

Asia-Pacific Regional PCT Training Course

Many countries in the Asia-Pacific region are renewing their efforts in relation to regional and international cooperation in the economic and technical fields. The effective use of the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) system is playing an increasingly important role in promoting this development. Already, of the 1,745 PCT applications filed in 1999 by applicants from developing countries, some 71 percent were filed by nationals and residents of developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region. To build on these trends, WIPO conducted a regional PCT training course for developing contracting States from June 20-23 in Beijing, China in cooperation with the State Intellectual Property Office (SIPO).

In her opening comments, Mrs. Jiang Ying, Commissioner of the SIPO, called the course an effective channel to promote awareness and use of the PCT system in the region. She noted that China is on the verge of becoming a member of the World Trade Organization and that the international PCT system, in use for over 20 years, is an excellent tool for Chinese industry to be a major participant in the global marketplace.

Questions and Difficulties

Most of the questions raised in the course related to PCT procedures and requirements. Explanations



Participants at the Asia-Pacific regional training course on the PCT.

Photo: State Intellectual Property Office, China

given by the speakers from different patent offices helped participants gain a better and more comprehensive understanding of these issues. Speakers from the European Patent Office and the Swedish Patent and Registration Office explained how their offices prepare PCT international search and preliminary examination reports.

In their presentations, the speakers from China and the Republic of Korea stressed the advantages of the PCT in connection with national economic and industrial development. Several patent attorneys and agents mentioned that the accession to the PCT by China had brought them much more business. They said that using the PCT presents various advantages, although they noted that using the system requires more preparation time to familiarize themselves with the relatively complicated filing procedures.

Many of the course participants cited the lack of qualified patent officials and agents to deal with the increase in PCT applications as an immediate problem. They also noted some difficulty in dealing with patent agents in developing countries, who are unfamiliar with PCT procedures.

Conclusions

The presentations and exchange of practical experience helped foreign and local participants gain familiarity with PCT procedures in order to handle PCT applications more effectively and skillfully. The participants noted that the developing countries with fast growing economies could benefit from the experience of China and the Republic of Korea. They stressed the need to make the PCT system more relevant to other developing countries, in particular to the least developed countries.