CWS.ATR.PI.2013.AP

Annual Technical Report 2013 on Patent Information Activities submitted by ARIPO (CWS /ATR/PI/2013/AP)

Where URLs are requested below, it is preferred that either URLs which are likely to remain stable over time (three years or more) are provided, or home (main) page URLs are provided with a short explanation of how to access the corresponding information.

The term "patent" covers utility models and Supplementary Protection Certificates (SPCs). Offices which issue design patents should report their design patent information activities in their Annual Technical Reports on Industrial Design Information Activities.

I. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN PATENT INFORMATION ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE OFFICE

Outline of main policies and plans aimed at development of patent information activities and expected time frames for their realization

The ARIPO policies and plans are based on the Strategic Plan 2011-2015 adopted by the Administrative Council at its 34th Session held in Harare, Zimbabwe in 2010. The Strategic Plan is composed of six strategic goals, and each strategic goal is clustered under 19 programmes

New projects launched or resumed this year in the context of the policies and plans mentioned above, short description: aims, partners, tasks

-During the year the ARIPO/WIPO/KOICA Project to Upgrade and Modernize the ARIPO Office and those of its Member States was launched on October 7 and the Project Implementation developed.
-With regard to the expansion of the ARIPO headquarters building, computer-aided designs of the proposed extension were developed by a team of architects and construction managers.
-ARIPO held joint programmes with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), International Union for the Protection of the New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), European Union (EU), International Federation for Reproduction Rights Organizations, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), Mexican Institute of Industrial Property (IMPI-Mexico), IP Australia, State Intellectual Property Office of the Peoples' Republic of China (SIPO), State Administration for Industry and Commerce (SAIC), Office for the Harmonization of Internal Market (OHIM), Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO), National IT Industrial Promotion Agency (NIPA) and Community Plant Variety Protection(CPVO).
-ARIPO Office reviewed the Harare Protocol on Patents and Industrial Designs and its Implementing Regulations and adopted proposed amendments in order to improve and harmonize the Protocol with international treaties i.e. Paris Convention, Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS) and the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) with the view to enable the ARIPO Office to better serve its users

Statistics: changes in terms of application filings and grants with respect to previous year; trends or areas experiencing rapid changes

The Office registered an increase in the number of applications for IP titles. Number of patent and utility model application lodged increased by 14%. The number of grants of patents and registration of utility models also increased by 32%. The office embarked on an exercise to reduce back log on substantive examination which has led to the increase in grants.

Other matters and useful links (URLs): annual report of the Office, news page, statistics, etc.

-Website: www.aripo.org
-Face book account under African Regional Intellectual Property Organization.

II. SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES RELATED TO PATENT INFORMATION CARRIED OUT BY THE OFFICE

Information and support provided by the Office to applicants regarding filing on paper and/or e-filing (instructions, seminars, etc.) – URLs

The ARIPO Office embarked on the initiative of sensitizing and attracting more users to file applications through the ARIPO route. To that aim missions and attendance to users meetings were undertaken.
-9th Biennial US – Africa Business Summit held in Chicago, Illinois, USA from 8 to 11 October 2013
-2nd Annual Africa Network Meeting, Adams & Adams, Pretoria, South Africa, September 12
-The Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V), Yokohama, Japan from June 1 to 3
-ARIPO undertook several activities in capacity building. The training programmes carried out during the year covered different areas in IP and benefitted at least 83 officials from the Member States

Availability of the application dossier in electronic form

ARIPO patent documentation is included into PCT minimum documentation and patent documents are classified and reclassified in the full International Patent Classification (IPC) on the publication stage.
Information about published ARIPO patent documents including classification data is sent to EPO to be included into the Master Classification Database (MCD).
ARIPO does not reclassify the back file of published ARIPO patent documents.

Abstracting, reviewing, and translation of the information contained in patent documents

The filing language at ARIPO is English and as such the Harare Protocol on Patents requires that an application (including specification) that is in a foreign language is translated into English by the applicant within 6 months of lodging the application.

III. SOURCES OF PATENT INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE OFFICE

Main types of publications of the Office (patent applications, full text, first pages, abstracts, bibliographic data, granted patents, etc.), medium (on paper, on CDs, online – URLs)

-Digitization of ARIPO patent documents under the WIPOScan project
-Distributed to Member states on CDs

Official Gazettes: main types of announcements, frequency of publication, medium (on paper, on CDs, online – URL), etc.

-The ARIPO Journal is published monthly and is available in print and electronic format to cooperating partners and paid subscribers
-the ARIPO Newsletter is published bi-monthly and is available in print and electronic format

IV. ICT SUPPORT TO SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES RELATED TO PATENT INFORMATION CARRIED OUT BY THE OFFICE

Specific software tools supporting business procedures within the Office: general description, characteristics, advantages, possible improvements

-The POLITE Database
-Internal e-mail system

Hardware used to supporting business processes of the Office

-PCs and Laptops, Network printers, Photocopiers, Scanners

Internal databases: coverage, updates, interlinks with external sources

The POLITE database is presently for in-house administration of IP titles but it is being upgraded through a project of Systems Upgrade being implemented in partnership with WIPO and KOICA.

