

China tops patent, trademark and design filings in 2016 – UN agency reports

6 December 2017 – Worldwide filings for patents, trademarks and industrial designs reached record heights in 2016 amid soaring demand in China, which received more patent applications than the combined total of applications received by the United States, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the European Patent Office, the United Nations intellectual property agency said Wednesday.

Innovators around the world filed [3.1 million patent applications](#) in 2016, up 8.3 per cent for a seventh straight yearly increase, according to the World Intellectual Property Office's annual report.

China accounted for 98 per cent of total growth, receiving about 236,600 of the nearly 240,600 additional patent filings.

Trademark applications jumped by 16.4 per cent to about seven million, and worldwide industrial design applications grew by 10.4 per cent to almost one million – both also driven by growth in China.

“The latest figures charting a rise in demand for intellectual property rights confirm a decade-long trend, where developments in China increasingly leave their mark on the worldwide totals,” said WIPO Director General Francis Gurry. “China is increasingly amongst the leaders in global innovation and branding.”

Patents

China's State Intellectual Property Office received the highest number of patent applications in 2016, a record total of 1.3 million. It was followed by the US Patent and Trademark Office at 605,571, the Japan Patent Office at 318,381, the Korean Intellectual Property Office at 208,830 and the European Patent Office at 159,358.

On a per-capita basis, patent filings in China ranked behind those in Germany, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the US.

Asia's share of all applications filed worldwide has increased from 49.7 per cent in 2006 to 64.6 per cent in 2016, primarily driven by strong growth in filings in China. Offices located in Asia received just over 2 million applications.

Trademarks

An estimated 7 million trademark applications covering 9.77 million classes were filed worldwide in 2016, 16.4 per cent more applications than in 2015, marking the seventh consecutive year of growth.

“The number of trademarks being sought around the world has increased three-fold since 2001, reflecting the importance of protecting branding assets in today’s business environment,” said Mr. Gurry.

The office of China had the highest volume of filing activity with a class count of around 3.7 million, followed by the US at 545,587, Japan at 451,320, the European Union at 369,970 and India at 313,623.

Industrial designs

Global industrial design filing activity in 2016 grew by 10.4 per cent to an estimated 963,100 applications containing 1.2 million designs. Design counts worldwide grew by 8.3 per cent, driven primarily by strong growth in China.

The office of China received applications containing 650,344 designs in 2016, corresponding to 52 per cent of the world total, followed by the EU at 104,522, the Republic of Korea at 69,120, Germany at 56,188 and Turkey at 46,305.

Among the top 20 offices, the fastest growth in design counts occurred in Iran, a 34.8 per cent increase, followed by Ukraine’s 17.4 per cent growth, China’s 14.3 per cent increase and the US’s 12.1 per cent growth.

[Issue of Jerusalem must be resolved through direct negotiations between parties, UN chief stresses](#)

6 December 2017 – In the wake of the announcement by the United States President recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres on Wednesday stressed that there is no alternative to the two-state solution and that Jerusalem is an issue that must be resolved through direct negotiations between the parties.

“In this moment of great anxiety, I want to make it clear: there is no alternative to the two-state solution. There is no Plan B,” said Mr. Guterres, speaking to the press at UN Headquarters in New York.

In his [remarks](#), the UN chief noted that it is only by realizing the vision of two states “living side-by-side in peace, security and mutual recognition, with Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and Palestine, and all final status issues resolved permanently through negotiations,” that the legitimate aspirations of both peoples will be achieved.

“I understand the deep attachment that Jerusalem holds in the hearts of so many people. It has been so for centuries and it will always be,” he added.

I will do everything in my power to support the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to return to meaningful negotiations and to realize this vision of a lasting peace for both people.

He also noted that since he took up his post as UN Secretary-General, he has consistently spoken out against any unilateral measures that would jeopardize the prospect of peace for Israelis and Palestinians.

“For my part as the UN Secretary-General, I will do everything in my power to support the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to return to meaningful negotiations and to realize this vision of a lasting peace for both people,” he stated.

[Millions of babies, mostly in South Asia, risk brain damage from breathing toxic air, UNICEF warns](#)

6 December 2017 – Almost 17 million babies live in areas where air pollution is at least six times higher than international limits, causing them to breathe toxic air and potentially risking their brain development, according to a new paper released on Tuesday by the United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)).

[Danger in the Air](#), notes that breathing in particulate air pollution can damage brain tissue and undermine cognitive development – with lifelong implications and setbacks.

“Not only do [pollutants harm babies’ developing lungs](#) – they can permanently damage their developing brains – and, thus, their futures,” said UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake.

Satellite imagery reveals that South Asia has the largest proportion of babies under the age of one living in the worst-affected areas, with 12.2 million babies residing where outdoor air pollution exceeds six times international limits set by the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)). The East Asia and Pacific region is home to some 4.3 million babies living in areas that exceed six times the limit.

“Protecting children from air pollution not only benefits children. It also benefits their societies – realized in reduced health care costs, increased productivity and a safer, cleaner environment for everyone,” he stressed.

The paper shows that air pollution, like inadequate nutrition and

stimulation, and exposure to violence during the critical first 1,000 days of life, can affect the development of their growing brains.

It explains that ultrafine pollution particles are so small that they can enter the blood stream, travel to the brain, and damage the blood-brain barrier, which can cause neuro-inflammation.

Some pollution particles can cause neurodegenerative diseases while others can damage brain areas for learning and development.

A young child's brain is vulnerable: by a smaller dosage of toxic chemicals, as compared to an adult's; as they breathe more rapidly; and because their physical defences and immunities are not fully developed.

The paper outlines urgent steps to reduce the impact of air pollution on babies' growing brains, including immediate actions for parents to decrease children's exposure at home to harmful fumes produced by tobacco products, cook stoves and heating fires.

