



Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Report

Expert group meeting on intellectual property systems in the Arab region Beirut, 17-18 April 2019

Summary

An expert group meeting on intellectual property systems in the Arab region was convened at the United Nations House in Beirut on 17 and 18 April 2019. The meeting discussed the status and challenges of intellectual property systems in the Arab region, their role in promoting innovation and competitiveness, and their potential contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Over seven sessions, participants discussed the status of intellectual property in Arab countries, the role of technology transfer offices in intellectual property systems, and intellectual property regulations at the institutional level, including at the levels of universities, industry and small and medium enterprises. Regional and international case studies were also presented to stimulate the sharing of knowledge and lessons learnt. A series of consultative discussions involving representatives from Arab Governments, United Nations organizations, and experts from regional and international institutions informed the deliberations, based on a draft report on intellectual property systems in the Arab region and the gender gap in Arab intellectual property systems.

The expert group meeting concluded with a set of recommendations on the relationship between innovation and intellectual property, awareness and training needs, institutional and legal aspects, and cooperation with regional and international organizations. The present report provides an overview of the main themes and discussions addressed at the meeting and the results of the evaluation.

CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Introduction	1-3	3
<i>Chapter</i>		
I. OUTCOMES	4	3
A. Innovation and intellectual property		3
B. Awareness and training		3
C. Institutional and legal aspects		4
D. Regional and International Organizations		4
II. TOPICS FOR DISSCUSSION	5-31	5
A. Opening	6-8	5
B. Session I: Innovation and intellectual property systems	9-11	5
C. Session II: Status of intellectual property systems in the Arab region	12-14	6
D. Session III: Intellectual Property Initiatives and Programmes	15-16	7
E. Session IV: Intellectual property for promoting entrepreneurship and SMEs	17-20	7
F. Session V: Intellectual property and technology transfer in selected Arab countries	21-24	8
G. Session VI: Country experiences: Intellectual property for promoting innovation	25-28	9
H. Session VII: Regional and global initiatives in IP	29-31	10
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	32-36	11
A. Venue and date	32	11
B. Participants	33	11
C. Documents	34	11
D. Evaluation	35	11
<i>Annex.</i> List of participants		12

Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) organized an expert group meeting on intellectual property (IP) systems in the Arab region, which was held at the United Nations House in Beirut on 17 and 18 April 2019.
2. The main objective of the meeting was to discuss the status and challenges of intellectual property systems in the Arab region to develop a common understanding of the strengths, opportunities and threats of intellectual property systems, of issues related to their management, administration and enforcement, of their impact on socioeconomic development, and of their role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
3. The present report highlights the main outcomes of the meeting, and provides a summary of the presentations and discussions.

I. OUTCOMES

4. The meeting led to the following findings and recommendations proposed by participants.

A. INNOVATION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

(a) Intellectual property is essential for fostering and sustaining innovation cycles. It is also crucial to transforming research into intellectual property assets that can be commercialized through licensing processes or by creating startups and therefore jobs. As such, intellectual property is important for achieving SDG 9;

(b) Intellectual property boosts productivity, enhances competitiveness at the national and international levels, strengthens industrialization, accelerates innovation and contributes to job creation. Serious efforts are needed in the region to boost innovation, inventions, patents and copyrights, as the Arab region lags behind other regions worldwide;

(c) Arab countries should enhance their research and development systems, and formulate and adopt innovation and intellectual property policies and strategies to diversify and boost their economies;

(d) Financing funds, venture capital and angel investors should be promoted and encouraged in the Arab region to promote innovation and entrepreneurship;

(e) The private sector plays an important role in innovation and economic growth. There is an urgent need to encourage investors in the private industrial sector in Arab countries to invest in research, development and innovation, and to play an active role in the innovation ecosystem.

B. AWARENESS AND TRAINING

(a) It is vital to raise societies' awareness of intellectual property, with a special focus on students, researchers and entrepreneurs. Engineering schools, technological institutions and university curriculums should include courses on intellectual property;

(b) Specialized training programmes are needed for researcher, innovators and public officers in charge of intellectual property offices, technology transfer offices and copyright offices. Training programme should focus on intellectual property, patent systems and copyright, and should be customized according to the needs of each target group and its level of involvement in intellectual property system;

(c) Experience shows the positive role of innovation and invention exhibitions in linking innovators with investors in the industrial sector. Such exhibitions should be encouraged in Arab countries;

(d) Intellectual property offices and technology transfer offices play a role in encouraging the business community to use intellectual property professionally. They should therefore foster intellectual property in a business-friendly manner. Other private sector intermediaries should also be equipped to provide intellectual property support services to small and medium enterprises, particularly export-oriented and high-tech enterprises;

(e) It is necessary to form a qualified group of lawyers in each Arab country to draft patents so as to support and assist researchers and innovators in drafting their own patents;

(f) It is important to train judges and security forces on intellectual property, and establish dedicated intellectual property courts in Arab countries;

(g) Women in Arab countries should participate in awareness campaigns and specialized training programmes. They should also be encouraged to participate in research, development and innovation, and apply for patents or copyrights.

C. INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL ASPECTS

(a) Arab countries are encouraged to join international instruments on intellectual property, amend national laws in line with the international treaties, and establish mechanisms to enforce the implementation of these laws;

(b) Coordination and collaboration between various entities involved in intellectual property, such as intellectual property offices, copyright offices and technology transfer offices, are of high importance in the Arab countries. Government should develop mechanisms for ensuring the sustainability of collaboration and coordination;

(c) Collaboration, coordination and exchange of best practices among Arab countries is crucial for enhancing intellectual property systems and promoting innovation in Arab countries. Collaboration is also essential between the Arab region and other regions such as Latin America and Asia, which are also developing regions and have good practices in the domain of intellectual property and innovation;

(d) There is a need to create a regional database on inventions and patents for Arab countries, and to examine the feasibility of establishing an Arab patent office;

(e) It is vital to agree on common Arabic terminology related to intellectual property to facilitate cooperation, coordination and the exchange of experiences between Arab countries;

(f) There is an urgent need to develop and regulate intellectual property related jobs.

D. REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

(a) There is a necessity to maximize the benefit of services provided by international organizations in the domain of intellectual property and innovation, particularly the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and ESCWA, and to enhance the dissemination of studies, reports and other resources;

(b) Regional and international organizations play a key role in enhancing intellectual property systems in the Arab region.¹ Regional and international organizations must continue their efforts and strengthen collaboration to increase benefits for Arab countries;

¹ The League of Arab States launched the Arab guiding law for intellectual protection. ALECSO established the Arab network for intellectual property. The WIPO Arab Regional Bureau implemented many capacity-building workshops and prepared studies, reports, project and programmes related to intellectual property systems. ESCWA established several technology transfer offices dealing with intellectual property in various Arab countries, and published many studies on innovation policies customized to the needs of Arab countries.

(c) It is necessary to request regional and international organizations to prepare analytical studies and best practices on research, development and innovation, intellectual property systems, digital copyrights and other topics for Arab countries.

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

5. The meeting spanned two days and consisted of seven sessions. Topics discussed included intellectual property systems and innovation, status of intellectual property systems in the Arab region, initiatives and programmes, the role of intellectual property in promoting entrepreneurship and small and medium enterprises, case studies and country experiences on intellectual property and technology transfer, and promoting innovation in selected Arab countries.

A. OPENING

6. Mr. Mounir Tabet, Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCWA, welcomed participants and briefed them on the objectives of the meeting and the topics that would be tackled during the sessions. In his opening statement, he stressed the importance of intellectual property rights (IPR) for economic growth, and as a key factor in boosting national and international competitiveness, creating jobs and protecting innovators and entrepreneurs, and supporting socioeconomic development and safeguarding cultural heritage.

7. Mr. Walid Abdelnasser, WIPO Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab Countries, highlighted the WIPO efforts to advance intellectual property systems in the Arab region, and stressed the need to encourage the exchange of knowledge and expertise between Arab countries and with other regions, such as the initiative of the United Arab Emirates to initiate dialogue between Arab countries and Asian countries. He also emphasized the need to initiate discussion between leaders on intellectual property and innovation to advance them in the region.

8. Mr. Nadim El Gemayel, Lebanese Member of Parliament and Chairman of the Information and Technology Parliamentary Committee, stressed the need for law enforcement and regulations to promote innovation and creative products in the region. He said that the Lebanese Government was working on special laws for establishing startups and small enterprises, and that the Lebanese labour law comprised articles on taxes that promoted the protection of copyright.

B. SESSION I: INNOVATION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY SYSTEMS

9. The first session on innovation and intellectual property systems was moderated by Mr. Haidar Fraihat, Director of the ESCWA Technology for Development Division. Ms. Nibal Idlebi, Chief of the ESCWA Innovation Section, presented the ESCWA vision and mission aimed at enhancing quality of life in the Arab region by embracing a knowledge-based economy, a digital economy and an information society. She gave a general overview of ESCWA efforts in the field of innovation, and highlighted its importance and strong relationship with intellectual property and their role in achieving the 2030 Agenda and specifically SDG 9. She also provided a brief overview of the publications and future reports on the innovation landscape, innovation policies, Arab Horizon 2030 and intellectual property, innovation in small and medium enterprises, and the entrepreneurship ecosystem. Moreover, she highlighted the status of innovation in the Arab region based on the Global Innovation Index and by considering GDP. She presented as well ESCWA framework for innovation policy that clarifies the mechanisms for developing innovation policies in various sectors.

