

WIPO General Assemblies 2023 General Statement

Iceland

Iceland would like to begin by thanking the Director General, Mr. Daren Tang, Madam Chair and the WIPO Secretariat for all their work in making these Assemblies possible. We also like to thank WIPO for continued support and fruitful co-operation and support in various aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. It is of high importance to have access, not only to wide variety of information, technical resources and guidelines but also to be able to interact with the Office's experts as needed. We congratulate Mr. Tang on his strong leadership during this year and for an impressive report on WIPOs achievements presented during these Assemblies.

As to this Assemblies Agenda, Iceland notes the various changes to specifically the Madrid and PCT Regulations. We also sincerely thank the Secretariat for preparing the Report on the Assistance and support for Ukraine's Innovation and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System, cf. document A/64/8. The people and the whole economic system of Ukraine continue to be faced with difficult challenges and Iceland strongly supports the continued assistance and support provided to the innovative system of Ukraine.

Iceland welcomes the continuous effort of WIPO in mapping the global IP landscape. The Global Innovation Report has been of utmost importance for years now and the recent survey on attitude to IP around the world, for which report will be available in September, will undoubtedly serve as a unique and useful tool for future work in relation to raising awareness on IP.

Furthermore, the continued focus of WIPO on women's contribution to the global economy as important innovators and entrepreneurs is of high importance. This focus was well appreciated as the theme of the World IP Day in April, in which Iceland actively participated, holding a well-attended conference where female leaders from the innovation and intellectual property sector gave interesting presentations on a wide range of topics related to intellectual property rights. Two Icelandic male innovators were nominated this year for the EPO Inventor Award which caught some attention in the Icelandic Media as well. Enhancing innovation and promoting better use of IP is emphasized by the Government of Iceland and several actions have already been taken to promote and support innovation within universities and the innovation society. Under the leadership of the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation last autumn, a delegation from Iceland visited Universities, technical centres and SIPO in Singapore to learn from the success of Singapore in connecting IP and the innovation community.

Concerning country names and specifically the country name Iceland, Icelandic delegates continue to actively participate in the Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications (SCT). At least since March 2017, concerns have been raised as to the seemingly insufficient protection in several countries against the registration of Country Names as Trademarks. Although a final decision has not been reached, the registrability of Country Names as trademarks in Europe is now at a certain turning point with recent decisions of EUIPO's Grand Board deeming the name of the country of Iceland descriptive and thus not registrable. In the Board's decision it was underlined that the Country Name Iceland would be perceived by the relevant public as an indication that the goods and services designated originate from Iceland. Iceland continues to stress that the right to a Country Name should be a fundamental right of every country, enjoying similar protection as State Emblems and Flags under Article 6ter of the Paris Convention.

It is noticeable that WIPO continues to grow under strong leadership of Mr. Tang. Iceland wishes him and his team every success in the next years leading the Office.