

CELEBRATING WORLD IP DAY 2022

IP and Youth: Innovating for a Better Future



April 26, 2022

Dear Director-General Daren Tang,

As a global coalition of 106 public policy organizations from 51 countries, we are pleased to celebrate World Intellectual Property Day alongside WIPO once again.

This year's theme, **"IP and Youth: Innovating for a Better Future,"** is particularly important as young people continue to be a driving force of innovation as consumers, content creators, inventors, and artists. At the same time, the world is emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic emboldened by decades of breakthrough research¹ that has resulted not only in effective vaccines and therapeutics, but their mass production on a global scale--accomplishments only possible thanks to robust intellectual property rights.

The intellectual property protections of today ensure that tomorrow's young people will continue to witness accessible quantum leaps from healthcare to space travel.

IP Promotes the Next Generation of Innovation.

More must be done to promote and protect IP rights for young people. A working paper from the U.S. National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) indicated that 42 percent of innovations were created by inventors in their 30s and 40 percent by inventors in their 40s.² A 2008 survey of patent holders similarly found that the average age of inventors was 47 in the United States and 39.5 in Japan.³ Notably, the oldest members of the millennial generation have already surpassed age 40 and the rest are rapidly nearing this peak age range for new innovations.

1. <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2021/the-long-history-of-mrna-vaccines>

2. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w11359>

3. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.730.5840&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

However, more recent research suggests that most inventors file their very first patent in their late 20s to early 30s.⁴ Indeed, it is part of new trend, the average age at first patent for inventors between 2006 and 2016 was lower than that of inventors between 1996 and 2005.⁵ As millennials approach the average age for major inventions and Generation Z approaches the average age for a first patent filing, we must ensure that these generations and the future generations continue to enjoy and value a global system of robust intellectual property rights.

IP Rights Create Jobs.

IP-intensive industries play a central role in job creation. In the United States, IP-intensive industries account for 44 percent of total employment, and jobs in these industries come with a 60 percent weekly wage premium over jobs in other industries.⁶ As of 2019, IP-intensive industries represented 83.3 million jobs in the European Union, or 38.9 percent of total employment.⁷ These jobs came with a 47 percent wage premium over jobs in non-IP-intensive industries in the EU.⁸

In the G8 countries, copyright-intensive industries by themselves account for 3 to 8 percent of all employment, including 3 percent of employment in Japan, 5.4 percent in Canada, 6.5 percent in the European Union, 7.3 percent in Russia, and 8.5 percent in the United States.⁹ In the developing world, copyright-intensive industries account for approximately 3 to 11 percent of total employment, including 5 percent in Brazil, 5.8 percent in Colombia, and 11 percent in Mexico.¹⁰ Workers and innovators in nations of all levels can benefit from the improved job prospects that result from strong IP protections.

IP Rights Boost Trade and Guard Against Illicit Trade.

The importance of IP protections is underscored by the dominance of IP-intensive industries in driving imports and exports. For instance, in the European Union, 54 percent of service exports and a tremendous 96 percent of exported goods originate from IP-intensive industries. Similarly, 57 percent of service imports and 89 percent of goods imports into the EU are from IP-intensive industries.¹¹

4. https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w28769/w28769.pdf

5. Ibid.

6. <https://www.uspto.gov/sites/default/files/documents/uspto-ip-us-economy-third-edition.pdf>

7. https://euipo.europa.eu/tunnel-web/secure/webdav/guest/document_library/observatory/documents/IPContributionStudy/IPR-intensive_industries_and_economicin_EU/WEB_IPR_intensive_Report_2019.pdf

8. Ibid.

9. <https://iccwbo.org/content/uploads/sites/3/2011/02/Intellectual-Property-Powerhouse-for-Innovation-and-Economic-Growth.pdf>

10. Ibid.

11. https://euipo.europa.eu/tunnel-web/secure/webdav/guest/document_library/observatory/documents/IPContributionStudy/IPR-intensive_industries_and_economicin_EU/WEB_IPR_intensive_Report_2019.pdf