It also suggests investing in cleaner, renewable sources of energy to replace fossil fuel combustion; provide affordable access to public transport; increase green spaces in urban areas; and provide better waste management options to prevent open burning of harmful chemicals.

Danger in the Air advises reducing children's exposure to pollutants by traveling during lower air pollution times of the day; providing appropriately fitting air filtration masks, in extreme cases; and creating smart urban planning so that major sources of pollution are not located near schools, clinics or hospitals.

It further recommends improving children's overall health to bolster their resilience, and promotes exclusive breastfeeding and good nutrition.

Finally, as reducing children's exposure begins with understanding the quality of air they are breathing, the report endorses improved knowledge and monitoring of air pollution.

"No child should have to breathe dangerously polluted air and no society can afford to ignore air pollution," Mr. Lake concluded.

Use fiscal stability to bolster inclusive and sustainable development in Asia-Pacific, UN report urges

6 December 2017 – Countries in the Asia-Pacific region should make the most

of the prevailing stable economic conditions to orient their economies towards a more socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable path, the United Nations development wing in the region has urged.

“Unless economic growth is accompanied by an expansion of decent jobs and strengthening of social safety nets, the region will continue to see a rise in inequality and little progress in eliminating poverty,” [said](#) Shamshad Akhtar, the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific ([ESCAP](#)).

“Without concerted efforts, economic growth will continue to come at a significant, and often irreversible, environmental cost,” she added, unveiling the [year-end update](#) to the Commission’s flagship publication, the [Economic and Social Survey for Asia and the Pacific](#).

The report highlights that fiscal sustainability is not a concern in most countries but overcoming the wide financing gap – difference between public investments required to effectively pursue sustainable development and the prevailing trends – requires fiscal space to be enlarged, including through the mobilization of resources, broadening private sector participation and strengthening capital markets.

It also states that countries can improve governance and fiscal management through effective leverage of technology.

“Through the use of technology, Governments can improve tax administration and compliance and the implementation of direct benefit transfers while improving public expenditure efficiency,” reads the year-end update.

Regional economic outlook for 2018 ‘broadly stable’ but private investment remains weak

The report also cautions that while the regional economic outlook for 2018 is “broadly stable,” private investment remains weak in most countries, partly as a result of overcapacity and debt overhang in the corporate and banking sectors of some major economies.

To achieve a stable and sustained economic growth momentum, higher wages supported by productivity gains and revival of private investment will be needed, it urges.

The Economic and Social Survey for Asia and the Pacific (published until 1973 as the Economic Survey of Asia and the Far East) has been [issued annually](#) by ESCAP since 1947. It is one of the longest, continuously running reports in the UN system, monitoring progress on and analysing emerging socioeconomic issues in the region and providing policy advice to the decision makers.

Somalia Partnership Forum stresses job creation and poverty reduction to promote stability

5 December 2017 – A gathering of senior representatives of the Somali Government, the United Nations and the international community concluded in Mogadishu today with a call for greater investment in the country's economic development to create more job opportunities, rehabilitate essential infrastructure, and improve the living conditions of the Somali people.

For the second consecutive day, the Federal and state-level leaders of the country met with senior representatives of the international community in the so-called Somalia Partnership Forum to assess the various challenges facing Somalia, with today's high-level conference focusing on humanitarian and development issues.

Participants commended the Government of Federal President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed "Farmaajo" for its leadership in the country's drought response effort that averted a devastating famine in 2017. But several speakers also warned that the threat of a major humanitarian disaster still loomed over millions of Somalis, and continued support from international partners would be needed for the foreseeable future.

"Unfortunately, we cannot declare victory, and we have to exercise extreme caution because the situation remains the worst we have faced in recent living memory after four failed rainy seasons," said Peter de Clercq, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator and the Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative for Somalia.

"We continue to need deliveries of humanitarian assistance to the tune of \$100 million per month," he explained.

Mr. de Clercq noted that international partners have provided over \$1.2 billion in assistance to support the Federal Government's drought response effort this year, adding that a humanitarian response plan for Somalia in 2018 will seek to raise another \$1.5 billion.



Peter de Clercq (left), UN Deputy Special Representative for Somalia who is also the UN Resident Humanitarian Coordinator, speaks during the Somalia Partnership Forum in Mogadishu. UN Photo/Omar Abdisalan

"Without the support of the international community, we could not have averted this famine," Somalia's Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khairi said in his remarks at the event.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

([OCHA](#)), poverty, marginalization, armed violence, insecurity, political instability, natural disasters and a lack of economic development have driven up humanitarian needs for decades in the east African country.

Also, a lack of access to basic services, especially in the areas of education and livelihoods opportunities, can easily tip residents into the vulnerable category in terms of relief needs, as well as encouraging outward migration in search of employment and increased susceptibility to recruitment by militant groups.

In his keynote address, President Farmaajo said his Government intends to reduce poverty by two per cent each year and had created jobs for thousands of Somali youth since taking office earlier this year with assistance from the international community.

“We must still do more to retain our young people,” he added. “That is a must, not only to grow our country but also for preventing radicalization. We are fully aware that socio-economic improvements to the quality of our people’s lives...will undoubtedly help bring about political stability.”

President Farmaajo also reiterated his long-standing call for debt relief that would provide Somalia with access to loans from international financial institutions to pay for urgently needed infrastructure improvements.

“If we are not able to build roads required by our small businesses to bring their produce to market, it would be difficult to meet our stated goal of reducing poverty,” the President said.

A communiqué issued at the end of the meeting welcomed the Federal Government’s pledge to hold one-person, one-vote elections in 2021. The document also stated that the next Somalia Partnership Forum would be held in the middle of 2018.