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Team of Specialists on Intellectual Property

Second meeting
Geneva, 27 July 2007

REPORT OF THE TEAM OF SPECIALISTS
ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
ON ITS SECOND MEETING

Summary

At its annual meeting, the Team of Specialists on Intellectual Property: reviewed the work done since the first meeting and the work plan for the second half of 2007, including, the work done in other thematic areas (para. 3-7), the International Conference on Intellectual Property protection and transforming research and development outputs into intangible assets in economies in transition (para. 9), progress report on the comparative report on the commercialization of intellectual assets and synopsis of good practices of intellectual property commercialization, protection and enforcement (para. 10-12), cooperation with other international organisations, private sector and other stakeholders, and capacity building activities (para. 13-16), adopted its programme of work for 2008 (para. 26), and agreed on the date of its next meeting (para. 28).

The next Annual Meeting of the Team will be held in the week of 30 June – 4 July 2008.

CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. ATTENDANCE	1	3
II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 1)	2	3
III. REVIEW OF THE WORK DONE SINCE THE FIRST MEETING AND WORK PLAN FOR THE SECOND HALF OF 2007 (Agenda item 2)	3-16	3
A. Work done in other Thematic Areas	3-7	3
B. CECI Information Exchange Platform	8	4
C. International Conference on Intellectual Property Rights Protection and Transforming Research and development Outputs into intangible assets in Economies in Transition.....	9	4
D. Comparative Report on the Commercialization of Intellectual Assets and Synopsis of Good Practices and Good Policies of Intellectual Property Commercialization, Protection and Enforcement.....	10-12	4
E. Capacity-Building Activities, and Cooperation with other International Organizations, the Private Sector and other Stakeholders.....	13-16	5
IV. WORK PLAN FOR 2008 (Agenda item 3).....	17-26	6
V. OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 4)	27-28	7

I. ATTENDANCE

1. The Team held its annual meeting on 27 July 2006. Experts representing government agencies, academic institutions and the private sector from twenty-nine UNECE member States participated in the meeting. The meeting was also attended by the European Commission and by representatives of inter-governmental organisations active in the field of Intellectual Property Rights (World Intellectual Property Organization, World Trade Organization, European Patent Office).

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 1)

2. The Chairman of the Team, Mr. Slobodan Markovic, chaired agenda items 1, 2 and 4, while Mr. John Anderson, one of the vice-Chairpersons, chaired agenda item 3. The Team adopted its agenda after making slight modifications to the provisional agenda dated 22 May 2007 (ECE/CECI/IP/2007/1) as to the order in which items were to be discussed.

III. REVIEW OF THE WORK DONE SINCE THE FIRST MEETING AND WORK PLAN FOR THE SECOND HALF OF 2007 (Agenda item 2)

A. Work done in other Thematic Areas

3. The Chairman gave the floor to the Secretariat to brief the Team on work done in 2007 in other focus areas under the UNECE Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration (CECI). The Secretariat explained that there were many important issues which, while having a clear intellectual property (IP) dimension, cut across several of the focus areas within CECI. It is therefore important for Team members to be aware of what was going on in the other focus areas in order to best exploit available synergies.

4. The UNECE Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies had held its inaugural annual meeting in March 2007 and was in the process of completing a Comparative Review on “Creating a conducive environment for higher competitiveness and effective national innovation systems - Lessons learned from the experiences of UNECE countries”.

5. In the other three focus areas, that is, “Promoting an enabling environment for entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) development”, “Promoting an enabling environment for efficient financial intermediation in support of innovative development”, and “Promoting best practice in efficient public-private partnerships”, expert networks had been formed and inaugural conferences had been held in May and June 2007.

6. The Secretariat thanked in particular the government of Israel for co-hosting the international conference on “Knowledge sharing and Capacity-Building on Promoting Successful Public-Private Partnerships in the UNECE region”. A guidebook to “Promoting Good Governance in Public Private Partnerships” had also been produced in this focus area.

