

Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP)

Twenty-Eighth Session
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REPORT ON THE SHARING SESSIONS ON WOMEN AND IP

prepared by the Secretariat

The Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP), at its 22nd 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 the various aspects of the proposal through a sharing session.

1. In pursuance to this decision, the Secretariat organized a series of three sharing sessions in the period from April to October 2021. This document contains a report on these sessions.

I. ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS

2. In order to fully respond to the various elements contained in the Mexican proposal, the Secretariat identified common threads amongst them and designed three sharing sessions around the topic of “Closing the Gender Gap in IP”, that progressively built upon each other and offered a comprehensive view of the challenges and opportunities related to the gender gap in IP.

3. The objective of the sharing sessions was to:

- Raise awareness about the importance of bridging the gender innovation gap and increase participation by women and girls in the IP ecosystem;

- Promote the results of WIPO's work in this area; and
- Bring together stakeholders from around the world to share their experience and good practices in addressing the barriers faced by women and girls in accessing the IP system.

4. The sessions were open to participation by Member State representatives, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academics, and civil society. Simultaneous interpretation was available in English, French, and Spanish.

5. Due to the restrictions linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, the sessions were held in a hybrid format, with moderators and the Geneva-based speakers participating from WIPO premises and the participants connected online. The hybrid format allowed for the participation of a wide number of interested actors across different time zones.

II. STRUCTURE OF DISCUSSIONS

6. Each session addressed the following three themes:

- i. Mapping and Addressing Barriers
- ii. Exploring Multi-stakeholder Initiatives
- iii. Looking at Good Practices

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, twelve different speakers contributed to the sharing sessions. They were selected to represent different geographical regions and organizations within the IP community: diplomatic representations and governmental organizations, academia, IGOs, NGOs, and other multi-stakeholder organizations. The opening and closing of the sessions was done by Senior WIPO officials.

III. PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATION

8. The Secretariat sent invitation emails to the WIPO Regional 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 website, 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 – MAPPING AND ADDRESSING BARRIERS](#)

10. The first sharing session took place on April 28, 2021, from 12 to 1.30 p.m. Geneva time. The session laid the foundations for the series by mapping the barriers that prevent women from using the IP system in greater numbers and with greater benefits. It also looked at opportunities to foster women's participation in innovation, based on research findings and case studies from Chile and South Korea. The session brought together some 240 participants¹, from 70 countries.

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.

