

Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP)

Thirty-Second Session
Geneva, April 29 to May 3, 2024

REPORT ON THE SHARING SESSIONS ON WOMEN AND IP

prepared by the Secretariat

1. The Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP), at its twenty-second session, approved a proposal presented by the delegation of Mexico on “Women and Intellectual Property (IP)” contained in document CDIP/22/16 Rev.2. The decision, *inter alia*, requested the Secretariat to facilitate discussions that addressed various aspects of the proposal through a sharing session. A factual report of the first three sharing sessions was presented to the twenty-eighth CDIP session (document CDIP/28/8).
 2. At its twenty-sixth session, while discussing the topic “Women and IP” under the agenda item on “IP and Development”, the Committee approved the Follow-up Proposal by Mexico on “Women and IP” contained in document CDIP/26/10 Rev. The mentioned Proposal, *inter alia*, requested the Secretariat to continue the organization of sharing sessions.
 3. This report presents a summary of the main elements of the two sharing sessions on Women and IP organized during the years 2022 and 2023, for information of the Committee.
- #### **I. ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS**
4. During the reporting period, the Secretariat organized two thematic sharing sessions, offering a comprehensive view of the challenges and opportunities related to the gender gap in IP in the selected sectors, specifically:

- (i) Women and Tourism, held on November 15, 2022; and
- (ii) Women in the Creative Industries, held on October 12, 2023.

5. The objectives of the sharing sessions were to:

- bring together women experts from various regions to share their professional experiences in the selected sectors, highlighting what the role of IP was along the way;
- discuss how IP can boost women's participation in and contribution to the selected sector, serving as a source of inspiration for other women; and
- promote the results of WIPO's work in this area.

6. The sessions were organized in a hybrid format, with Geneva-based moderators participating from WIPO premises, speakers and participants connecting online. Such an approach allowed for the participation of a wide number of interested actors across different regions. The sessions were open to participation by Member State representatives, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academics, private sector entities, and civil society. Simultaneous interpretation was available in English, French, and Spanish.

II. STRUCTURE OF DISCUSSIONS

7. Each session was moderated by a Geneva-based Ambassador, who guided both the panel discussions and the Questions and Answers (Q&A) session. Overall, eight different speakers contributed to the sharing sessions. They were selected to represent different geographical regions and organizations within the IP community: governmental organizations, academia, private sector, IGOs, and NGOs. The opening and closing remarks were delivered by Senior WIPO officials.

III. PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATION

8. The Secretariat sent invitation emails to the WIPO Group Coordinators, Permanent Missions in Geneva, Ministries of Foreign Affairs, IP Offices, and IGOs and NGOs accredited with WIPO. In addition, the sessions were promoted amongst a wide audience using different means, such as newsletters, mailing lists, and social media.

9. After each sharing session, a short summary was published on WIPO's webpage devoted to Intellectual Property, Gender, and Diversity, together with the power-point presentations made by the Speakers. The sessions were recorded and made available *via* the WIPO [webcast](#).

IV. OVERVIEW OF THE SESSIONS

A. [CLOSING THE GENDER GAP IN IP – WOMEN AND TOURISM](#)

10. The first sharing session took place on November 15, 2022, from 12.30 p.m. to 2.30 p.m., Central European Time (CET). The session featured women experts and entrepreneurs from Armenia, Egypt, Grenada, and Portugal, who shared diverse and inspirational experiences in the tourism sector. Specifically, through practical examples from local handicraft production and wine tourism through to astrotourism and agritourism, the speakers highlighted how trademarks, industrial designs and copyrights can be used to support the growth of tourism-related businesses and to encourage women's participation in

and contribution to the sector. The session brought together some 300 participants¹ from 110 countries.

11. The session was opened by Mr. Irfan Baloch, Director, Development Agenda Coordination Division of WIPO, and moderated by Her Excellency Le Thi Tuyet Mai, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva. The program of the session and the presentations of the speakers are available on the WIPO [webpage](#) dedicated to this session.

12. Below are some highlights of the presentations made by the speakers:

13. Ms. [May M. Hassan](#), founder of IPMentor Initiative, IP attorney and trainer, introduced several national initiatives aiming to promote women empowerment in Egypt, including the launch of the [National Strategy for the Empowerment of Women](#) and of the [National IP Strategy](#). She also presented the IPMentor Initiative that through various activities, such as awareness-raising videos, pro bono mentorship sessions and interactive games, supported women and youth to use IP effectively. In conclusion, Ms. Hassan presented successful stories of women using trademarks and industrial designs to promote their tourism-related businesses in Egypt, identified during the field study in the framework of the WIPO Development Agenda project on "[Intellectual Property, Tourism and Culture](#)".

14. The presentations of Ms. [Mary Badalyan](#), co-founder and a chief executive officer of EventToura, focused on the brand of the "Yerevan Wine Days" festival and the role of trademark registration for small and medium-sized enterprises. Ms. Badalyan presented a case where as a trademark owner with prior rights, she prevented a registration of confusingly similar trademark by a major restaurant chain in Armenia. She also highlighted the importance of forging consumer-brand relationships through merchandise offerings and innovative merchandising strategies. In the end, Ms. Badalyan touched upon the opportunities and challenges of IP ownership in the metaverse.

