



With breaking stories and  
newswire products from

**UN NEWS CENTRE**



## **Efforts to protect intellectual property in digital age make progress, UN reports**



26 September 2011 –

The United Nations agency entrusted with defending intellectual property such as trademarks, patents and copyrights opened its annual meeting today reporting progress on issues ranging from audiovisual performances to protecting the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples.

“The atmosphere amongst Member States has greatly improved,” UN World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Director General Francis Gurry [told](#) the [opening session](#) in Geneva. “Delegations are very constructively engaged in looking for solutions. I would like to thank all Member States for the extraordinary engagement that has made this possible.”

He noted that the international intellectual property (IP) community faces three major challenges in coming years – management of demand of IP applications, the migration of all cultural content to the Internet, and enhancing the capacity of least developed and developing countries to use the IP system for encouraging innovation and creativity.

WIPO’s top copyright negotiating body is set to call for the resumption of a conference on protecting audiovisual performances after agreement was reached in June to provide a clearer legal basis for the international use of audiovisual works, both in traditional media and in digital networks.

Such an instrument would help safeguard the rights of performers such as singers, musicians, dancers and actors against the unauthorized use of their performances in audiovisual media such as television, film and video. Previous accords grant protection mainly in relation to sound recordings of performances.

Mr. Gurry also reported great progress in the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC), which is proposing steps to ensure that those accessing genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge comply with specific conditions for access, use and benefit-sharing under national law.

At an IGC meeting in June indigenous representatives delivered a joint statement identifying their substantive expectations and calling for their more effective participation in all negotiations and decision-making processes.

Tonight WIPO [inaugurated](#) its new administration building, the work of award-winning Behnisch Architekten of Stuttgart, Germany, with Barbara Hendricks, one of the world's leading opera singers and a best-selling recording artist, performing Manuel de Falla's *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas*, accompanied by internationally renowned pianist Love Derwinger.

“This is a special occasion in the history of our organization and we are honoured that it is distinguished by the presence of such an inspirational representative of the international artistic community, and one, moreover, who has demonstrated a tireless, life-long commitment to promoting development through the arts,” Mr. Gurry told some 900 guests at the inauguration.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[Global trademark and patent registrations rebound, UN reports](#)