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## Patents issued under UN innovations registration system hit two million mark



14 April 2011 – The number of multiple States patents issued under a United Nations-backed treaty on intellectual property has hit the two million mark since the international innovations registration system was launched in 1978, the UN reported today.

An application by the United States-based mobile technology company Qualcomm<sup>2</sup> has become the two millionth one under the UN World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO) Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), which makes it easier for companies and inventors to seek patent rights in multiple countries.

A single international patent application under the PCT has legal effect in all 142 countries bound by the treaty. PCT applicants receive valuable information about the potential patentability of their inventions and have more time than under the traditional patent system to decide in which of the PCT countries to continue pursuing patent protection.

The PCT system consolidates and streamlines patenting procedures, postponing the payment of sizeable costs and providing applicants with a sound basis for important decision-making.

“Rapidly growing use of the PCT over the past six years – the time it took to go from one to two million international patent applications – reflects continuously increasing investments in innovation and the growing importance of protecting innovation outputs in international markets,” said Francis Gurry, the WIPO Director-General.

It took 26 years to receive the first one million PCT applications, he said adding that “significant growth in PCT membership has increased the attractiveness of the system and thereby contributed to healthy filing growth.”

Paul E. Jacobs, chairman and chief executive officer of Qualcomm, congratulated WIPO on this historic milestone. “Our growth and success as a company would not have been possible without the strong protection of our inventions around the world. We look forward to contributing to the next million applications.”

Until a few years ago, the largest users of the PCT system originated mostly in the United States or Europe, but there have been a significant change in the geography of innovation with East Asia emerging as the region that currently accounts for the largest number of international patent applications.

Last year, the use of the PCT increased by over 56 per cent in China, now the fourth largest country of origin of PCT applications in the world, while it rose by 20.5 per cent in the Republic of Korea and almost 8 per cent in Japan.

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