15. Ms. [Apolónia Rodrigues](#), president of the Dark Sky Association, and president of the Rede de Turismo de Aldeia do Alentejo, elaborated on the role of IP in promoting and branding a tourism destination. In particular, Ms. Rodrigues shared some lessons learned based on her experience in creating the first starlight tourism destination in the world: i) a registered trademark is an asset and its protection is an ongoing process; ii) trademark usage guidelines for employees and partners should be developed and put in place in order to protect the brand; iii) the more successful the brand is, the harder it is to protect. Understanding IP rights and staying vigilant by monitoring for potential trademark infringement is crucial.

16. Ms. [Valma Jessamy](#), owner and resident scientist of Jessamine Eden Wellness Farm, as well as a chief executive officer and principal research scientist of 17th/21st Century Cures Ltd., presented her agro-ecotourism venture built around an award winning and trademarked medical honey. The Farm acts as a wellness sanctuary for tourists visiting Grenada and offers a wide range of honey-derived products, including patented antiviral wellness products. Building on this success, Ms. Jessamy also obtained trademarks for several festivals related to agro-products and the Farm, which were used as part of the official tourism calendar in Grenada.

17. Presentations of the panelists were followed by a lively Q&A session, addressing questions from the audience. The event was concluded by closing remarks delivered by

¹ This figure indicates the number of participants who joined the session via the platform. In addition, a wide number of participants followed the sessions via the live webcasting.

Mr. Benjamin Owen, Senior Project Specialist, Ethics, Culture and Social Responsibility Department, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Mr. Owen reiterated the timeliness of the topic and stated that as the sector rebounds after the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to reflect on its future direction to rebuild it in a more sustainable and inclusive manner. He also highlighted the role of IP rights in adding value to tourism-related products and services owned by women.

B. CLOSING THE GENDER GAP IN IP – WOMEN IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

18. The second session took place on October 12, 2023, from 12.30 p.m. to 2.30 p.m., Central European Summer Time (CEST). Through practical examples from the fields of cartoons, filmmaking, authorship, and technology, women panelists from Pakistan, Kenya, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Hungary shared their professional experiences in the creative industries, highlighting what the role of IP was along the way. The session brought together some 180 participants² from more than 100 countries.

19. The session was opened by Ms. Sylvie Forbin, Deputy Director General, Copyright and Creative Industries Sector of WIPO, and moderated by Her Excellency Francisca Elizabeth Méndez Escobar, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva. The program of the session and the presentations of the speakers are available on the WIPO [webpage](#) dedicated to this session.

20. Below are some highlights of the presentations made by the Speakers:

21. Ms. [Nigar Nazar](#), chief executive officer of Gogi Studios, painter and editorial cartoonist, spoke about the power of art for social change. She shared her experience in using her character of Gogi in Puppet form to address traumatized children, cancer patients and earthquake survivors. Ms. Nazar also elaborated on the importance of copyright protection and highlighted that it is a tool to ensure that creators receive proper compensation for their work.

22. Ms. [Angela Oduor Lungati](#), executive director at Ushahidi, as well as co-founder of AkiraChix, presented the work of the Ushahidi platform and shared practical examples from various part of the world of how it helped communities affected by conflict, natural disasters, humanitarian challenges, and discrimination to quickly collect and share information. She mentioned that as an open-source software, Ushahidi promoted a free exchange of ideas within a community and allowed to analyze the data and provide rapid emergency relief.

23. Ms. [Jihan Williams](#), poet and author, Registrar of the IP Office of Saint Kitts and Nevis, shared her experience of self-publishing the book entitled “Lifting the Weight of Miscarriage: Healing Insights on Pregnancy Loss for Sufferers and the People Around Us”. She emphasized the necessity of copyright protection for authors and listed some IP lessons learned along the way: i) learn the rules about incorporating other’s work into yours (permission and/or sufficient acknowledgement); ii) be clear on ownership when you collaborate or commission work (e.g. logos, artwork, photography, etc.); iii) learn your rights when others use your work; and iv) keep records of your work as you create.

24. The presentation of Ms. Orsi Nagypal, writer and film director, focused on the importance of empowering women and promoting women’s perspectives through storytelling in the film industry. She also touched upon collection of copyrights that related to different elements of film production, such as a screenplay, music, directing talent and actors’ performances. Each

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of those rights needed to be properly transferred, assigned, and documented for the producer to be able to claim ownership of the film and license distribution rights.

25. The session concluded with a Q&A session, and some closing remarks delivered by Ms. Kristine Schlegelmilch, Senior Advisor on IP and Gender, Office of the Deputy Director General of the Patents and Technology Sector of WIPO. Ms. Schlegelmilch mentioned the role of creative industries in driving positive change and inclusivity, while highlighting persistent challenges, such as lower wages and underrepresentation of women in leadership roles. She highlighted WIPO's commitment to addressing this gap and promoting and encouraging women's participation in the IP system through the [IP and Gender Action Plan](#).

V. CONCLUSION

26. Overall, the sharing sessions succeeded in raising awareness about the gender gap in IP in the two selected sectors of tourism and creative industries, and showcased practical examples of how IP can boost women's participation in and contribution to those sectors. The level of engagement of the audience, and the positive feedback received from Member States, speakers, moderators, WIPO staff, and participants reaffirmed this view.

27. The Committee is invited to take note of the information contained in the present document.

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