

# CWS/ATR/PI/2014/AP

## Annual Technical Report on Patent Information Activities in 2014 submitted by ARIPO

### 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 main policies and plans of ARIPO in 2014 were anchored on the Consolidated Medium Term Strategic Plan 2014 - 2015 biennium adopted by the Administrative Council of ARIPO at its 37th Session held in Kampala, Uganda from November 25 to 26, 2013. The Consolidated Strategic Plan approved by the Administrative Council reduced the strategic goals to five, and the implementing programmes to 15.

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

- One of the remarkable achievement of 2014 is the joining of São Tomé & Príncipe to ARIPO, through ratification of the Harare Protocol for the Protection of Patents, Utility Models and Industrial Designs. São Tomé & Príncipe became the 19th member State of ARIPO.
- The groundbreaking ceremony to mark the commencement of the project of building the extension of ARIPO Headquarters and to lay the symbolic foundation stone was undertaken on Friday November 14, 2014 by the Chairman of the ARIPO Council of Ministers.
- For 2014, the flagship program was the "ARIPO Roving Seminars" aiming at creating awareness on IP and ARIPO activities. The Roving Seminars which were held in Gambia, Liberia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Swaziland benefited 655 participants. The Roving Seminars undertaken by the ARIPO officials in the member States included technical missions to the IP Offices.
- The ARIPO/WIPO/KOICA Project to Upgrade and Modernize the ARIPO ICT Infrastructure and those of its Member States registered important developments with the deployment of several missions from Korea, including a resident consultant. Equipment to support the project was received.

#### Main areas of patent information activities and related information and communication technology (ICT) practices which were in the focus of attention last year

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

- The number of applications received by the ARIPO Secretariat continues to increase steadily. 835 patent applications were lodged in 2014 compared to 692 for the same period in 2013.

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

- Website: [www.aripo.org](http://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

Published two Brochures namely: 1. Search Services Provided by ARIPO, and A Step by Step Guide to the Grant of a Patent at the ARIPO Office.

In a bid to keep on sensitizing users of the ARIPO systems on the advantages of filing applications through the ARIPO route, the Office undertook a number of missions and users' meetings, namely:

- 9th COMESA Business Partnerships Forum and Linkages Fair, from February 21 to 23, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo
- First International Patent Forum, from March 18 to 19, London, United Kingdom
- Canada Africa Business Summit from September 15 to 18, Toronto, Canada

To ensure compliance with the ARIPO patent procedures, a number of national roving seminars under the theme "making better use of intellectual property for business competitiveness and development in Africa" were held as follows:

Swaziland from March 24 to 28; Mozambique from April 21 to 25; Liberia from April 28 to May 2; Sierra Leone from May 19 to 23 and The Gambia from August 4 to 8 benefiting a total of 655 participants .

Running concurrently with the Roving Seminars were technical missions to the IP Offices as follows

- The Intellectual Property Office of The Kingdom of Swaziland from March 27 to 28, Mbabane, Swaziland;
- The Industrial Property Institute of Mozambique (IPI) from April 21 to 25, Maputo, Mozambique;
- The Liberia Intellectual Property Office (LIPO) from April 28 to May 2, Monrovia, Liberia;
- The Sierra Leone Intellectual Property Office from May 21 to 23, Freetown, Sierra Leone;
- The Gambia Office of the Registrar General from August 4 to 8, Banjul, The Gambia

The objectives of these technical missions were various and included to conduct practical training on processing of ARIPO applications (receipt, transmittal, filling in applications, notifications) under the Harare and Banjul Protocols; discussing challenges faced by the office in processing ARIPO applications in general and those applications designating the Member State with the responsible officers

#### **Availability of the application dossier in electronic form**

**Classification<sup>1</sup>, preclassification<sup>2</sup> (if applicable), reclassification<sup>3</sup> activities; classification systems used (e.g., International Patent Classification (IPC)); matters concerning indexing of patent information**

- 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.

#### **Other activities**

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

### **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 continued
- Published patent data on CDs for Member States

**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 in electronic format
- The ARIPO Newsletter is published bi-monthly and is available online on the ARIPO Website, in print and can be sent in electronic format

**Information products and patent document collections (coverage, medium, etc.) available to examiners, including external collections and databases**

- Online - Patent Scope, ARDI, USPTO online databases, Espacenet, EPOLINE
- CD-ROMS/DVDs - ESPACE EP, ESPACE Bulletin, ESPACE UK, Patent Abstracts of Japan, Korean Patent Abstracts
- Print Formats-Industrial Property Magazines like; Research Disclosure, World Patent Information.
- Industrial Property Journals and Gazettes from the Member States and other external partners through the patent information exchange arrangements

