



**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

World IP Day 2024 – IP and Sustainable Development Goals

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Introduction

World Intellectual Property (“IP”) Day (April 26) is marked as the day on which the importance of IP and IP rights is celebrated around the world. A unique opportunity to shed light on the significant contributions of creators and innovators globally and to raise awareness around the IP system and its potential in driving positive change within societies.

IP and Sustainable Development Goals

The [theme](#) of this year’s World IP Day chosen by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)? ***“IP and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Building our common future with innovation and creativity.”***

Said theme explores how the IP system can aid in achieving the [seventeen \(17\) SDGs](#) set by the United Nations. The 17 SDGs are the following:

1. No Poverty
2. Zero Hunger
3. Good Health and Well-Being
4. Quality Education
5. Gender Equality
6. Clean Water and Sanitation
7. Affordable and Clean Energy
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth
9. Industry – Innovation – Infrastructure
10. Reduced Inequalities

11. Sustainable Cities and Communities
12. Responsible Consumption and Production
13. Climate Action
14. Life Below Water
15. Life on Land
16. Peace-Justice-Strong Institutions
17. Partnerships for the Goals

The SDGs are at the core of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted by the United Nations Member States in 2015 and constitute ambitious shared goals that need to be reached for a sustainable future. According to the [United Nations](#), the SDGs are a *“shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future”*.

IP System – Facilitator of Change

A balanced and contentious development of the IP system has the potential to lead in fostering sustainable, fair and prosperous societies. Though the IP system is arguably linked to all the SDGs, certain contemporary examples are presented below, to highlight how the IP system is connected to the SDGs and consequently can lead to effective societal change.

Goal 1 (No poverty) and Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)

Goal 1 and Goal 8, which relate to the elimination of poverty around the world and economic development, can be achieved by encouraging

creators and innovators to seek protection for the IP created and developed by them so as to secure their rights against unlawful uses and users. Simultaneously, this action will set them in a position to financially exploit their creations and inventions through, for instance, the licensing of their valuable IP to third parties while effectively enforcing their rights against third parties, where needed. A strong IP system is essential in providing incentives to creators and innovators to further implement and explore their ideas.

In addition, the development of IP awareness is crucial and can lead to the beneficial outcome of creators and innovators not being taken advantage of when licensing their IP rights to third parties. IP and economic growth are interlinked, considering that the most advanced economies in the world are simultaneously the largest IP producing countries, where high levels of protection and incentives are offered to creators and innovators to produce and develop IP.

Goal 13 (Climate Action) and Goal 7 (Affordable and Green Energy)

Goal 13 and Goal 7, which relate to the battling of the threatening phenomenon of climate change and the development of green energy, can be achieved, for example, through a robust patent system. Namely, patent law is capable of providing incentives to inventors in order to continue innovating in terms of creating novel solutions in the field of “green” technologies, which aim to tackle global persistent issues.

The patent system is evidently closely linked with the process of creating new technologies that can become essential in combating global warming and adapting to the new reality and challenges that climate change presents and will continue to present in the future. In its essence patent law is a useful tool in promoting innovation. To be noted that other forms of IP rights such as trademarks, trade secrets and industrial designs

can also be leveraged to promote sustainability and the respective SDGs.

Conclusion

The IP system is capable of promoting sustainability and therefore the SDGs set by the United Nations. Imminent action is required to address and mitigate the global challenges presented, where companies and individuals making use of the IP system should not undermine the invaluable opportunity to benefit the world and tackle such thorny issues through the strategic utilization of their IP.

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