10. Mr. Pierre El Khoury, an ESCWA expert on intellectual property systems and innovation, stressed that innovation was fostered mainly through the digital economy, which included medical care, the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, and the digital distribution of products protected by intellectual property that could be transferred across the world via the Internet. He clarified that intellectual property rights constituted an integral part of the thriving economy in most developed countries, and part of the economy of developing countries that capitalized those intangible assets into wealth - intellectual property was therefore 'gold'. He noted that innovation was a human force that had no limits in turning problems into progress, since it pushed the boundaries of possibilities thus creating unprecedented new capabilities. He added that since

innovation led to higher efficiency in productivity and sustainability, it therefore increased economic output and in turn nurtured research and development, leading to more technological innovation. He illustrated how innovation fostered by intellectual property rights supported the economic development of societies, given that they were a determining factor of economic growth and innovation since they encouraged entrepreneurs and inventors to produce original goods and distribute new products and services.

11. Ms. Maha Bkheet, Director of the Intellectual Property and Competitiveness Department at the League of Arab States, presented the organization's efforts in protecting intellectual property rights. She gave a historical overview of the establishment of the Directorate of Intellectual Property at the League of Arab States and its objectives. She reviewed the history of cooperation with WIPO and coordination meetings with national intellectual property offices in Arab countries, whose political will was reflected in their accession to international agreements and their support for the establishment of the Technical Committee for Intellectual Property in response to a decision by the Economic and Social Council. She also gave an overview of the activities of the Directorate such as publications on intellectual property and competitiveness, including a directory of intellectual property offices in Arab countries and a directory of Arab inventors. She highlighted the Arab indicative law (Guiding Arab Law) on the protection of intellectual property rights, which included three sections on copyrights and related rights, industrial property and border measures. Within this context, she focused on the decisions of Arab summits supporting research, development and innovation through the adoption of a regional strategy embodying a unified Arab vision for the advancement of scientific and technological research and innovation in the Arab region, to bring the scientific system to a level that clearly contributed to the process of economic and social development by linking scientific research to economic development.

C. SESSION II: STATUS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY SYSTEMS IN THE ARAB REGION

12. Two presentations were discussed in this session, which was moderated by Ms. Nibal Idlebi. In his presentation on intellectual property challenges and opportunities in the Arab region, Mr. Pierre El Khoury provided a detailed background on a framework for strengthened intellectual property systems. He explained the innovation cycle of product discovery, development and commercialization that enabled innovative companies to reinvest their revenues from sales and licenses to refine existing products and produce new ones, as well as the competitive intelligence system. He stressed that intellectual property rights were a crucial component of that cycle, and had multiple implications for promoting sustainable economic growth.

13. The second part of his presentation focused on a draft ESCWA report on intellectual property challenges and opportunities in the Arab region. He clarified that the report represented the first part of a comprehensive study on intellectual property in terms of scope and content. The current report focused on the benefits of intellectual property rights in fostering innovation and economic development under the general framework of the SDGs and 2030 Agenda. He presented the methodology employed to prepare the study that focused on exploring intellectual property systems and highlighting links to innovation policies, processes, competitiveness and the SDGs. He said that the report included some examples and success stories from the Arab region. He identified the challenges and opportunities of intellectual property systems in the Arab region, and indicated that the report provided recommendations to Arab countries divided by subregion: North Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf region.

14. Mr. Walid Abdelnasser, Director of the WIPO Regional Bureau for Arab Countries, made a presentation on the status of intellectual property in Arab countries from the perspective of WIPO. He gave a brief overview of two recent pilot projects on the WIPO work programme: a pilot project on intellectual property and tourism, and a pilot project for training judicial institutions (completed in December 2018). He noted the Global Innovation Index (GII) developed by WIPO, which turned out to be the most important index that donor countries and investment evaluation institutions referred to when classifying countries by investment flow. He also touched upon the 2018 GII results, where the United Arab Emirates ranked 39 at the global level, while Yemen ranked last. He explained that the main areas of technical cooperation with Arab countries included awareness and enforcement of intellectual property, which should be used as an incentive to increase creativity and innovation, especially among young people. He explained that invention and innovation

exhibitions were a new trend in the Arab region, aiming to connect young inventors and innovators with industry and business sectors. He added that a lack of qualified human resources and institutional capacity negatively affected the protection of intellectual property. He introduced experts to an agreement between the WIPO academy, the WIPO Regional Office and the Moroccan Office of Industrial and Commercial Property to establish the first training programme in Arabic on intellectual property. In terms of institutional capacity, he provided a brief overview of the two WIPO programmes for innovation and technology support centres and national technology transfer offices in Arab countries.