**Information products and patent document collections (coverage, medium, etc.) available to external users, conditions of access (e.g., free of charge, subscription, etc.)**

**Legal status information (kind of information, coverage, medium, etc.)**

**Other sources**

### **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
- Facsimile

**Hardware used to supporting business processes of the Office**

- PCs and Laptops, Network printers, Photocopiers, Scanners, Servers

**Internal databases: coverage, updates, interlinks with external sources**

**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-)

**Administrative management electronic systems (register, legal status, statistics, and administrative support)**

**Other matters**

## **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**

- A Library is available and stocks patent and non-patent literature by the Office and from cooperating partners like the WIPO, EPO, EAPO, UK-IP, JPO, KIPO, ROSPATENT, SIPO
- ARIPO also purchased some non-patent titles for research work.
- Currently, officers can access the library 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, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Accredited Open Access Journals \_South Africa (AOAJSA), National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR)

**Office's initiatives on providing foreign patent information in the local language(s) (e.g., machine translation tools, translation of abstracts)**

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

- The ARIPO Academy provided 10 scholarships to selected students from the member states, which pursue the Master of Intellectual Property (MIP) degree program at Africa University in Mutare, Zimbabwe. A total of 33 students have been offered scholarships by ARIPO since the inception of the Program in 2008.
- Students from various Universities and R&D centres, in member states continue to seek and use the services and facilities of the ARIPO Office Library for information in their research work free of charge. These can be walk in users or those who wish to be assisted through the virtual library.
- A Workshop on Technology and Innovation Support Center (TISC) at the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) on February 12, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
- Education and training: training courses, e-learning modules (URLs), seminars, exhibitions, etc.

**Other activities**

- The ARIPO office continues to pursue good relationships with its strategic partners. A number of MoUs were signed or renewed in the course of the year, specifically with Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market (Trade Marks and Designs) (OHIM), IP Australia, the Industrial Property Tribunal of the Republic of Kenya, the Mexican Institute of Industrial Property (IMPI Mexico), State Administration for Industry and Commerce (SAIC) of the Republic of China; and Norwegian Copyright Development Association (NORCODE).

## **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, Japan Patent Office, Korean 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**

Article VI of the Lusaka Agreement which was adopted on December 9, 1976 on the creation of ARIPO mandates the Organization to "co-operate with Governments of States not members of the Organization and with organizations, institutions and bodies (...) which are desirous of assisting the Organization or its members in achieving the objectives of the Organization". To that end the following activities were undertaken with strategic partners:

- Visit to the African Union and the Ethiopian Intellectual Property Office from February 24 to 25, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- Bilateral Meetings between ARIPO and The Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market (OHIM)
- Visit of the Vice Minister of the State Administration for Industry and Commerce (SAIC) of the Peoples' Republic of China to ARIPO, September 8

- MoUs signed with strategic partners
- The World Intellectual Property Congress of AIPPI from September 14 to 17, Toronto, Canada
- The 53<sup>rd</sup> and 54th Series of Meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of the WIPO;
- The 4<sup>th</sup> session of Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) from May 12 to 16
- The 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the PCT Working Group from June 10 to 13;
- WIPO IPC Revision Working Group, October 27 to 31
- Meetings at the World Trade Organization (WTO)
- The first Africa Innovation Summit from February 4 to 6, Praia, Cape Verde
- WIPO Inter-Regional Seminar on Developing National and Regional Approaches to Enhancing Innovation Support and Commercialization of Research and Development (R&D) Results and Patents from June 11 to 13, Casablanca, Morocco
- Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF 2014) from April 22 to 26, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
- SMEs International Export 2014 from October 22 to 25, Harare, Zimbabwe
- First Research and Intellectual EXPO from September 3 to 6, Harare, Zimbabwe

In furtherance of Article VI of the Lusaka Agreement the following were executed in the year 2014:

- The Addendum to the MoU between the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market (Trade Marks and Designs) (OHIM) and ARIPO;
- The MoU between ARIPO and IP Australia Concerning IP Australia's Regional Patent Examination Training Program;
- The MoU between ARIPO and the Industrial Property Tribunal of the Republic of Kenya;
- The letter of intent to renew the MoU between ARIPO and the Mexican Institute of Industrial Property (IMPI Mexico);
- Renewal of the MoU between ARIPO and the State Administration for Industry and Commerce (SAIC) of the Republic of China; and
- MoU between ARIPO and the Norwegian Copyright Development Association (NORCODE).

#### **Assistance to developing countries**

- In 2014 ARIPO sponsored capacity building and training activities in the member states

#### **Other activities**

## **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.