

Thank you, Madam Chair :

The Republic of Korea would like to congratulate you on your election as chair. We would also like to thank the Secretariat for the preparation of this General Assembly.

We especially express our appreciation to Director General Daren Tang for his excellent leadership as the WIPO Director General.

Madam Chair and distinguished delegates :

In wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and an acceleration of digital transformation, we now face unprecedented challenges for the global economy. Recently, we are hearing many economic specialists raise concerns about an upcoming economic crisis.

The Republic of Korea believes that innovation will be a driving force to overcome this crisis. As a motivator of innovation, IP will become increasingly important, and the international IP community must take on a more active role to improve the IP system.

Madam Chair and distinguished delegates:

The Republic of Korea has worked to better support the IP system.

First of all, we enhanced protection for the IP of digital products.

Over the past two years, we amended the Trademark Act and the Design Protection Act to stipulate unauthorized online transmission of digital goods with trademarks as infringement and to allow protection of digital graphic images on its own.

We also revised the Unfair Competition Prevention Act to prohibit the misappropriation of data and the misuse of portraits and names of famous persons.

In April 2021, we signed an MoU with INTERPOL to have joint investigations and to tackle cross-border copyright infringement cases caused by the advances of digital technology.

And, in order to address issues related to Metaverse and non-fungible tokens (NFTs), we established "a Copyright Council for Metaverse and NFTs" and published "A Guideline for NFTs and Copyright."

Secondly, the Republic of Korea upgraded its examination and trial services.

Specifically, we established separate patent examination guidelines to provide sufficient protection for emerging technologies, including intelligent robot, autonomous driving and 3D printing.

Additionally, an image search system utilizing AI technology was developed and introduced to trademark and design examination, which greatly reduces time and improves accuracy.

Madam Chair and distinguished delegates:

Despite the pandemic, the Republic of Korea has continued to actively encourage creativity and innovation.

In 2021, Korean applicants had the 4th largest amount of PCT applications worldwide as well as the highest growth rate at 3.2% among the top five countries.

Also, the Republic of Korea's advanced copyright system has laid a strong foundation for the Korean creative industry to flourish with contents like "Squid Game" and "Parasite" and for music artists such as BTS to secure a solid foothold in a global stage.

Accordingly, the 2021 WIPO's Global Innovation Index recognized the Republic of Korea as the 5th most innovative country.

Madam Chair and distinguished delegates:

The IP divide between countries can become wider in a post-pandemic and digital era. To mitigate this divide, we need strong international cooperation and solidarity of the IP community more than ever.

The Republic of Korea carried out various projects to share our experience and know-how through the WIPO Korea Funds-In-Trust which is the second largest amount of voluntary contribution among the Member States.

In particular, working with WIPO, we renewed and developed IP Panorama 2.0, a interactive toolkit of e-learning content for SMEs especially in developing countries, which will be launched tomorrow in the lobby of this building. Also, a pilot IP training course for women leaders will be established as an annual program starting this year.

Further, we have been supporting the WIPO Accessible Book Consortium since 2015 to facilitate access for visually impaired persons and extend accessibility of copyrighted materials.

We also worked to raise copyright awareness for young children through an educational animation series "Pororo, The Little Penguin" which has been translated into 9 languages to date.

Madam Chair and distinguished delegates:

The Republic of Korea reaffirms its commitment to solidarity with Member States for the development of the global IP system.

Thank you.