D. SESSION III: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMMES

15. The session included two presentations and was moderated by Mr. Mounir Tabet. The first presentation by Mr. Talal Abu Ghazaleh, President of Talal Abu Ghazaleh Group in Jordan, focused on the efforts of Talal Abu Ghazaleh Intellectual Property for Fostering Enforcement of Intellectual Property in the Arab Region. He noted that intellectual property represented the main conflict between the United States and China in the current era. He said that the current intellectual property system was invalid since it stated that the term for protecting a patent was 20 years before becoming generic. Arab countries were among the best countries worldwide in applying intellectual property and regulations. The problem lay in the fact that the global system had stopped updating intellectual property laws. He concluded that focus should be shifted to innovation rather than technology transfer, and called on Arab countries to set up their own suitable laws, rules and regulations.

16. Mr. John Taylor McEntire, Director of Industry Development and Knowledge Transfer at Qatar Foundation Research, Development and Innovation, made a presentation on the journey of Qatar in research that had begun with the launch of the Qatar National Research Fund in 2006. He gave a brief overview on the activities undertaken by the Qatar Foundation as the first organization to fund research with investments exceeding \$1 billion. He said that the first Technology Transfer Office had been established in Qatar in 2013, and was also the first office to set up intellectual property policy within the country and to develop a robust and detailed method for reviewing research results on intellectual property protection and commercialization. He noted that the core functions of the Qatar Foundation intellectual property office included intellectual property management, commercialization and licensing, innovation training and recognition, industry support and development. He explained that after establishing branch campuses of major international universities in Doha, the Qatar Foundation had established three national research institutes covering ICT, energy and environment and biological sciences. The fruits of those efforts were reflected in licensing and startup activity domestically and internationally.

E. SESSION IV: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY FOR PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SMES

17. Mr. Fouad Mrad, Senior Programme Manager at the ESCWA Technology for Development Division, moderated the session. Mr. Ahmad Ellaithy, Senior Director of the Technology Transfer Office at the American University in Cairo (AUC) presented the effects of introducing a technology transfer office and an intellectual property policy at AUC. He gave an overview of the inception of the AUC technology transfer office, which was funded through a European Union pilot project that involved three other public universities in Egypt: Helwan University, Asyout University and Cairo University. He summarized the level of engagement and the number of patents and innovation disclosures filed, and listed the positive effects of introducing the technology transfer office at AUC, including increased entrepreneurship activity and orientation inside labs, higher awareness of and engagement with intellectual property matters beyond the school of science and engineering, positive change in perceptions of AUC, and the positive impact of innovation metrics. He explained that challenges facing the AUC technology transfer office included low local appetite from industry and markets for disruptive innovation, high anxiety with regard to demanding fair terms in intellectual property agreements, confusion about the difference between ownership, revenue distribution and inventorship, managing patent costs and owning equity. He also gave an overview of the challenges observed with technology transfer offices in Egypt, including a lack of dedicated resources and funds or de-risking and translation of research with well suited terms and metrics, in addition to legal and procedural challenges relating to universities' engagement in economic spheres.

18. Ms. Amal Abdullah, an expert in intellectual property for entrepreneurs at Saba for Intellectual Property in Lebanon, delivered a presentation on intellectual property and entrepreneurship. She gave an overview of Saba Intellectual Property and its services in the areas of prosecution, registration and enforcement of intellectual property rights and related legal and paralegal services. She explained that intellectual property education was key for raising the awareness of entrepreneurs on intellectual property systems, how to protect their ideas, types of available intellectual property protection, and how to legally enforce intellectual property rights. She listed some of the challenges and common problems that entrepreneurs and startups faced when deciding on their intellectual property strategy including challenges related to resources (financial and human), identification of business' intellectual property, and formulating good intellectual property strategies. She explained that common problems included: proper assignment of intellectual property rights at early stages (employees, consultants), ownership of intellectual property assets; disclosure of intellectual property rights; allowing others to use intellectual property assets; and not seeking advice from intellectual property specialists. She concluded that when entrepreneurs recognized, protected, exploited (licensing, valuation, marketing), and enforces intellectual property rights properly, they gained a competitive advantage in the market and over the competition.

19. Ms. Tamara Nanayakkara, Counsellor at the SMEs and Entrepreneurship Support Division at the WIPO Department for Transition and Developed Countries, presented the intellectual property system and its role in innovation and in WIPO programmes for SMEs. She gave an overview of the broad areas of WIPO work: international legal standards and treaty making and management, and supporting the use of intellectual property for economic development. She presented the scenario of a national innovation system with two main pillars: knowledge-based and industrial/services sector with intermediaries such as science parks, innovation centres, and incubators supported by the policy framework. She said that intellectual property was an element in stimulating the creation of knowledge and enabling its transfer to service sectors, and allowed industrial sectors to compete in the market place. She clarified that the main challenges faced by developing countries includes a lack of intellectual property management in universities, SMEs and start-ups, an absence of collaboration between universities and industry, limited intellectual property expertise, a lack of intellectual property education and funding, foreign finance and development, and a lack of policies to support local innovations. Within this context, she presented possible WIPO interventions in innovative SMEs, startups and research. She also provided examples of WIPO activities and intellectual property business-oriented publications explaining the different types intellectual property, and IP Panorama as an intellectual property learning tool.