7. In the focus area “Promoting an enabling environment for entrepreneurship and SME development”, a set of policy recommendations had been developed under the title “Reducing Barriers to Entrepreneurship and Encouraging Enterprise Development: Policy Options”. In the focus area “Promoting an enabling environment for efficient financial intermediation in support of innovative development”, the first draft of a Comparative Review on “Financial Intermediation Supporting Knowledge-driven Development and National Practices Facilitating Access of Innovative Entrepreneurs to Domestic and Foreign Finance” was being reviewed.

B. CECI Information Exchange Platform

8. The Secretariat introduced Team members to the CECI Information Exchange Platform. The Secretariat explained that this was an online interactive tool for virtual collaboration among members of CECI teams of specialists and expert networks in-between physical meetings. Team members who did not already have access would be given access immediately after the meeting. The Secretariat then gave a demonstration of the main features of the Platform and encouraged Team members to make active use of it to contribute information material, to peer-review draft documents, and to exchange information on capacity building needs and offers.

C. International Conference on Intellectual Property Rights Protection and Transforming Research and Development Outputs into Intangible Assets in Economies in Transition

9. The Chairman gave the floor to Professor Ludmila Sterbova, Prague University of Economics, who had chaired the “International Conference on intellectual property rights (IPRs) protection and transforming research and development outputs into intangible assets in economies in transition” on 25-26 July 2007. Professor Sterbova gave a brief summary statement, referring to the written collection of moderators’ reports available in the room (see document ECE/CECI/IP/CONF.1/2007/2).

D. Comparative Report on the Commercialization of Intellectual Assets and Synopsis of Good Practices and Good Policies of Intellectual Property Commercialization, Protection and Enforcement

10. The Secretariat introduced the agenda item “Progress made in the preparation of the documents mandated in the Team’s Terms of Reference and the CECI Programme of Work”. The original, ambitious time table to have first drafts of the mandated Comparative Report and Synopsis of Good Practices ready before the Team meeting had been delayed somewhat. The Secretariat expressed its gratitude that in the days leading up to the Team meeting, an increasing number of pertinent materials had been submitted by Team members, among others from Estonia, Bulgaria, Moldova, Slovenia, Russia, UK, Ukraine, and Turkey. These contributions were uploaded on the CECI Information Exchange Platform and would be incorporated in the drafts of the Comparative Report and Good Practices.

11. The Secretariat encouraged Team members to contribute further information materials pertaining to the topics to be covered by these documents. The first draft, once completed, would be circulated to Team members, as well as to the Secretariat's broader network of experts, for a constructive peer review. Based on this peer review, which would take place via e-mail and via the CECI Information Exchange Platform, the Secretariat would prepare a final draft of both the Comparative Report and the Good Practices, the latter for consideration by CECI at its 2007 Annual Session in December.

12. After these introductory remarks, Professor Gail Evans of Queen Mary University (London), the Secretariat's consultant working on the two draft documents, gave two presentations. The first presentation summarized the progress made on chapters four and five of the Comparative Report, dealing with Technology Transfer between Public Research Organizations and Business, and IP Strategies for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, respectively. The second presentation summarized progress made on chapter six of the Report, on IP Valuation, Accounting and Audits.

E. Capacity-Building Activities, and Cooperation with other International Organizations, the Private Sector and other Stakeholders

13. The Chairman gave the floor to the Secretariat to brief Team members on capacity building activities planned and under preparation in the remainder of 2007, and relations with other international organizations, the private sector and other stakeholders. The Secretariat informed the Team that preparations were under way for sub-regional capacity building activities in the latter half of 2007 in cooperation with the governments of Belarus (on enforcement issues) and Ukraine (on technology transfer issues), as well as with several international organizations, including World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO,) and the private sector (on using IP to raise financing for innovative enterprises).

14. The Team was cooperating with the UNECE expert network on Financing Innovative Development on one of these capacity building events, demonstrating the synergies between different thematic areas within CECI.

15. The secretary of the UNECE Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6), one of UNECE subsidiary bodies, invited the Team to take part in an international capacity-building seminar on product safety and counterfeits to be held on 5-6 November 2007 in Geneva, thereby demonstrating synergies between CECI and other inter-governmental committees within UNECE.

