



International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

Geneva, August 9, 2017

**Francis Gurry, Director General
World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)**

It is with deep appreciation and respect that the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) joins today in celebrating the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, and the tenth Anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ("the Declaration").

Since its adoption, the Declaration, and its Article 31 in particular, which refers to the right of Indigenous Peoples to "maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions", has resonated profoundly throughout WIPO's program of work in support of Indigenous Peoples.

Appropriate intellectual property-related tools, both existing or to be developed, may importantly contribute to empowering Indigenous Peoples by helping them to promote and protect their traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions from misappropriation by third parties, and benefit from their commercial exploitation, if they so wish.

WIPO's new publication - *Protect and Promote Your Culture. A Practical Guide to Intellectual Property for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities* - that was launched on June 16, 2017, describes in detail the range of intellectual property tools that are available to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities to promote and protect their traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, primarily and ultimately as an embodiment of their cultural identity and as a rich foundation of their well-being and social cohesion.

This publication is the newest addition to WIPO's on-going program of work in support of Indigenous Peoples, which also includes multi-stakeholder practical workshops, distance learning courses, trainings, an indigenous fellowship, two scholarships for 2018 and 2019, and the dissemination of briefs, studies and toolkits. Updated details are made available on the WIPO's Indigenous web portal at <http://www.wipo.int/tk/en/indigenous/>.

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In parallel, WIPO facilitates the development of an intellectual property-related legal instrument or instruments that will ensure the balanced and effective protection of genetic resources, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions at the international level through negotiations taking place within the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (the IGC).

Within the set of international agreements which relate to the issues at hand, the Declaration stands as a reference in the working documentation of the IGC as well as in the draft texts on the protection of traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, and is regularly advocated for in the IGC negotiations.

Indigenous Peoples are key stakeholders in these negotiations and are potential beneficiaries of any future instrument. In line with Article 18 of the Declaration, various modalities have been established to facilitate and enhance their participation as observers in this process. In this regard, WIPO was pleased earlier this year to announce that the WIPO Voluntary Fund, which grants financial means in support of such participation, had been replenished by Australia. WIPO strongly encourages further donations to be made to the WIPO Voluntary Fund.

WIPO aims to make sure that the development of a balanced and effective international intellectual property system takes place for the benefit of all, including Indigenous Peoples.

In so doing, WIPO looks forward to continue collaborating fruitfully with Indigenous Peoples in support of their specific interests and well-being, and further contributing, within its own mandate, to the implementation of the rights enshrined in the Declaration.

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