20. Mr. Mohammad Diab, Intellectual Property Senior Specialist at the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) and the Princess Somaya University of Technology in Jordan, presented the intellectual property governance structures for Jordanian academic and research institutions. He gave an overview of the situation from the academic, incubator and research perspectives. He said that RSS was established in 1970 and was the first institution in the region to establish a technology transfer office in the 1990s. He explained that the intellectual property registration office provided IP and business advisory services, including strategic consulting as official IP agents in Jordan, patent drafting and assessment, commercialization advice, and IP governance and regulation. He tackled the issue of IP policies in Jordanian universities, and explained that although all universities aimed to create and spread knowledge, each university had its own strategy to implement and achieve its mission and vision, thus requiring different IP policies. He also addressed technology transfer setups in Jordanian universities, clarifying that the Jordan Technology Transfer Network was established in 2010 and comprised 22 offices in Jordan representing universities, research institutions and industry players with a centralized office.

F. SESSION V: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER IN SELECTED ARAB COUNTRIES

21. The fifth session on intellectual property and technology transfer in selected Arab countries was moderated by Mr. Hassan Ghaziri, Founding Director of the Beirut Research and Innovation Centre. The first case was presented by Mr. Mahmoud Sakr, President of the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology (ASRT) of the Ministry of Scientific Research in Egypt. He presented the experience of Egypt in technology

transfer and intellectual property rights management. He focused on the efforts exerted since the issuance of IPR law (82/2002) and the establishment of the Economic Court in 2008 to improve the legal framework for IPR protection and enforcement so as to attract more investments. He clarified the position of ASRT within the science, technology and innovation system in Egypt, and its functions as a national academy, a national think tank, a house of expertise, and a funding governmental organization. He explained that the academy was now the main supporter of innovation and IPR, and the main driver of innovation and technology transfer in Egypt through four mechanisms focusing on technology, innovation and commercialization offices.

22. The programmes for supporting IP offices for innovation and inventions in Morocco were presented by Ms. Amina Adnani, Head of Legislation and Conflict Department at the Moroccan Office of Industrial and Commercial Property (OMPIC). She started her presentation with a brief overview of the innovation strategy in Morocco and its objective, themes, framework and the role of OMPIC in achieving the objectives of the strategy. She described the role of technology and innovation support centres, which comprised 33 members and 45 focal points in universities, research and development centres, and agencies representing the private sector, providing direct support and assistance on technological information and guidance for innovation protection tools, such as the use of patents, and referrals to existing project financing tools. Within this context, she explained that the activities undertaken by OMPIC included building partnerships with Moroccan universities to foster a culture of industrial property, and to support innovation by teaching about industrial property, organizing joint seminars, exchanging publications and scientific information, providing assistance and training to scientific researchers in filling patent applications, and contributing to the development of a patent protection strategy. She reviewed the IP Portfolio Analysis service used to assess needs in industrial property rights, and the role of the Moroccan Academy of Intellectual and Commercial Property.

23. Ms. Abeer Al Hammadi, Director of Innovation and Economic Development at the Qatar Foundation, delivered a presentation on building bridges for the development of a cohesive innovation ecosystem in Qatar. She provided a general overview of the stages of development in the Qatari research and development environment and the innovation cycle. She explained that these stages had attracted talented human resources, establishing successful international partnerships and practical outputs of international quality. She listed the challenges that included limited funding from the private sector and entrepreneurs/investors, and an absence of sophisticated systems and local expertise in IP. She said that innovation and economic development in Qatar facilitated relationships between Qatar Foundation research institutes/universities and local and international industry players for mutual benefits. She also presented the Al Khabeer programme developed in 2015 as a service to provide IP consulting activities to local entrepreneurs and startups, to foster and grow local players in the innovation ecosystem. She concluded her presentation by clarifying that Qatar Foundation also provided education and training on IP and innovation to build the innovation ecosystem, so as to bridge gaps in understanding and capability.

24. The experience of Tunisia was presented by Mr. Chedli Abdelli, Director of the National Agency for the Advancement of Scientific Research (ANPR). He gave a brief overview of the main stages for developing the IPR system in Tunisia. He clarified that the National Institute for Standardization and industrial intellectual property, the Tunisian Organization for Copyright and Related Rights, and the General Directorate of Plant Varieties at the Ministry of Agriculture were in charge of industrial and intellectual property, supported by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research at the General Administration for Research Valuation and the National Agency for the Advancement of Scientific Research. He focused on intellectual property protection measures in Tunisia and procedures for filing patent applications, with a focus on the good practices. He gave an overview of the financial incentives for patents, presented related statistics and the progress of Tunisia in GII, and discussed the role of ANPR in technology transfer.