11. The session was opened by Mr. Hasan Kleib, Deputy Director General, Regional and National Development Sector of WIPO, and moderated by Her Excellency Patricia Benedetti, Ambassador of El Salvador to the World Trade Organization and WIPO and the Chair of the CDIP. The Program of the session is available [here](#).
12. Below are some highlights of the presentations made by the Speakers:
13. Ms. [Jozefina Cutura](#), Director at the Millennium Challenge Corporation, presented the findings of the literature review "[Challenges for Women Inventors and Innovators in Using the Intellectual Property System](#)" she has authored. She mentioned that one of the main hurdles in developing her literature review was the lack of systematic and comparable sex-disaggregated data. In addition, different sources used different measures and definitions of women's patenting activity. Among the key barriers to women becoming inventors were the following: (i) low labor force participation rate by women which reduced the available female talent pool; (ii) lack of childhood exposure to female role-models; (iii) under-representation of women in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields; (iv) discrimination, bias, sexism, socio-cultural norms and expectations; (v) lack of access to resources. Ms. Cutura provided a set of recommendations: (a) improve the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data; (b) encourage female entry into patent-intensive STEM fields and careers; (c) address socio-cultural issues and bias that inhibit women's innovative potential; (d) support networking, collaboration, and learning; (e) reduce the complexity and cost of the patenting process and strengthen national capacity to serve women inventors and innovators; (f) improve enforcement of rights in developing countries, including in female-dominated areas; and (g) support proactive policies and more research.
14. The presentations of Ms. [Jennifer Brant](#), Director of Innovation Insights, and Mr. [Mark Schultz](#), Goodyear Endowed Chair in IP Law and Director of the IP & Technology Law Program of the University of Akron School of Law, focused on the results of a study they co-authored: "[Policy Approaches to Close the Intellectual Property Gender Gap - Practices to Support Access to the Intellectual Property System for Female Innovators, Creators and Entrepreneurs](#)". In her introduction, Ms. Brant highlighted the five challenges contributing to the gender gap in IP, namely: (i) lack of data to understand the scope and nature of the IP gender gap; (ii) low representation of women in STEM fields, a; (iii) low representation of women in careers related to IP law and administration; (iv) lack of understanding of the value of IP rights and how the IP system worked; and (v) limited access to mentoring and other opportunities for advancement in IP-intensive fields.
15. Mr. Schultz presented a set of five actions to address the IP gender gap: collect data, support women in STEM and in business, recruit women for careers in IP law, teach them the value and relevance of IP, and support women's success in IP-intensive fields. Each action was supported by examples and case studies from different countries that were described in detail in the Study.
16. Ms. [Loreto Bresky](#), National Director of the Chilean National Institute of Industrial Property (INAPI), presented on INAPI's work on closing the gender gap in IP. INAPI had developed a crosscutting, institutional strategy on gender equality. To coordinate their internal and external actions in implementing it, it also established a Committee that had the mission to contribute to gender equality in international and national IP systems by generating initiatives for collaborative learning and promotion. INAPI was working to become a key actor in the promotion of gender equality and change management in order to expand the possibilities of women innovators and entrepreneurs to strategically use IP. Ms Bresky gave some examples of the concrete actions INAPI was undertaking internally, as well as externally. She highlighted some areas of INAPI's future work that included generating programs that supported wider representation of women inventors in the private sector, providing IP

trainings, promoting research and development in universities, and sharing of gender-related data and methodologies in IP-related sectors.

17. Ms. [Insil Lee](#), President of the Korean Women Inventors Association (KWIA), mentioned that her organization was operating various activities that promoted the work of women innovators, such as fostering human resources, discovery or provision of assistance to everyday life inventions, and commercialization of inventions. KWIA worked with several companies to improve IP rights education programs to support women inventors. Despite the fact that the Republic of Korea was amongst the top five Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) applicants in the world, there were large IP gender disparities in the country. KWIA organized workshops for the promotion of women inventors for the Korean Intellectual Property Office, collaborated with WIPO, organized an international exposition and university seminars, held creativity classes, and provided support activities on commercialization for women inventors.

18. The session concluded with a Q&A session, and some closing remarks delivered by Ms. Sara Callegari, Gender and Diversity Specialist, Human Resources Management Department of WIPO.

B. [CLOSING THE GENDER GAP IN IP: EXPLORING MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INITIATIVES](#)

19. The second session took place on July 7, 2021, from 12.30 to 2.00 p.m. Geneva time. It explored initiatives that address the gender gap in IP by bringing together different actors – for example, governments, private sector, universities, civil society organizations, etc. – with different expertise and reference groups, to design and implement synergetic solutions. The session brought together some 90 participants², from more than 60 countries.

20. The session was opened by Ms. Lisa Jorgenson, Deputy Director General, Patents and Technology Sector of WIPO, and moderated by Her Excellency Kadra Ahmed Hassan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative Djibouti to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva. The Program of the session is available [here](#).

