

DG Tang Speech – WHO-WIPO-WTO Trilateral

14 November 2023

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Dear DG Tedros of the WHO,

Dear DG Ngozi of the WTO,

Dr. Ambrosio Yobanolo del Real,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you to the WHO for organizing this 10th Trilateral Symposium on human health and climate change. I join my fellow DGs in thanking you for being with us today, and our teams for working hard behind the scenes to make these symposiums a reality each year.

As DG's Tedros and Ngozi have rightly said: the climate crisis is also increasingly a health crisis.

And the impact falls especially hard on the developing world. By 2050, over half of the additional death attributable to climate change is expected to occur in Africa.

This cannot be our future. While the work, expertise and mandate of our three organizations vary, we are united in our common mission to address climate change, health, and in building a better, fairer and more sustainable world.

It is sometimes said that IP is an obstacle to achieving such a world. However, at WIPO we have been working to make IP part of our collective journey towards building a better future for all, as we need IP to help unleash the innovation and creative potential of our peoples around the world in the service of realizing the UN SDGs.

But saying this is one thing, what WIPO is hoping to do, through trilateral cooperation, as well as our programs, is to make this reality.

I am very pleased and proud that this trilateral cooperation has grown from strength to strength, bringing together our three agencies regularly – at the DG level and at the working level – to discuss, plan and, most importantly, to act.

For example, our Trilateral Assistance Platform allows Member States to tap on the expertise and networks of all three agencies to address complex problems which can only be solved through a multi-faceted approach involving health, trade and innovation. I'm pleased that the offerings on this Platform now go beyond Covid-19 to include other issues of common interest to all Member States.

Our annual symposiums, and I note that this is the 10th in the series, allow us to bring together experts and panelists who might otherwise not be in the same room to come together in a common platform to address issues which are by nature, multi-disciplinary.

And our different resources, networks, and expertise, as well as our knowledge can indeed help one another, and especially our Member States, to have the background, context and evidence to make the best policies they can in a complex and dynamic world to address the global challenges that they face individually and together as a global community.

Turning to the topic of today, how climate change is impacting human health, at WIPO we have the benefit of being able to see technology trends from all over the world.

And what we see is that in the last 10-15 years, there has been a consistently high level of investment in technologies and research that are connected to climate change. This is perhaps unsurprising given how climate change has become more visible and alive to everyone, and that, therefore, there is an increasing desire by researchers, universities, start-ups, companies and others to apply their minds and innovative energies to addressing this existential challenge.

However, one big problem has been a gap between those who have and want to offer these technologies, and those who need them. That's why we created WIPO GREEN - a free, online platform matching providers and seekers of green technologies around the world.

Over the past 10 years, it has grown to cover 130,000 technologies from over 140 countries, becoming the biggest green tech exchange-matching platform that the UN offers today.

But what is important is that these technologies have to get into the hands of those who need them and become deployable on the ground.

Partnerships are at the heart of this work. And so our challenge now is how can we work together across the three agencies so that game-changing technologies create impact on the ground.

WIPO will continue to help build innovation and tech transfer capabilities in Member States so that tech transfer can lead to actual deployment on the ground, and help home-grown solutions move from mind to market and be deployed and diffused across the world.

We also want all three agencies to be able to provide and facilitate the important discussions that Member States are taking across the international community on TRIPS flexibilities and other IP issues.

In conclusion, the issues that our Member States and the world have to address are increasingly complex, multi-faceted and dynamic, so it is even more important that we work across agencies, rather than in silos. Today's seminar and our other trilateral initiatives is a concrete way to bring this alive.

I look forward to another open and constructive discussion today and beyond today, and to working with all you to bring our collective expertise, energy and ideas to build a better, fairer and more sustainable world.

Thank you.