16. The Secretariat explained that no extra-budgetary resources were available for capacity building in 2007, but that some regular-budget resources and in-kind contributions (such as logistical support) would be used, and that some members of the Team had agreed to have experts from their organizations participate on a bona fide basis.

IV. WORK PLAN FOR 2008 (Agenda item 3)

17. The CECI Programme of Work¹ calls for the following activities to be carried out in the field of Intellectual Property in 2008:

- (a) Based on 2007 work, Guidebook on commercialization strategies for IP products in the UNECE member countries;
- (b) Ongoing exchange of experience gained on IPR protection and commercialisation possibly through interactive seminars in the UNECE member States or regional events;
- (c) Specific targeted seminars on request in identified areas of need for the UNECE countries with economies in transition;
- (d) Capacity-building activities based on specific requests of the UNECE member States.

18. The Chairman briefly introduced the programme of work for 2008, and asked the Secretariat to elaborate further.

19. The Secretariat referred to the discussions held on the Programme of Work at the level of CECI in 2006 and explained that the “Guidebook on IP Commercialization Strategies” will provide a “bridge” between the work done in 2007 (Comparative Report and Synopsis of Good Practices) and the expanded capacity building activities mandated for 2008 and beyond in the area of IP commercialization.

20. Referring to the Guidebook, the Secretariat pointed out that this was intended to offer guidelines at a more strategic, and less country-specific level. These guidelines may help policy makers in member States to ensure they get the maximum benefit out of the more specific capacity building activities by presenting a strategic framework in which to think about priorities and options for improving the environment for IP commercialization. The Secretariat informed the Team that it would hire a consultant to draft this Guidebook. The expertise of this consultant would be on the side of organizing the available substantive material in a way suitable for a “How-to Guidebook”. Once a draft is ready, Team members would be called upon to give their feedback, possibly based on “testing” the Guidebook on some potential users. Based on this feedback, a final version of the guidebook would be prepared and translated.

21. On capacity building activities, the Secretariat stated that in 2008, it will further develop capacity building activities based on lessons learned in 2007 and based on the Comparative Report and Synopsis of Good Practices to be finalized in 2007. The Secretariat pointed out that these activities should be undertaken at a regional or sub-regional level, and would typically be focused on addressing very concrete practical issues. The Secretariat also informed that it was in discussions with some governments and inter-governmental organisations to mount capacity building activities in 2008, and although it will devote a more significant part of its regular-budgetary allocations to capacity building activities, it was in the process of raising extra-budgetary funding to significantly expand the resources that the Secretariat will have available in 2008 for these activities.

¹ ECE/CECI/2006/6 Annex II Thematic Area D

22. In the ensuing discussion, participants supported both the content and the direction of the programme of work for 2008 as introduced by the Chair and elaborated by the Secretariat.
23. Participants agreed that capacity building activities should be undertaken at a regional or sub-regional level, and that these activities should be demand driven.
24. Participants also agreed that the guidebook should serve as a useful tool for practitioners. One participant pointed out that the guidebook should serve as a curriculum to ensure that all aspects of IP, including its enforcement, were reflected. The same participant asked the Secretariat to make sure that capacity building activities were not put on hold during the production of the guidebook. Another participant highlighted the fact that the guidebook should serve as a very useful tool for future capacity building activities. The representative of WIPO offered to explore the possibility of WIPO's assistance towards translation and dissemination costs.
25. Subsequently, Team members from Albania, Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkey presented their IP strategies, including their future plans, ranging from amending existing legislation to take into account the new challenges faced by right holders, to awareness raising campaigns aimed at both the private sector and the public at large. Most of these country briefs, as well as similar briefs by Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were also made available to the Team in writing.
26. The Team adopted its programme of work for 2008.

V. OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 4)

27. Participants agreed that the Secretariat prepare the meeting's report no later than 10 days following the meeting and that it be reviewed and adopted by the Chairman and Vice-Chairperson on behalf of the Team.
28. The Team also agreed to hold its next meeting in Geneva in the week of 30 June – 4 July 2008.