

Medium-Term Strategic Plan

Introduction by WIPO Director General, Daren Tang

Monday, July 12, 2021

Good afternoon,

It is a pleasure to open this session and to introduce the Medium-Term Strategic Plan 2022-2026 (MTSP) of the new Administration.

At the very beginning, I wish to reiterate my deep appreciation to Member States - and those of my colleagues - for the enthusiastic and constructive way you have engaged in putting together the document. Your guidance, directions and feedback has inspired this MTSP. It is as much your vision, as it is ours, and I look forward to working together with all of you to bring it to life.

Dear Members, Dear Colleagues, Dear Friends,

We face a world where a global pandemic has claimed lives and livelihoods, and set back our common aspirations for a better and fairer world by the end of this decade, as encapsulated in the 2030 SDGs. Yet, in the midst of this crisis, there have been glimpses of hope and opportunity. Innovation in health and medicine has allowed us to prevent, treat and vaccinate our peoples, and innovation in communications have allowed us to connect, engage and collaborate whilst thousands of miles apart. More broadly, the pandemic has accelerated pre-existing trends towards the globalization of innovation and creativity, and increased the importance of IP, innovation and creativity to all countries in the world.

These opportunities, however, come with challenges. The knowledge and awareness of IP, and its powerful role as a catalyst, remains low. The fruits of innovation and creativity are unevenly distributed. And solving global challenges and achieving our SDGs require even more effective international co-operation.

It is therefore not enough for us to be satisfied with business as usual.

It is therefore not enough for us to want to merely stay the course, when the world is entering into new and uncharted waters.

This is why the MTSP we are sharing with you today is an MTSP that will lift up and broaden the work of WIPO, and support you in rising to the new challenges and opportunities that lie before us.

This is why our Vision is a world where innovation and creativity from anywhere is supported by IP for the good of everyone.

Our aspiration is for every Member State – and especially developing countries and LDCs – to use IP as a powerful tool to create jobs, attract investments, support business growth, lift up communities, and ultimately develop dynamic economies and vibrant societies.

To do this, we will need to continue doing well in our traditional areas of strength – as the global norm and standard setting agency for IP, and in the provision of our global IP protection services. But even while we must continue to do this well, we must also go beyond the technical and legal aspects of IP, to bring alive its pragmatic and development aspects. We must engage not just with the IP experts and specialists, but also with those on the ground, so that laypersons, SMEs, women, youths and others who have not been fully served by the IP ecosystem, begin to understand how IP is already part of their lives and begin to see how it is also a part of their dreams and aspirations. This is why our Mission must be to build a balanced and effective global IP ecosystem that supports everyone in using IP to grow and develop.

We must also play our part in addressing inequities in development. The Development Agenda will continue to play a key role in our work, but we must innovate our support to create real impact on the ground. This means going beyond an activity based approach to finding projects and partnerships that can deliver tangible results at the grassroots level, and to help Member States build back better. And we will redouble our work with external stakeholders, NGOs, civil society and partners across the UN family and beyond, so that we can address global issues and achieve the aspirations of the 2030 SDGs.

Dear Members,

Our Vision and Mission are underpinned by four Strategic Pillars and a Foundation.

At the outset, I should clarify that these Strategic Pillars and Foundation are not intended to describe work that is Sector-specific, but to describe priorities for WIPO that cut across the whole Organization and cut across all sectors. They serve the same function for WIPO, as the SDGs do so for the UN family, signaling where our common aspirations and energies will be channeled to across the entire Organization.

Our first pillar is focused on outreach and engagement, and broadening our outreach and engagement efforts beyond IP specialists and experts to everyone, everywhere. IP is still seen as highly technical, complex and somewhat enigmatic area of work, with the result that not many understand its importance to their lives, and more importantly, its potential to help them take their ideas to the world.

We therefore need to bring IP to the general public and other stakeholders at the grassroots level like SMEs, and to share with them the value and usefulness of IP in a way that they can understand and connect with. We will of course continue to engage our fellow IP experts in specialist forums and channels, but our reach needs to broaden beyond them, and our strategy will need to evolve to also encompass content for a more general audience. This year's World IP Day campaign, which centered on the theme of "SMEs– from Ideas to Market" is an example of this approach.

Youth will be an area of focus for engagement. Yet if we are to reach the innovators and creators of the future, we must not only speak their language but be active on the platforms and channels they use on a daily basis. Already we have stepped-up our presence on social media and this will continue, alongside the creation of original, longer-form content from our Media Studio.

Our website and publications will also see a shift and broaden the way we present content, as well as greater emphasis on the broader use of languages, so as to reach out to new audiences, in line with WIPO's ethos of multilingualism.

Pillars two and three describe WIPO's traditional areas of strength. These pillars remain the bedrock of our work and will continue to be at the core of our activities throughout the MTSP period and beyond.

Pillar two centers on WIPO's role as a global convener for the IP community and as the international setter of norms and standards that shape the global IP ecosystem. The Secretariat is committed to providing the best support to Member States and facilitating the further development of WIPO's normative agenda. After all this is the work that created the Treaty of Marrakesh which is helping blind, visually impaired and otherwise print disabled people to access accessible reading materials. We will work with Member States to find creative and interesting ways to make even fuller use of time spent in Committees and Working Groups. Likewise, we will continue to bring the international community together to address emerging policy issues pertaining to IP. For example, our series of IP and AI conversations have stimulated broad debate on the future direction of the global IP ecosystem as a result of AI. We plan to address other emerging issues relating not just to AI, but to Frontier Technologies, in a similar manner.

