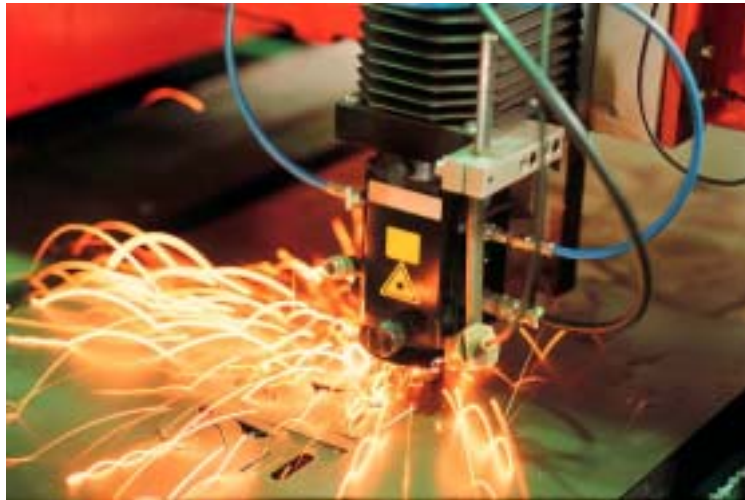# PCT APPLICATIONS CONTINUE TO GROW IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) is reporting continued growth in the number of international patent applications filed by industries and inventors from developing countries. Compared to the same period last year, the first six months of the year saw sustained growth in PCT filings in India, up 43 percent, Mexico, up 33 percent, South Africa, up 14 percent, and Singapore, up 5 percent.

Of the 57,818 PCT applications filed between January 1 and June 30 this year some 2,593, or 4.5 percent, were from developing countries. In 1996 – just 6 years ago – PCT applications from developing countries represented only 0.5 percent of the total number of applications filed. The number of applications from developing countries rose from 680 in 1997 to 5,379 in 2001.

Of the applicants from developing countries, Biowindow Gene Development Inc. of China filed the largest numbers of applications, followed by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research of India, Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd. of China, Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd. and LG Electronics Inc., both in the Republic of Korea.

Preferential Fees

The PCT, which has facilitated the process of seeking patent protection internationally since coming into effect in 1978, offers preferential fees for developing country applicants who fulfill certain criteria. From January to June 2002, some 15 percent of PCT applications from developing countries benefited from a 75 percent reduction in certain PCT fees.

While use of the PCT continues to grow in developing countries, the largest users of the system remain developed countries. In 2001, inventors and industries from the United States of America topped the list, accounting for 38 percent of applications filed. They were followed by their counterparts in Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom and France. Overall, the PCT, which has sustained double-digit growth every year since 1984, received 103,947 applications in 2001, a 14 percent increase in the total for 2000.

♦