The prevalence of IP-intensive trade underscores the importance of Free Trade Agreements and the WTO-administered TRIPS agreement to expand protections and harmonize enforcement of IP rights.¹² Rules-based trade that is focused on intellectual property is key to tackling counterfeiting and other illicit trade. The International Chamber of Commerce reports that counterfeiting and piracy result in over \$100 billion USD of excess costs and as many as 2.5 million lost jobs in the G20 countries alone.¹³

As calculated in the 2021 International Property Rights Index, stronger property rights protections in a particular country have a very strong correlation ($r^2 = 80.7$ percent) to lower levels of illicit trade in that country.¹⁴ Likewise, the International Trade Barrier Index finds a robust relationship between trade facilitation, including enforcement of FTAs, and combatting illicit trade.¹⁵

Counterfeit and illicit goods often carry higher levels of health risks and tax evasion, benefit criminal networks, and harm artists. Troublingly, a report from the EU Intellectual Property Office found that 60 percent of young people were not concerned if their online purchases were of fake products, while 12 percent intentionally bought counterfeit products online.¹⁶ Protecting intellectual property rights requires enforcement, focused measures in FTAs, and communicating their value to young people and the general public.¹⁷

IP Rights Promote Economic Growth.

Intellectual property protections are also important for promoting economic growth. The United States Patent and Trademark Office found that IP-intensive industries contribute \$7.8 trillion USD to the U.S. economy, or nearly 41 percent of total U.S. GDP.¹⁸ The U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Global Intellectual Property Center (GIPC) further reported that these innovative industries account for over 40 percent of U.S. economic growth.¹⁹

The role of robust IP protections is clearest when contrasting country scores and their World Bank income classification. According to the 2021 International Property Rights Index, high-income countries' scores were 33.5 percent stronger than the average score of upper-middle-income

12. https://ecipe.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/OP0122_ExecutiveSummary.pdf

13. <https://iccwbo.org/content/uploads/sites/3/2011/02/Intellectual-Property-Powerhouse-for-Innovation-and-Economic-Growth.pdf>

14. https://atr-ipri21.s3.amazonaws.com/IPRI_FullReport_v7.pdf

15. <https://www.tradebarrierindex.org/full-report>

16. https://euipo.europa.eu/tunnel-web/secure/webdav/guest/document_library/observatory/documents/IP_youth_scoreboard_study/IP_youth_scoreboard_study_en.pdf

17. <https://www.tradebarrierindex.org/full-report>

18. <https://www.uspto.gov/sites/default/files/documents/uspto-ip-us-economy-third-edition.pdf>

19. <https://www.theglobalipcenter.com/resources/why-is-ip-important/>

countries and 66.1 percent stronger than the average score of low-income countries.²⁰ This IP protection gap must be closed.

One key driver of economic growth in developing nations is the effect of intellectual property rights on foreign direct investment (FDI). Referring to the Park- Patent Index, the OECD found “a 1% increase in the strength of patent protection correlates to a 2.8% increase in FDI. A similar increase of trademark and copyright protections correlates to a 3.8% and a 6.8% increase in FDI, respectively.”²¹

WIPO Ensures the Protection of IP.

The World Intellectual Property Organization is a key institution in global discussions about intellectual property policies within and between nations. By providing services for patents, trademarks, and other forms of IP and providing a forum for arbitration and mediation of IP disputes, WIPO can effectively assist nations in forming ideal systems and laws of their own to facilitate strong protection of IP rights.

On this World Intellectual Property Day, we urge WIPO, along with other international organizations, national governments, and policymakers around the world, to continue to promote policies which strengthen intellectual property protections and ensure that a healthy innovation environment can thrive for today's youth and for generations to come.

Cc: António Guterres, UN Secretary-General; Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General, World Trade Organization (WTO); Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO)

Signed,

20. https://atr-ipri21.s3.amazonaws.com/IPRI_FullReport_v7.pdf

21. <https://iccwbo.org/content/uploads/sites/3/2011/02/Intellectual-Property-Powerhouse-for-Innovation-and-Economic-Growth.pdf>



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