

Turning problems into progress: UN celebrates 'risk-takers' on World Intellectual Property Day

26 April 2017 – On [World Intellectual Property Day](#), the United Nations is spotlighting innovation – “future-shapers and risk-takers” – exploring how it is making our lives healthier, safer, and more comfortable, turning problems into progress.

Marking the Day at World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) headquarters in Geneva, UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres [noted](#) that while the world is facing enormous changes and challenges, including new technologies and shifting labour markets that will impact people’s lives, WIPO has an essential role to play.

“Your organization can be a central tool of the UN to be able to cope with these challenges, to provide us with the knowledge about what is happening, to give us the ideas, the suggestions of how we can organize ourselves at different levels to be able to cope with these challenges,” he said.

WIPO is the global forum for intellectual property services, policy, information and cooperation. We are a self-funding agency of the United Nations, with 189 member States. The agency’s mission is to lead the development of a balanced and effective international intellectual property (IP) system that enables innovation and creativity for the benefit of all.

Mr. Guterres continued: “Your organization has an extremely important role, because you are in the frontier of knowledge and the frontier of knowledge is in the end what will determine the future of our international community.”

For his part, WIPO Director General Francis Gurry [said](#), this year’s campaign celebrates all those risk takers, those ‘future shapers,’ those innovators who develop a new technology, product or service that spurs us onward and makes us better.”

“On World Intellectual Property Day, let us reflect on and appreciate the energy, drive and dedication required to translate an idea into reality. And let us renew our commitment to building a global IP framework that makes innovation work for everyone, everywhere,” he said.

He noted that innovation – and the technological progress it represents – makes a significant contribution to economic growth and creates opportunities for new and better jobs.

“We often do not take enough time to think about the many ways in which innovation improves the quality of our lives. One only has to compare the way we live today with the way we lived 100 years ago,” he continued.

Over the past century, he said, the world had seen an extraordinary

transformation in the quality of “our material lives, thanks to the introduction of countless new and improved technologies and products.”

Mr. Gurry went on to explain that intellectual property, such as patents, trademarks, industrial designs and copyright are a crucial part of a successful innovation system.

“It provides a return for those who take the risk to introduce the ‘new’ – in terms of products and services – into the economy. It provides a framework for the rather difficult and challenging journey that any idea has to undertake before becoming a commercially available product or service,” he stated.

Mr. Gurry concluded by inviting everyone to take advantage of this year’s campaign as “an opportunity for us all to think about what it actually takes to invent something and the challenges associated with that process. It is also a chance for us to consider how we can make innovation really work for the benefit of the whole of society.”