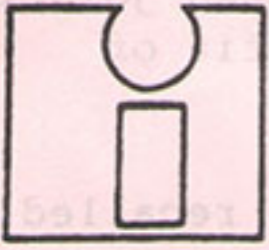


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**INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF
INVENTOR'S ASSOCIATIONS
(IFIA)**



**WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
ORGANIZATION
(WIPO)**

**INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
ON
SUPPORT TO INVENTORS**

jointly organized by

the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

and

the International Federation of Inventors' Associations (IFIA)

Geneva, March 30 to April 3, 1992

REPORT ON THE SYMPOSIUM

prepared by the International Bureau

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1. An International Symposium on "Support to Inventors" organized jointly by the World Intellectual Property Organizations (WIPO) and the International Federation of Inventors' Associations (IFIA) was held in Geneva from March 30 to April 3, 1992. This Symposium was the fifth Conference organized jointly by WIPO and IFIA in the framework of the cooperation for the benefit of inventors.

2. The Director General of WIPO addressed the participants. He recalled the traditional close contacts between WIPO and IFIA and congratulated IFIA and its President on the considerable increase in membership over the last year. He underlined the need for IFIA to widen its membership base in attracting collaborating members such as innovation centers. Such membership would be beneficial to all members of IFIA. He also drew the attention of the participants to the ongoing efforts toward the harmonization of national industrial property laws and to the growing response to the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) which renders patent protection abroad simpler and cheaper. Furthermore, the Director General assured the participants of the continued cooperation and assistance of WIPO to IFIA.

3. There were 91 participants from the following 41 countries, two intergovernmental organizations and one non-governmental organization: Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, China, Colombia, Congo, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Libya, Malaysia, Mali, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Senegal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Spain, Tunisia, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI), the European Patent Office (EPO) and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC).*

4. The participants were representatives of governments and industrial property offices, representatives of inventors' associations or inventors, representatives of innovation centers, universities and entrepreneurs.

5. The Symposium was opened by Mr. Shahid Alikhan, Deputy Director General of WIPO and Mr. Farag Moussa, President of IFIA.

6. At the opening ceremony, Mr. Shahid Alikhan presented a WIPO gold medal, for outstanding service to inventors, to Mr. Norman C. Parrish, founding member and President of the National Congress of Inventor Organizations (NCIO) of the United States of America for his outstanding contribution to the promotion of inventive and innovative activity, for services rendered to inventors in the United States of America and for promoting international cooperation among inventors and inventors' associations.

7. The Symposium examined two main topics, namely:

Topic I: Role of Industrial Property Offices in Support of Inventors; and

Topic II: Role of Innovation Centers and Universities in Support of Inventors.

Furthermore, WIPO and IFIA presented information papers on some of their activities in support of inventors.

* The list of participants is given in Annex I.

8. The discussion took place on the basis of eight main documents presented by five invited experts from Denmark, Finland, Singapore, the United States of America, as well as by IFIA and WIPO. Furthermore, several participants presented additional papers which were distributed at the discussion sessions. A list of the documents and of the discussion papers presented in the meeting is attached in Annex II.

9. The discussions on Topic I were moderated by Mr. Farag Moussa (President, IFIA) and the two main papers were presented by Mr. Martti Enäjärvi (Director General, National Board of Patents and Registration of Finland) and Mr. Alan L. Edwards (Member of the Board of NCIO, USA).

10. In the discussions on Topic I the participants emphasized the very important role of the industrial property offices in the encouragement of inventive activity and the innovation process and as the natural partners of inventors and associations of inventors. Today industrial property offices are governmental service institutions and many of them widen and improve the services they offer to the public, including to inventors, namely:

- improvement and strengthening of the administrative procedures and thus facilitating access to protection for inventions,
- increasing international cooperation to facilitate protection of inventions in foreign countries,
- providing access to information contained in patent documents,
- legal advisory services, related to industrial property laws and regulations,
- organizing and participating in campaigns to improve the public awareness of the importance and role of inventive and innovative activity and upgrading the image of the inventor, including offering awards and prizes for inventive activity,
- providing direct or indirect assistance (including financial) to associations of inventors.

