

Speech delivered by Mr. Yo Takagi
at the Fifth Global Congress, Cancun, Mexico

On behalf of the Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Mr. Francis Gurry, I wish to renew WIPO's support and commitment to the objectives of the Fifth Global Congress on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy. This is the Fifth Congress; since the first was held in Brussels on May 2004, WIPO has been working together with INTERPOL, WCO, and the private sector represented by ICC-BASCAP, INTA, and ISMA to strengthen our collaboration. We are delighted to see this unique public/private sector partnership strengthened over the last five years.

We are in the midst of a world economic downturn. We have received signs of recovery in a few countries but they are weak and uncertain with the jobless rate surging. The rest of the world has still been struggling with recession, despite huge public investment for economic stimulation. Lessons that we learned from our history is that it is only the enhancement of productivity that would allow us to get out of economic recession. It is only new ideas, technologies, innovation and creativity that would allow us to create new jobs.

In this century of knowledge-based economy, efforts have been made by a number of countries to transform from resources-based and commodities-based economies into knowledge-based economies with a solid value chain and mutual trust between consumers and suppliers of new products and services. The current recession has encouraged those countries to speed up their transformation.

It is in this climate and context that we are meeting here and see escalating trade in counterfeit and pirated goods which are spreading out to all corners of the world. We have to find better strategies, practical and realistic measures in combating piracy and counterfeiting. WIPO wishes to renew its firm commitment to this challenge and call for stronger collaboration. WIPO is pleased to continue to avail its expertise in intellectual property to you, as piracy and counterfeiting have become more sophisticated and complex.

I wish to take this opportunity to share with you some thoughts and recent evolution at WIPO.

From the perspectives of intellectual property, piracy and counterfeiting activities are threat to the integrity and proper function of socio-economic system for supporting innovation and creativity. An intellectual property system is an integral part of the socio-economic system. The impact of piracy and counterfeiting goes beyond the horizon of the protection and enforcement of IP rights. Pirated and counterfeiting products are putting sand in economic engines. They are damaging consumers trust in genuine goods, and relationships with suppliers. With rampant piracy and counterfeiting worldwide, trademark systems could no longer assure consumers' trust in the quality of goods. Copyright system could no longer help creators and musicians to produce new music and movies for holiday seasons.

The problem of counterfeiting and piracy was perceived as a rich-poor issue five years ago. It is no longer. It is a problem also in any developing country where the government tries to establish their infant industry to get out from the poverty line.

Recognizing the complexity and scale of the challenge, last year, WIPO's 184 member states adopted an inclusive, development-oriented approach to building respect for intellectual property.

This is for restoring the proper role of the IP system as an integral part of socio-economic and knowledge infrastructure to support efforts of innovators and creators in both developed and developing countries that are expected to make contribution to the society in particular in difficult times.

This new strategic orientation emphasizes the need for a balanced, realistic and effective strategy that should get sustained and broad respect for innovation and creativity intellectual property across the globe.

It embraces issues that support effective compliance as well as broader societal interests, consumer protection and development-oriented concerns. By taking a fresh look at this challenge from a broader, more holistic perspective, we believe it will be possible to give new impetus to promoting and sustaining greater respect for innovated ideas, creative activities and, in that context, greater respect for intellectual creation. The respect for intellectual property should then help curb the trade in counterfeit and pirated goods.

This strategic reorientation will enable us to improve understanding of the dynamics of the trade and its far-reaching impacts. It will further give a clearer assessment of what is being done, what needs to be done and how results can best be achieved in the future. We believe that such an approach will enable the international community to better calibrate its efforts and to use the available limited resources to best effect.

International cooperation is a prerequisite if we are to make progress in combating counterfeiting and piracy. The Fifth Global Congress offers an excellent forum for a rich exchange of experiences, views and ideas, about how to do more and how to do it more effectively with fewer resources. In the coming days, you will be addressing a range of important issues that, I am sure, will help to advance our shared goal to disrupt and curb this insidious trade and to restore widespread respect for creativity, trust and rules of other socio-economic system for our prosperity.

Last but not least, I wish to thank our partners, the host country, Mexico, and the Mexican Institute of Industrial Property (IMPI), for its generous and kind support for the Fifth Global Congress.

Thank you for your attention.