



Protecting traditional knowledge among key themes of UN official's visit to India



Francis Gurry, Director General of WIPO

13 November 2009 – The head of the United Nations World Intellectual Property Organization (**WIPO**) today wrapped up a five-day visit to India, during which a major focus of discussions was protecting traditional knowledge, genetic resources and folklore.

Director General Francis Gurry lauded India as a “pioneer” in dealing with questions related to these three issues, according to a **news release** issued by the Geneva-based agency.

In particular, he highlighted the publicly available Traditional Knowledge Digital Library, which contains a vast database of thousands of formulations in patent search compatible formats in various languages.

The importance of advancing international discussions on the protection of traditional knowledge, genetic resources, traditional cultural expressions and folklore was also the focus of a one-day international conference held today in the Indian capital, New Delhi.

In his opening remarks to the meeting, Mr. Gurry applauded India's achievements in establishing frameworks to protect its ancient traditional knowledge systems, such as the “Indian Systems of Medicine” initiative which covers traditional healthcare systems and medicine. He also noted the enactment of legislation to protect traditional knowledge and genetic resources.

WIPO has been addressing these issues through its Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore, set up in late 2000.

Intellectual property rights allow the creators – or owners of patents, trademarks or copyrighted works – to benefit from their own work or investment in a creation.

These rights are outlined in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which provides for the right to benefit from the protection of moral and material interests resulting from authorship of any scientific, literary or artistic work.

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