Establishment and maintenance of electronic search file: file building, updating, storage, documents from other offices included in the search file

File building and updating
Search is done in the POLite system and other online services like espacenet. There is no single search file that is created for the purpose of search only. In the POLite system, data is updated regularly through normal system updates and also when new files are captured.

Foreign data included in the search system
- Publication data: China (2010-), Germany (1988-), Japan (1965-), OHIM (2003-), US (1997-), WIPO (1999-)
- Others: computer generated graphic designs (2003-), typeface (1999-), catalogues (1999-), two-dimensional designs (2013-)

V. PROMOTION ACTIVITIES AIMED TO SUPPORT USERS IN ACCESS AND EFFICIENT USE OF PATENT INFORMATION

Patent library: equipment, collection management, network of patent libraries in the country, cooperation with foreign patent libraries

-Anderson Ray Zikonda Library available and stocks patent and non-patent documentation by the Office and from cooperating partners like the WIPO, EPO, EAPO, UK-IPO, JPO, KIPO, ROSPATENT, SIPO
-ARIPO also purchased some non-patent titles for research work.
-Currently, officers can access the library's online public access catalogue (OPAC) via the Office intranet
-The library management software is the Liberty3 software by Softlink Europe

Publications related to different business procedures and patent information sources available to users, for example, books, brochures, Internet publications, etc.

-ARIPO continued with the publication of brochures on Patents, Utility Models, Common IP Infringements, Patent Application and Filing Procedures, General Information on ARIPO and FAQs
-Publication of the Harare Protocol and its implementing regulations
-Virtual library allows access to research literature from subscribed online databases like PUBMED Central, Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERii), HINARI, ARDI, Gale Virtual Library, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Accredited Open Access Journals _South Africa (AOAJSA), National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR)

Cooperation with universities, research centers, technology and innovation support centers, etc.

- ARIPO partnered with Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE) in Zimbabwe to assist the institution in developing its IP policy. After the initial meeting, the University organized an IP awareness program for University Administrators and Deans of Faculties on March 1, 2013 where ARIPO officials made presentations
-Students from various Universities and R&D centres, in member states continue to seek and use the services and facilities of the ARIPO Office for information in their research work free of charge.

Education and training: training courses, e-learning modules (URLs), seminars, exhibitions, etc.

ARIPO undertook technical missions aimed at conducting onsite practical training on processing of ARIPO applications to:
-Zambian examiners, Harare, Zimbabwe from April 15 to 19
-Botswana Registrar of Companies & Intellectual Property Office (ROCIP) f
-IPAS Java Training Programme, for the Malawian IP Officials, Harare, Zimbabwe
-Zimbabwe Intellectual Property Office (ZIPO), Harare Zimbabwe
-Ugandan parliamentarians and officials of the URSB, Harare, Zimbabwe
- United Republic of Tanzania's Business Registration and Licensing Agency (BRELA)
-Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF 2013), Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
-2013 edition of the Harare Agricultural Show, Harare, Zimbabwe
-National Intellectual Property Exhibition, Leribe, Lesotho
- Under a Tripartite Partnership among ARIPO/WIPO/Africa University, the 6th Cohort of Masters in Intellectual Property students were selected and enrolled. The students visited ARIPO for their practical sessions at ARIPO.

VI. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF PATENT INFORMATION

International exchange and sharing of patent information in machine-readable form, e.g., priority documents, bibliographic data, abstracts, search reports, full text information

-ARIPO continued exchanging of patent documents with the WIPO, European Patent Office, and all the National Patent Offices of the Member States of the Organization in electronic formats (CDs & DVDs.

Participation in international or regional activities and projects related to patent information

-"First Africa IP Forum" in Johannesburg, South Africa
-World Trade Organization, TRIPS Council Meeting. Geneva, Switzerland
-The African Conference on the Strategic Importance of Intellectual Property (IP) Policies to Foster Invention, Value Creation and Competitiveness, Dar-es-Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania
-Workshop on the Practical Approaches to IP Utilization and Protection in Africa, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania
-2nd Seminar for IPR Officials from English-Speaking countries from seven African English-Speaking countries, Shenzhen and Beijing, China,
-Commemoration of the World IP Day, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe,
-AIPPI Forum and Executive Committee Meeting, Helsinki, Finland
-2nd Annual Africa Network Meeting, Adams & Adams, Pretoria, South Africa,
-9th Biennial US – Africa Business Summit, Chicago, Illinois, USA

Assistance to developing countries

-In 2013 ARIPO continued to sponsor capacity building and training activities in the member states

VII. OTHER RELATED MATTERS

1.	Classification is allotting one or more classification symbols (e.g., IPC symbols) to a patent application, either before or during search and examination, which symbols are then published with the patent application.
2.	Preclassification is allotting an initial broad classification symbol (e.g., IPC class or subclass, or administrative unit) to a patent application, using human or automated means for internal administrative purposes (e.g., routing an application to the appropriate examiner). Usually preclassification is applied by the administration of an office.
3.	Reclassification is the reconsideration and usually the replacement of one or more previously allotted classification symbols to a patent document, following a revision and the entry into force of a new version of the Classification system (e.g., the IPC). The new symbols are available on patent databases.