

# Global Registration Systems

Patent Cooperation Treaty registers record growth in 1998



*Deputy Director General François Curchod met with the Minister for Industry Sikander Bakht during the New Delhi seminar*

In addition to seeing the deposit by South Africa (on December 16\*) of the 100th instrument of accession to the PCT, 1998 also saw considerable growth in the use of the Treaty, with 67,007 international applications filed worldwide – an increase of 23.1% over 1997.

While applicants from the industrialized countries continue to be the main users of the PCT system, the statistics for 1998 show that inventors and industry in several

## India and the PCT

Following India's accession to the PCT in December 1998, an extensive training program was carried out in the country by WIPO staff members. The program included two training sessions on PCT procedures for 27 officials from the Patent Office in Calcutta and four national seminars on the PCT held in Calcutta, Chennai, New Delhi and Mumbai for a total of some 400 participants, including patent attorneys, patent examiners, scientists, and research scholars. WIPO Deputy Director General François Curchod participated in the New Delhi seminar, which was also attended by

the Minister of Industry of India Sikander Bakht. The response to the training program highlighted a huge demand for information on intellectual property, in general, and on the PCT, in particular. Many participants requested further seminars in other locations in the country.

The Indian government has approved a 25 million Swiss franc plan to modernize the national office, including the construction of a new building, the recruitment and training of 240 new examiners, and the computerization of operations (at present exami-

nation work is done manually as computers and EDP systems are not available).

On February 12, 1999, a high-level delegation from the Institute of Intellectual Property Development of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) visited WIPO headquarters. The delegation met with Deputy Directors General, Mr. Castelo, Mr. Curchod, and Mr. Uemura and visited PCT and trademarks operations. The 13-member delegation, headed by Dr. S. Narayan, Secretary, Ministry of Industry, consisted of senior representatives from the private sector.

developing countries and countries in transition (for example, Azerbaijan, Viet Nam, and Zimbabwe) began using the system for the first time, while others made greater use of it (in particular, Brazil, Cuba, Czech Republic, Hungary, Indonesia, Mexico, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan). Inventors and industry in the United States continued to be the biggest user of the PCT in 1998, with 42.3 % of all applications, followed by those of Germany (13.6%), Japan (9.1%), United Kingdom (6.5%) and France (5.0%).

WIPO Director General, Dr. Kamil Idris said "the PCT offers important possibilities to developing countries in establishing or developing their national patent systems in support of economic development". He encouraged all countries to "embrace the opportunities and advantages offered by the PCT" in their efforts to promote innovation and to attract

foreign investment through protection of intellectual property.

By filing only one international application with one Office, the PCT applicant can obtain the effect of regular national filings in any or all of the states bound by the PCT without initially having to furnish a translation of the application or pay national fees. The national patent granting procedure and the related high expenses are postponed, in the majority of cases, by up to 18 months (or even longer in the case of some Offices). The PCT system offers to patent applicants a user-friendly and cost efficient route for filing.

Recognizing the importance of the Internet as a means of communicating information to users and potential users of the PCT, WIPO uploaded numerous further PCT materials on the Internet, including the weekly publication of the PCT Gazette, of which Section I (Published

International Applications) is in fully searchable form.

In a continued effort to ensure automation of the PCT system, the International Bureau released the so-called PCT-EASY software on January 1, 1999. This enables applicants, through the use of more than 165 validation checks, to avoid making mistakes in preparing the request part of their international applications. In the future, the software will facilitate the handling of international applications by Offices.

In order to reduce the cost of filing international applications, the Assembly of the PCT Union decided in September 1998 to decrease the maximum number of designation fees payable with effect from January 1, 1999, from 11 to 10. It also decided to introduce a 200 Swiss franc reduction where applicants prepare, to the extent permitted, the request form using the PCT-EASY software.

## Mafalda

