

General Statement of Japan at the 57th Series of Meetings of the
Assemblies of the Member States of World Intellectual Property
Organization (WIPO) in 2017
Version as Delivered

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

On behalf of Japan, may I extend my gratitude for your dedicated work as the chair of the General Assembly, and also express my appreciation to Director General Francis Gurry and the Secretariat for all their work.

Let me take this opportunity to discuss the issues that new technologies have brought about and the posture we should adopt in tackling them so that we can open up a new era for the IP system.

Looking back at our history, three major events have shaped the IP system today. First, the Paris Convention introduced an international framework. Second, the international filing systems such as the PCT eliminated procedural duplication for both Offices and applicants.

Third, the TRIPS Agreement established high standards of IP protection.

Emerging technologies and changing social structures, at the same time, have spawned problems. For instance, IT advances have led to abuses of patent rights such as patent trolls and patent hold-ups in relation to standard essential patents, or SEPs.

Another example is the issue of trademark squatting. Simple e-filing systems combined with the more relaxed filing STLT requirements have opened the floodgates for bad-faith trademark applications that avoid paying fees.

Also, in an IoT era, everything will be connected to the Internet, exposing all industries to the risk of involvement in patent disputes. These and other problems have created some skepticism toward IP rights, but none are actually so fundamental as to shake the entire IP system, and nor is the advance of IT and emerging technologies in itself problematic. The importance of the IP system for rewarding and encouraging risk-taking innovators remains unchanged. Therefore,

we should solve these hitches one by one, and to prevent any further spread of anti-IP sentiment.

Once we overcome these obstacles and the IP system is ready to accommodate emerging technologies, the refortified IP system could be called “IP4.0” following the three eras marked by the Paris Convention, the PCT, and the TRIPS Agreement. Japan is committed to lead in our efforts for realizing IP4.0 in conjunction with WIPO and its member states.

Last but not least, with the Japan Funds-in-Trust celebrating its 30th anniversary this fiscal year, WIPO plans to mark the occasion by holding a high-level forum in Tokyo in February 2018. I hope to see you all again in Tokyo.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.