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

22. Ms. [Sara Callegari](#), Gender and Diversity Specialist of WIPO's Human Resources Management Department, presented the most recent data on the global gender-related IP statistics and some of the key initiatives put in place by WIPO to bridge the gender gap in IP. She mentioned that in 2020, 16.5% of PCT applicants were women, noticing a positive upwards trend since 2005, with nearly one percent increase compared to 2019. That was one of the highest increase ever registered, which contributed to an almost five percent increase compared to the level registered 15 years prior. Ms. Callegari mentioned that there were a multitude of factors determining the gender gap in IP and those needed to be all tackled in a synergetic way, as focusing only on one of these factors would not move the needle. She highlighted some of the key areas of work under WIPO's focus. For example, WIPO was working to increase the representation and to "normalize" the image of women inventors and creators, by disseminating inspiring stories. It produced, analyzed, and disseminated qualitative and quantitative data to support evidence-based policies and programs. It also deployed efforts to increase awareness on IP for business for everyone, through capacity building activities, dedicated online courses and other awareness raising activities. WIPO also ensured that its IP services were inclusive and possible, by conducting gender analysis of accessibility of IP services, outreach, and by conducting capacity building workshops on inclusive practices and gender-sensitive plans for IP offices. WIPO worked with a multitude of

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stakeholders such as IP practitioners, governments, universities, private sector, civil society organizations, IGOs and NGOs. WIPO strived to align its external response to the internal one to make the Organization more gender-responsive.

23. Ms. [Caitlin Kraft-Buchman](#), CEO and Founder of Women at the Table, explained various issues related to male-dominated qualification standards that were inadequate to women's needs. Such standards made it more challenging for women to access various fields and activities or to benefit from certain safety and comfort devices. Ms. Kraft-Buchman illustrated some concrete examples where such standards and algorithms were influenced by stereotypes and were considered discriminatory towards women. Women at the Table and its collaborators worked on creating technologies for women and girls. The collective commitment called the "Tech We Need", which joined women and girl community leaders together with local university partners, as well as international University partners to co-create gender inclusive technologies. She concluded by mentioning that tremendous creativity could be leveraged by going straight to the grass roots levels without having to wait for people to have very high level education degrees in order to invent technology.

24. Ms. [Holly Fechner](#), Partner, Covington & Burling LLP and representative of the Invent Together Coalition, highlighted how: (i) women should be full participants in the innovation economy as inventors and patent holders; (ii) it could be ensured that greater number of women could invent and patent through appropriate interventions throughout the lifespan of girls and women; (iii) policy makers, universities and companies - all have important roles to play in solving that challenge; and (iv) multi-stakeholder coalitions were key to achieving those goals. Invent Together was an initiative created to ensure that women and other underrepresented groups in the United States of America (USA) fully participated in invention and patenting. She explained that their multi-stakeholder coalition was composed of organizations, universities, companies, inventors and researchers, dedicated to understanding the diversity gaps in invention and patenting, and supporting public policies and private initiatives to close them. She believed that ensuring equity in patenting was both a moral and economic imperative. Identifying the barriers that women and minorities faced in accessing the IP system, would point to the direction in which there was a need for public policy solutions, as well as the private sector changes that were needed to ensure patent parity. Exposure to invention, as well as access to high quality invention education was very important. She mentioned that in order to contribute to reducing that gap, Invent Together, among other things, run programs to help entrepreneurs, and were working with companies and universities on sharing and building on best practices.

25. The session concluded with a Q&A session, and some closing remarks delivered by Mr. Irfan Baloch, Director, Development Agenda Coordination Division of WIPO.

C. [CLOSING THE GENDER GAP IN IP – LOOKING AT GOOD PRACTICES](#)

26. The third session was held on October 12, 2021, from 12.30 to 2.30 p.m. Geneva time. The session presented good practices in IP service design, outreach and delivery, in IP training and in IP organization's culture. The presentations highlighted the vibrancy of activities intended to close the gender gap in IP by a range of stakeholders, within different geographical regions. The session brought together some 190 participants³, from more than 70 countries.

27. The session was opened by Ms. Binying Wang, Deputy Director General, Brands and Designs Sector of WIPO, and moderated by Her Excellency Aurora Diaz-Rato Revuelta,

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Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations Office at Geneva. The Program of the session is available [here](#).