Under Pillar two, we will also continue to work across the international community to build respect for IP at the international, regional and national level, as an integral part of any IP ecosystem.

WIPO will also play a more active role in supporting the delivery of the SDGs and addressing the most pressing global challenges that we face in partnership with others.

Our response to the pandemic shows this approach in action. Over the course of the last 16 months, we have harnessed our expertise to help create an enabling environment for tech transfer and licensing, as well as provide legislative and policy advice on how to balance IP and health issues. We are committed to continuing our tripartite cooperation with the WHO and WTO on a range of initiatives from capacity building workshops to providing technical assistance to Member States relating to their need to have access to Covid-19 medical technologies.

While we recognize there is still much more to do to support the global response and deliver vaccine equity, WIPO is committed to playing an active part in this shared endeavor. We will also support Member States to build back better. As announced in my remarks this morning, we are today announcing a package of support measures which will further leverage WIPO's expertise and assist Member States to overcome the pandemic and rebuild.

Dear Members,

The MTSP's third pillar concerns the provision of high quality Global IP Protection services, which is one of the unique and longstanding aspects of WIPO's work. This includes the international registry systems, as well as the work of the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center. As global IP filings continue to rise, we recognize that we need to continue to support the wider use of WIPO's IP systems and registries, as well as take steps to continue to improve our customer service to users and digitalization, for example, through projects like the Global IP Portal – which is a one-stop shop for customers. Emphasis will be placed on strengthening the customer experience of our services, reaching out to current and new customers to improve our services, and ensuring a customer-centric approach in the development of new services.

Over the course of the MTSP, we will strive to build the reputation and strengthen the reputation of key publications and data releases such as the Global Innovation Index and the World IP Report. These have become critical sources of reliable information, data and knowledge for many users around the world, both public and private. In addition, platforms such as WIPO GREEN and WIPO Re:Search will continue to be strengthened and developed, in collaboration with external partners, so that we can address global challenges such as climate change and public health.

Pillar four centers on how IP can be a powerful tool for growth and sustainable development. The rise of the intangible economy combined with the importance of innovation and creativity led growth has led to growing interest in the development of IP ecosystems around the world.

To support our activities in this area, we have established a new Innovation and IP Ecosystems Sector. This will harness our expertise and enable WIPO to further develop our capabilities to the benefit all Member States. Our ambition is to enable all countries to use IP more effectively as a tool for growth, and this will be especially important for developing countries and LDCs. We will not do this through a one-size-fits-all approach, but by developing tailored made approaches that are sensitive to national and regional needs and circumstances, as well as your specific development aspirations. We will also work to strengthen horizontal cooperation among Member States, including greater North-South and South-South collaboration.

Expanding the number of innovators and creators who use IP effectively will be a key challenge that we intend to address.

Through projects like WIPO for Creators, which is a public-private partnership for creators to talk to fellow creators about IP and copyright in a down to earth manner, or initiatives like our Technology Innovation Support Centers, where we support researchers and research institutes to use IP to translate R&D into impact and to be effective at tech transfer. We will continue to find new ways to deliver impactful results for you.

However, this requires that we work closely with Members and, with your guidance, with the right partners within your country. For example, rather than engaging with SMEs and start-ups directly, we will need to work with Member States, IP Offices and other actors in country to identify appropriate partners for WIPO to collaborate with and scale, so as to create real impact on the ground. These efforts will be characterized by a shift towards a more project-based approach. Not only will this help us to deliver practical outcomes, but it will increase both accountability and ownership. This is vital if we are to engage meaningfully with SMEs, Youth and indigenous communities, all of whom need support to use IP to grow and develop.

We will also expand the use of IP by communities, many of whom are rich in traditional culture, heritage and knowledge, and should avail themselves of IP as a means of not just protecting their traditional heritage but also of bringing it to the world.

A key enabler in helping these new stakeholders use IP to grow and develop is our work in training IP expertise and building IP skills. The WIPO Academy will therefore broaden its offerings to include courses that would be relevant to entrepreneurs, SMEs, and others who want to develop practical IP skills, so that they can use it to take their ideas to the market.

Dear Members,

Before concluding, I would like to say a few words about WIPO's management functions and organizational values – the foundation on which the MTSP is built.

We have already started the journey of transforming the way WIPO works, and to empower our workforce by fostering an open, collaborative and dynamic culture – one that nurtures talent, builds trust and supports initiative. We will champion greater diversity and inclusiveness by continuing to progress gender equality across the Organization and through our commitment to multilingual stakeholders. And we will maintain a zero tolerance approach to all forms of unacceptable behavior such as bullying and harassment.

At the macro level, WIPO remains committed to high standards of governance and prudent financial management. Prevailing uncertainties mean that revenues cannot be taken for granted and we will continue to manage our resources efficiently, so as to provide you with 'value for money' for every dollar that we spend. At the same time, we will continue to invest in the digital transformation of WIPO, so as to continue improving our internal processes and external services, and ultimately serve you better as our Members.

In conclusion, the MTSP is a Vision to lift up the work of WIPO in a time of great crisis and opportunity, in line with our collective aspiration for IP to serve the world. I hope you will join us in building a World where innovation and creativity from anywhere is supported by IP for the good of everyone, and I look forward to working with all of you to make this Vision a reality.

Thank you very much