

Message from the Commissioner

As the Korean governmental agency primarily responsible for overseeing intellectual property rights (IPRs), the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO) strives to implement its intellectual property (IP) administration in such a way to strengthen national competitiveness.

Domestically, KIPO has put as great an emphasis as possible on further developing its examination services, as well as promoting economic sustainability through a virtuous cycle of IP creation, utilization, and protection. On the international front, we strengthened our cooperative ties with foreign IP offices and other international organizations.

In order to maintain one of the world's fastest first action pendency and better ensure high-quality examination, we expanded outsourcing prior art searches and facilitated various types of cooperation examinations including consultative examination among examiners and on-site public examination. This enables examiners to maximize time efficiency and helps them stay focused on their examinations.

This has resulted in some significant changes which increases the quality of our examination. The ratio of patent registration and ratio of appeal against a decision of rejection was lower compared to 2016.

In celebration of the 52th occasion of Korea's Invention Day, KIPO hosted an event which included a commemorative movie screening, ceremony performance, and outstanding invention exhibition to raise IP awareness. Further, inventors were honored who made significant contributions to society.

In addition, we prepared a blueprint for a nation-wide patent strategy, and we conducted patent trend surveys covering more than 3,100 Korean governmental R&D projects. We also provided support for the creation of high value-added standard-essential patents (SEPs), as well as for product development that takes into account IP rights and incorporates patenting, branding, and design.

To help support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) possessing outstanding patents and cutting-edge technology, we established an IP

financing system that allows IP as collateral for attaining substantial loans. In 2017, we expanded this system to include participation from private banks, rather than limiting it solely to public banks. The result was an accumulative sum of around 324.5 million USD lent to SMEs.

Moreover, 199 Invention Education Centers funded by throughout the nation provided IP education to elementary, middle, and high school students, thereby contributing to increased public IPR awareness and the fostering of a new national pool of talented inventors.

We endeavored to raise the level of Korea's IPR protection. We launched nationwide campaigns to promote public participation to abolish counterfeit goods. Also, we systematically cracked down on IP infringers and seized a total of 584,094 counterfeit goods.

Furthermore, we expanded our multilateral and bilateral cooperation in order to better improve the global IP system.

Throughout 2017, we participated in working group meetings to expand global IP services, in particular the PCT, Madrid, and Hague systems. We also participated in WIPO standing committees—the Standing Committee on the Law of Patents (SCP); the Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs, and Geographical Indications (SCT); and the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS)—to discuss global IP norm.

In April 2017, KIPO hosted a Heads of Intellectual Property Office Conference (HIPOC) under the theme "Client-centric IP Services." Many heads of IP offices attended the event including those from 13 countries in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Iran, as well as Deputy Director General Mario Matus from WIPO.

At the event, discussions were held on various topics, including sharing experience of IP rights policies and encouraging IP administration leadership. The heads agreed that IP capacity and economic development were closely related. They also recognized the need for an IP ecosystem in order to adapt to the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR).

We conducted appropriate technology(AT) and brand development projects with Uganda and Sri Lanka in 2017, and held appropriate technology competitions in four Latin American countries (Panama, El Salvador, Dominican Republic and Costa Rica). With these projects, we shared global IP sharing to resolve everyday difficulties and to help increase quality of life in developing countries.

Last but not least, KIPO, the JPO, the EPO, SIPO and the USPTO, the world's five largest patent offices (IP5), celebrated their 10th anniversary of cooperation forum at the 2017 IP5 Heads Meeting held in Malta. There we adopted a new vision to reflect the changing IPR environment that further incorporates efficiency, cost effectiveness and user friendliness. Furthermore, "IPR protection in the 4IR era" under the umbrella cooperation of the IP5 was discussed. From here on, individual policy efforts made by each patent office will be shared and joint projects can be promoted as we deal with the challenges of the 4IR.

The progress we have made so far has been possible because of the continued interest and support of our numerous stakeholders and IP users, both foreign and domestic. We at KIPO will lead the creation of strong and flexible IP and confidently advance into the era of the 4IR with resolve to facilitate economic growth and innovation.

The Annual Report contains information on KIPO's primary activities and overall performance results for 2017, which I hope will serve to provide a better understanding of our recent projects and vision for the future. It is my honor and pleasure to present to you this year's annual report.

Sung Yunmo | Commissioner



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