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

29. Ms. [Anel Valencia Carmona](#), Deputy Director General for Support Services of the Mexican Institute of Industrial Property (IMPI) stated that in Mexico, there was a significant gender gap in IP. IMPI strived to make IP accessible to more women to close that gap. To that end, IMPI created an IP and innovation [network for women](#), with the intention to raise awareness, give visibility to women in IP and make IP accessible to them. Through that network, they created a digital community with podcasts and a blog, which were intended to showcase women that had been successful in using IP through trademarks and inventions. The objective was to create role models and encourage other women to use IP. Furthermore, IMPI made additional information and resources available through the network, and was working on establishing a mentorship program. While the network was very new, IMPI was learning from the process and was making adjustments to reach out to more women.

30. Ms. [Thuraya Saud Al-Alawi](#), Head of Intellectual Property Section of the Innovation & Technology Transfer Center of the Sultan Qaboos University, highlighted the success and impact of the Development Agenda (DA) project on [Increasing the Role of Women in Innovation & Entrepreneurship](#) in Oman, and the work carried out by the Innovation & Technology Transfer Center of the Sultan Qaboos University (SQU). She presented the different programs through which the Center disseminated knowledge on IP amongst women, for example through a series of specialized workshops on IP, summer schools, as well as active promotion and communication *via* social media. She further mentioned the efforts that the SQU and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Proportion in Oman were making in order to ensure a wider participation by women in STEM fields, through IP policy.

31. Ms. [Mubiru Lilian Nantume](#), Founder and Managing Director of Grooming a Successful Woman with Intellectual Mind (GSWIM), presented about the work of the NGO. GSWIM was an organization, which empowered and inspired women to be successful through creativity and innovation. GSWIM focused on changing the mindset of women and encouraging them to come up with unique business ideas which could be transformed into business products to bring commercial value. Most of the women from the Ugandan communities had business ideas and were passionate about creativity and innovation but they were not aware about IP rights. GSWIM was working to solve the problem of gender inequality by using IP in the community setting. They brought hope, inspiration, motivation, persistence, confidence, courage and determination to those women who were helpless to start believing in their potential for creativity and innovation. They met in small groups to share their business ideas, test them, and propose enhancements. In addition, GSWIM was providing trainings to develop different business skills according to the community interests. It also encouraged trainings on IP and on how to be creative and innovative from an early age, as children. Finally, they encouraged and provided mentoring networks and opportunities for women entrepreneurs and innovators.

32. Ms. [Andrea Brewster](#), Lead Executive Officer of IP Inclusive, presented on IP Inclusive and the gender gap. IP Inclusive was a group of IP professionals from the United Kingdom working together for a common cause, which was to improve equality, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing in their sector. Ms. Brewster stressed out the problems IP Inclusive was trying to address, which included: (i) lack of gender parity in patents; (ii) less women representation at senior levels; (iii) lack of proper working arrangements for women; and (iv) the existing biases, stereotypes and assumptions. To address those problems, IP Inclusive created a "Women and IP" group, which covered all aspects of diversity as they focused more on inclusivity than diversity. She further provided some examples of the work of the "Women in

IP” group, and highlighted some of the benefits IP Inclusive brought to women, such as developing networks, showing role models, providing mutual support, starting new conversations, and providing a strong sense of community, ownership and engagement.

33. The session concluded with a Q&A session, and some closing remarks delivered by Mr. Irfan Baloch, Director, Development Agenda Coordination Division of WIPO.

V. CONCLUSION

34. Overall, the sharing sessions succeeded in raising awareness about the gender gap in IP and the need for consolidated national and international efforts to bridge it. The level of engagement of the audience, and the positive feedback received from Member States, speakers, moderators, WIPO staff, and participants reaffirmed this view. In addition, during the 26th session of the CDIP, Member States approved a [“Follow-up Proposal on Women and IP”](#), which *inter alia*, requests the Secretariat to continue holding sharing sessions on this topic. Accordingly, the Secretariat will continue with holding sharing sessions on “Closing the Gender Gap in IP”.

35. The CDIP is invited to take note of the information contained in the present document.

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