

2020 WORLD IP DAY COALITION LETTER



April 26, 2020

Dear WIPO Director-General Francis Gurry,

It is our great pleasure as a worldwide network of 93 think tanks from 49 countries to celebrate World Intellectual Property Day with you once again.

As humanity confronts the COVID-19 pandemic, we turn to IP-driven innovations for the most effective solutions. Today, the best scientists at companies and research institutions around the world are racing to develop potential new vaccines and treatments for COVID-19.

Research and testing are advancing swiftly. Effective intellectual property protection has enabled this rapid response. Many potential treatment candidates were originally pioneered to treat other conditions. Keeping these protections intact is the only way to ensure inventors can continue making bold investments in new technologies and medicines that improve global health.

The more IP rights are protected the more the global community can benefit from the collective wisdom, ingenuity, and creativity of the world's people. Slowly, this is happening. Property Rights Alliance has produced the International Property Rights Index since 2007 measuring intellectual property rights, physical property rights, and the legal and political institutions responsible for enforcing them. The world has seen an increase of IP Rights Protection of 4.5 percent over the last thirteen years. The ultimate consequence of this progress is, of course, greater prosperity for all.

IP Rights Are Green

This year's theme "Innovate for a Green Future" is relevant for every individual today and tomorrow. Strong IPRs encourage innovators to find solutions that are competitive, efficient, and

in-demand. In 2019 the world saw novel solutions such as meat alternatives that use 87% less water and 96% less land while producing 89% fewer greenhouse gas emissions and 92% fewer aquatic pollutants. The green-innovation economy in the U.S. alone generates \$1.3 trillion in annual sales revenue and employs nearly 9.5 million workers.

IP Rights Promote Economic Growth

IP-intensive industries play a leading role in economies with the highest rates of IPR protection. IP-intensive industries are responsible for generating nearly 40 percent of the combined U.S. & EU GDP while employing 30 percent of their entire workforce. That's 108 million hard working men and women that earn on average 46 percent more than their counterparts in other industries. In fact, their scores on the Property Rights Index are 57 percent greater than the rest of the world and their per-capita income 16 times greater than those at the bottom. If all countries and all people are going to have the same opportunity to contribute to the next era of innovation this IP rights gap must be closed.

IP Rights Inspire Innovation Across Sectors

Such growth from IP is not confined to tech hubs. Traditional industries are also reaping the rewards. Automotive, sports, real estate, pharmaceutical, information technology, and renewable energy sectors are all benefactors of IP protections. The number of patents filed worldwide increased by 5.2 percent in 2018 with an astonishing 3.3 million patents filed. According to a WIPO report on green patents, green technology companies rely on patents for their development and patent filings have increased dramatically since 2005. These patent protections offer innovators the incentive to look beyond what is considered possible to find solutions to society's current limitations. Due to these patent protections, new cancer drugs are being developed along with electric cars, biofuels, and agricultural processes to name a few. Innovation knows no boundaries.

IP Rights Protect Against Counterfeits

Counterfeit products are harmful to both producers and consumers and robust enforcement of strong IP rights is the best protection. Yet the global share of counterfeit goods consistently increases, from \$461 billion in 2013 to \$509 billion in 2016, or 2.5% of global trade, according to the latest data. While the cost of online piracy is on its way to reaching \$52 billion. These illegal products fund criminal enterprises, damage brand reputations, cause physical harm to consumers, and prevent IP industries from developing across the world. Counterfeit medicines, for instance, have been linked to disease progression and drug resistance. For most of the world's artists, inventors, and entrepreneurs the prevalence of counterfeits makes earning a career from their original works nearly impossible.

IP Rights Support Trade

Since the adoption of the TRIPS agreement intellectual property rights have been rightfully cemented into comprehensive trade agreements. These ground rules allow trade in IP-intensive goods to flow more freely than without, and with them a wide diffusion of knowledge. As countries adopt and maintain IP trade commitments, they guarantee not only that their industries will have competitive partners but as the Trade Barrier Index finds they open the door to greater

levels of prosperity and freedom while fighting corruption and abuse.

What the WIPO and UN Can Do

We firmly believe that international organizations, governments and policymakers across the world should move forward to promote policies which recognize the value of IP rights for contributing the lion's share of the world's innovations that are greener and lead to healthier futures.

This year in particular, we recognize the value of IP in the development of green technologies for the 21st century. IP rights expand the economy, bolster innovation, and improve people's quality of life. We look forward to working with WIPO to advance awareness of the incalculable value of IP rights.

Cc: Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary-General; Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO)



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