G. SESSION VI: COUNTRY EXPERIENCES: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY FOR PROMOTING INNOVATION

25. The session on country experiences in IP for promoting innovation was moderated by Mr. Nawar Al-Awa, ESCWA Regional Advisor on Technology for Development, and included four case studies from Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait and Lebanon. Mr. Abdallah Al Jaadan, Senior Manager of the Innovation Department at

Sabah Al Ahmad Centre for Giftedness and Creativity (SAGCG) of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science, gave an overview of the history of SAGCG, its branches, strategies, vision, mission and objectives. His presentation focused on the activities of the Innovation Department that was divided into the registration, development and commercialization sections. He also presented statistics related to patents, with a focus on medical patents. He concluded his presentation by announcing that SAGCG was planning to establish a medical hub focusing on medical projects with high potential in commercialization and marketing at the international level, in addition to other activities in the pipeline.

26. The Industrial Property System in Iraq was presented by Mr. Bahaddin Hamid Rashid, Director of the Scientific Affairs Department at the Industrial Research and Development Authority of the Ministry of Industry and Minerals in Iraq. He said that industrial property in Iraq included patents and industrial designs, trademarks and tradenames. He gave a general overview of Iraqi industrial property rights laws and the pre-examination system adopted in Iraq, as well as statistics on the number of patents and industrial patents. He explained that there were four obstacles facing the investment of patents: the inventor, the scientific supporter, the investor, and the consumer. He presented a set of suggestions and mechanisms to support inventors, including providing financial and moral support, establishing incubators, providing support to SMEs, issuing and implementing legislation supporting inventors, and increasing penalties for piracy.

27. Ms. Deema Abou Zalayka, Legal Consultant and Director of the Quality Control Section at Abu-Ghazaleh Intellectual Property, made a presentation on experiences and national case studies on IP systems from the region and beyond. Her presentation focused on two lawsuits. The first was a cancellation action of a trade mark in the Syrian Arab Republic, and the second was related to a trade mark infringement in the United Arab Emirates. In both cases, the facts of the lawsuits were discussed in addition to the legal claims, the evidence and final judgements.

28. The status of intellectual property and IP systems in Lebanon was presented by Mr. Wissam El Amil, Head of the IP Office at the Ministry of Economy and Trade in Lebanon. He gave an overview of the legal framework for industrial, intellectual and technical property by highlighting related international agreements and treaties. He also provided an overview of pertinent Lebanese laws, including those in the pipeline. He explained that upcoming activities of the IP Office included launching a national strategy for intellectual property and archiving 3.5 million trademarks, patents, industrial designs, and literary and artistic effects, in addition to other services such as the creation of a database for patents and industrial designs. He said that the IP Office had established strategic partnerships with several organizations including WIPO, the trademark association Brand Owner's Protection Group, the League of Arab States, the European Intellectual Property Office and the Investment Development Authority of Lebanon. It had also signed bilateral cooperation agreements with Egypt and Saudi Arabia. He also detailed the procedures for handling complaints.

H. SESSION VII: REGIONAL AND GLOBAL INITIATIVES IN IP

29. Ms. Mirna Barbar, Programme Management Officer at the ESCWA ICT Policy Section, moderated the session on regional and global IP initiatives. Ms. Fadia Homeidan, Director of Grants and Contracts and Technology Transfer at the American University of Beirut (AUB), made the first presentation entitled "Intellectual property protection and technology transfer at AUB". She summarized efforts made to encourage research, innovation and entrepreneurship at the university. She said that the IP policy at AUB aimed to facilitate research by faculty and staff members, assist them in transferring their ideas into innovation technologies, increase their awareness of intellectual property, foster enhanced research interactions with the private sector, and facilitate the transfer of technologies to enterprises (licensing or startups). She explained that the tasks of the Office include identifying innovation/IP in research projects, assessing patentability potential and coordination of patent filing, ensuring protection and follow-up, and supporting faculty members in transferring technology to industry and/or startups. She then reviewed the cycle of innovation at AUB and the commercialization cycle, and presented the intellectual property and technology transfer challenges faced by the university such as limited financial resources, lack of qualified potential in technology transfer, limited access to relevant industries, absence of national IP policy/strategy, and low national funding for research and development. She noted that the other side of

commercialization at AUB is startups. AUB had therefore established the Centre for Research and Innovation. She also provided examples of entrepreneurship training programmes at AUB and of students' startups.

