Members agreed to enhance public and mutual access to patent information and technological knowledge related to COVID-19 detection, prevention and treatment and to share best practices in dealing with global challenges.

Moreover, IP was emphasized for its potential key role in boosting economic recovery and innovation especially in times of crisis. The IP5 agreed to continue supporting the international IP community in addition to advancing IP cooperation related to new emerging technologies, harmonizing examination practices and procedures, improving quality and efficiency in patent examination, and actively engaging with IP5 industry associations. These commitments have been reflected and highlighted in the Joint



Statement published on the official IP5 website (www.fiveipoffices.org)

The KIPO Commissioner emphasized that in the quest for combating the COVID-19 pandemic, the world’s five largest IP offices would have to play a more active and flexible role on the global stage to find a good balance between securing free access to medicines for public health and safety and ensuring patent protection for pharmaceutical products. The IP5 offices plan to continue its endeavors to improve the IP system to make it more responsive to future challenges and serve as a

“catalyst” for technical advancement and safe future for society.

In the field of trademark and design, the five offices (CNIPA, EUIPO, JPO, USPTO, KIPO) of the TM5 and ID5 also announced a 2020 Joint Statement emphasizing the necessity of enhancing cooperation in new technological areas, improving examination services for user convenience, and collaborating internationally through online channels in order to foster post-pandemic development of the trademark and design systems.

10-Year Vision for Trilateral IP Cooperation

For two decades, KIPO, CNIPA and JPO have come together to establish a trilateral cooperation on IP, called the TRIPO cooperation, with the goal of facilitating exchange and utilization of patent examination information, harmonizing patent examination practices, and establishing international norms. The three offices have actively carried out cooperative activities and cooperation in six areas, including IP automation, patents, designs, trademarks, trials and appeals, and human resources development.

In December 2020, the annual TRIPO Heads of Office meeting was hosted by KIPO via video conference where the three offices discussed accomplishments thus far and future needs. Notably, the collective volume of international patent applications handled by the three offices has increased from about 40% in 2001 to about 60% over the twenty years, and the volume of trademark filing increased from about 20% to about 60% in the same period, making the ROK, China, and Japan the three largest IP economies in the world.



In celebration of the 20th anniversary of the TRIPO cooperation, a 10-year vision for trilateral IP cooperation was established with a view to adopting it at a next trilateral Summit Meeting. Under the new vision, TRIPO will make concerted efforts for joint responses to address new challenges, such as digital transformation and the spread of a pandemic, by improving relevant laws, examination practices and systems for facilitating the creation and protection of innovative technologies. Also, they will cooperate to improve public access and encourage utilization of patent information by the private sector and to expand cooperation to include other countries or regions, thereby supporting the endeavor to achieve technological development and innovation-driven growth.

Furthermore, the meeting was especially meaningful in that each country shared information on their respective cooperative programs implemented with ASEAN countries. With all three countries participating in the RCEP, discussions were made on the possibilities of a joint approach for the first time after signing the agreement. Accordingly, the TRIPO cooperation will continue to advance the range and depth of cooperation based on mutual trust.