11. Several participants expressed the opinion that fees collected by industrial property offices were often too high and thus discouraged many independent inventors from obtaining protection for their inventions. The fee schedules should be better adapted for the development of inventions.

12. With a view to improving services for their members, inventors' associations should be more active in developing the dialogue and contacts with industrial property offices, but also with the patent agents. The participants commended IFIA for its initiative to study the relations between inventors' associations and industrial property offices and encouraged IFIA to continue and complete the study and to make the results available to associations of inventors and industrial property offices.

13. The discussions on Topic II were moderated by Mr. Csaba Szantay (President, Association of Hungarian Inventors) and Mr. Vladimir Yossifov (WIPO) and the three main papers were presented by Mr. Chrys Mendis (Director, Innovation Center, National University of Singapore), Mr. Peter Cordsen (Project Manager, Danish Innovation Centre) and Mr. Wayne Watkins (Director, Office of Technology Commercialization, Utah State University). In addition, Mr. Gordon F. Cummer (Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Industrial Innovation Centre) and Prof. P.S. Sangal (Professor and Dean of Faculty of Law, Delhi University) presented the experiences respectively, of the Canadian Industrial Innovation Centre and in India.

14. In the discussions on Topic II the participants recognized the ever increasing importance of universities and innovation centers in the invention and innovation process and their role as natural allies of associations of inventors. It was felt that the universities and their innovation centers are excellent sources of knowledge, expertise, specialized information and actual inventions. The research laboratories in various universities often provide excellent resources and access for testing equipment, as well as experience in the transfer of know-how and technology. Innovation centers can, in general, be very useful to associations of inventors and also to inventors in several fields, namely:

- evaluation (technical and commercial) of inventions and innovative projects,
- guidance, training and education of members of associations of inventors,
- information (technological, business, commercial),
- building up of awareness of decision makers and the public in general.

15. Although in many cases university innovation centers have to treat with priority, inventions stemming from their own university or founding institution, they are open to assist and promote inventions proposed from outside.

16. Participants felt that associations of inventors should establish close working relations with innovation centers either in their own or in other countries and support the creation of national and international network links between such centers and associations. Special emphasis was given to the specific needs and conditions of developing countries, and in this respect to the possibility of closer bilateral relations with existing innovation centers.

17. It was felt that associations of inventors should use the contacts with innovation centers and with industry to actively identify existing demand for new products and for solutions based on the latest technologies.

18. Following the presentation by Mr. Farag Moussa, President of IFIA, of its pilot project of twinning between associations of inventors, many participants expressed their full support for the project and some of them expressed the wish also to enter into such agreements.

19. During the discussions after the presentation by Mr. Cordell Lundahl on the IFIA-NCIO commercialization program, the participants found this project very timely and useful and several participants made suggestions concerning the practical application of the program including inter alia the question of language of communication.

20. The participants appreciated the information of WIPO on its activities in support of inventors and inventors' associations, including the WIPO gold medal program. They also emphasized the importance and the quality of WIPO's activities in the field of the promotion of innovation, particularly in respect of developing countries.

21. The participants expressed their gratitude to all the speakers and moderators for their excellent contributions that enabled a broad exchange of information and experience among the participants.

22. The participants expressed their satisfaction to WIPO and IFIA for the excellent preparations and organization of the meeting, which ensured the successful progress of the debates.

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23. Also during the period of the Symposium, the International Federation of Inventors' Associations (IFIA) held its General Assembly.

24. The participants were invited by the organizers to attend the opening ceremony of the 20th Geneva International Exhibition of Inventions, New Techniques and Products at the Palais des Expositions, Geneva.

[Annex I follows]