30. Ms. Tamara Nanayakkara made a presentation on closing the gender gap. She reviewed a WIPO project entitled "Increasing the role of women in innovation and entrepreneurship: encouraging women in developing countries to use the intellectual property system". She said that the four-year project sought to understand the status of women inventors, their problems and challenges, and map existing support systems in four pilot Arab countries including Oman. The second part of the intervention was presented by Mr. Walid Abdelnasser, Director of the WIPO Regional Bureau for Arab Countries. He presented the status of women and intellectual property in the Arab region, highlighting WIPO efforts to promote gender equality through leadership, capacity-building, awareness raising and accountability.

31. The Programme of the Arab Network for Intellectual Property of Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) was presented by Ms. Sally Hassen Hattab, Project Coordinator. She gave an overview of efforts to coordinate the adoption of a common Arab vision and intellectual property. Within this context, she presented the vision of the network, its mission, and objectives to assist Arab countries in developing strategies for protecting and enforcing intellectual property rights, upgrading the efficiency of government agencies involved in the enforcement of intellectual property laws, and strengthening cooperation among Arab countries to develop a common Arab vision on issues related to intellectual property in line with the SDGs. She noted that the network's areas of work included communication and coordination with network members and other intellectual property stakeholders, organizing conferences, seminars and capacity-building workshops, and strengthening links with universities and research centres in Arab countries. She concluded her presentation with a brief on membership conditions.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. VENUE AND DATE

32. The expert group meeting was organized by the ESCWA Innovation Section of the Technology for Development Division. It was held at the United Nations House in Beirut on 17 and 18 April 2019.

B. PARTICIPANTS

33. The meeting was attended by 37 participants, of whom 17 were women, from 12 ESCWA member States (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, State of Palestine, Qatar, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia), and from regional and international organizations such as WIPO, the League of Arab States and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO). The list of participants is set out in the annex to the present report.

C. DOCUMENTS

34. The list of documents and presentations related to the meeting are available at the following link: <https://www.unescwa.org/events/egm-intellectual-property-systems-arab-region>.

D. EVALUATION

35. An evaluation questionnaire was distributed to participants to assess and rate the effectiveness, and impact of the meeting. The feedback was positive, most participants (96 per cent) found that the meeting met their overall expectations and achieved its purpose. Around 92 per cent of participants believed that the topics were relevant and critical to advancing discussions and action in the region. Over 80 per cent rated most of the sessions as good or excellent, whereas 70 per cent agreed that the time allocated for interactive discussions was enough. Around 50 per cent thought that the conclusions reached and proposed next steps were clear. Most participants rated the organizational aspects of the meeting as good or excellent.

Annex*

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

A. COUNTRY ORGANIZATIONS AND EXPERTS

Egypt

Mr. Ahmed Ellaithy
Senior Director of Technology Transfer Office
American University in Cairo (AUC)
E-mail: ellaithy@aucegypt.edu

Mr. Mahmoud Sakr
President
Academy of Scientific Research and Technology
(ASRT)/Ministry of Scientific Research
E-mail: msakr@asrt.sci.eg
sakrasrt@gmail.com
hanaa.elbayoumy@gmail.com

Mr. Mohamed Hegazi
Head of Intellectual Property Rights Office
and Head of Legislation and Laws Committee
Ministry of Communications and Information
Technology-Information Technology Industry
Development Agency
E-mail: mohegazy@itida.gov.eg

Iraq

Mr. Bahaddin Hamid Rashid
Director of Scientific Affairs Department
and responsible for IP Activity at the
Corporation of Research and Industrial
Development
Ministry of Industry and Minerals
E-mail: bahaddin@yahoo.com

Jordan

Ms. Gina Farraj
Advisor to the Minister
Ministry of Industry and Trade and Supply
E-mail: gina.Farraj@mit.gov.jo

Ms. Deema Abou Zalayka
Legal Consultant and Director of Quality
Control Section
Abu-Ghazaleh Intellectual Property (AGIP)
E-mail: dabu-zulekha@tag-legal.com

Mr. Mohammad Diab
Intellectual Property Rights Senior Specialist
Royal Scientific Society and Princess Somaya
University of Technology-iPark
E-mail: mohd_s_diab@hotmail.com

Kuwait

Abdallah Al Jaadan
Senior Manager of Innovation Department
of Sabah Al Ahmad Centre for Giftedness
and Creativity
Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement
of Science (KFAS)
E-mail: a.aljadaan@sacgc.org

Lebanon

Mr. Wissam El Amil
Head of Intellectual Property Office
Ministry Economy and Trade
E-mail: wamil@economy.gov.lb

Mr. Pierre El Khoury
Director
Beirut Bar Association
Lebanon
E-mail: el.khoury.pierre@gmail.com

Ms. Fadia Homeidan
Director of Office Grants and Contracts
and Technology Transfer
American University of Beirut (AUB)
E-mail: fh01@aub.edu.lb

Ms. Fatme Charafeddine
Associate University Librarian for Research
and Instruction
AUB
Lebanon
E-mail: fc01@aub.edu.lb

Mr. Nael Berri
Research Valorization
The National Council for Scientific Research
(CNRS)
Lebanon
E-mail: nael.berri@gmail.com

* Issued as submitted.

Lebanon (continued)

Ms. Tamara Elzein
Director of Programme
CNRS
E-mail: tamara.elzein@cnrs.edu.lb

Ms. Elise Noujeim
Associate Researcher and Director of the Grant
Research Programme
CNRS
E-mail: enjeim@cnrs.edu.lb

Ms. Krystel Khalil
Programmes Director
Berytech
E-mail: krystel.khalil@beryttech.org

Ms. Amal Abdullah
Expert in Intellectual Property
for Entrepreneurs
Saba for Intellectual Property
E-mail: aabdallah@sabaip.com

Mr. Hassan Ghaziri
Founding Director
Beirut Research and Innovation Centre
E-mail: hassan.ghaziri@epfl.ch
Info@lebcsr.org
hassan.ghaziri@gmail.com

Mr. Souheil Marine
Consultant
E-mail: souheilmarine@yahoo.fr

Mr. Omar Bizri
Expert in Science and Technology
E-mail: omarbizri@gmail.com

Morocco

Ms. Amina Adnani
Moroccan Office of Industrial and Commercial
Property (OMPIC)
E-mail: adnani@ompic.ma

Mr. Ilyas Azzioui
Head of Innovation and Technology Transfer Unit
National Centre for Scientific and Technological
Research (CNRST)
E-mail: ilyas.azzioui@gmail.com

Oman

Ms. Hanan Al-Jabri
Trademark Researcher
Ministry of Commerce and Industry
E-mail: hah4eee@hotmail.com

State of Palestine

Mr. Ali Thouqan
Director of Intellectual Property
Ministry of National Economy
E-mail: alit@met.gov.ps

Qatar

Mr. John Taylor McEntire
Director of Industry Development, IP
and Commercialization, Research, Development
and Innovation Division
Qatar Foundation (QF)
E-mail: jmcentire@qf.org.qa

Ms. Abeer Al-Hammadi
Director of Innovation and Economic
Development
Qatar Foundation (QF)
E-mail: aalhammadi@qf.org.qa

Sudan

Mr. Mohamad Ali
Director
Africa City of Technology
E-mail: mohamedali1999@yahoo.com

Syrian Arab Republic

Ms. Ghaida Rebdawi
Deputy Director for Educational Affairs
Higher Institute for Sciences and Technology
(HIAST)
E-mail: ghaida.rebdawi@hiast.edu.sy

Ms. Rania Abdrabeh
Director of National Quality Programme
Planning and International Cooperation
Commission (PICC)
E-mail: rania.abdrabo@yahoo.com

Mr. Majed Al Jamali
Director General
High Commission for Scientific Research
E-mail: maljamali@gmail.com

Tunis

Ms. Nefissa Chakroun
Consultant on Intellectual Property
and Technology Transfer
E-mail: c.nefissa@gmail.com

Mr. Chedli Abdelli
Director
The National Agency for the advancement
of scientific research (ANPR)
E-mail: abdelly.chedly@gmail.com
contact@anpr.tn

Mr. Naffa Boutiti
Deputy Director for the Industry Property
Department
E-mail: nafaa.boutiti@innorpi.tn

B. INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization

Ms. Sally Hassen Hattab
Projects Coordinator
E-mail: sally_hassen_83@yahoo.com

League of Arab States

Ms. Maha Bkheet Mohamed Zaki
Director Intellectual Property and Competitiveness
Department
Economic Sector
E-mail: maha.Bekheet@las.int

World Intellectual Property Organization

Mr. Walid Abdelnasser
Director of the Regional Bureau
for Arab Countries
E-mail: walid.abdelnasser@wipo.int

Ms. Tamara Nanayakara
Counsellor, SMEs and Entrepreneurship Support
Division (SESD), Department for Transition
and Developed Countries
E-mail: tamara.nanayakkara@wipo.int

C. UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

Mr. Haidar Fraihat
Director
Technology for Development Division (TDD)
E-mail: fraihat@un.org

Ms. Nibal Idlebi
Chief of Innovation Section
TDD
E-mail: idlebi@un.org

Mr. Fouad Mrad
Senior Programme Manager
TDD
E-mail: mrad@un.org

Ms. Mirna Barbar
Programme Management Officer
TDD
E-mail: barbarm@un.org

Ms. Lize Denner
Associate Programme Management Officer
Innovation Section
TDD
E-mail: denner@un.org

Ms. Maya Hammoud
Research Assistant
Innovation Section
TDD
E-mail: hammoudm@un.org

Ms. Khadija Mansour
Staff Assistant
TDD
E-mail: mansour10@un.org

Mr. Elio Helou
Intern
TDD
E-mail: elio.helou@gmail.com