



Seventh Global Congress continues march against counterfeiting and piracy

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The Global Congress on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy is the premier international forum for identifying solutions and advancing policy recommendations against the growing challenges of the illegal trade in counterfeiting and piracy. It is convened by a unique public-private partnership with leaders from INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization (WCO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the International Chamber of Commerce's Business Action to Stop Counterfeiting and Piracy (ICC/BASCAP) initiative and the International Trademark Association (INTA).

In early 2004, the need to address the rapidly growing global problem of counterfeiting and piracy was identified as a key priority for national governments and intergovernmental organizations concerned about the myriad adverse costs to social welfare and economic development that was resulting from the rampant theft of intellectual property.

Notably, trade in counterfeit goods was rising dramatically worldwide and had spread to almost every conceivable type of product. Billions of euros in revenues were being lost to the black economy. Counterfeit drugs were putting lives at risk. And there was growing evidence that transnational organized crime networks were using profits from trade in counterfeit and pirated goods to fund their activities.

It was clear that better strategies – based on more effective cooperation between stakeholders at national and international level – were needed to combat the multiple threats posed by this damaging trade. To this end, the first Congress was convened by WCO and INTERPOL with the support of WIPO.

The three intergovernmental organizations, each with a wealth of experience in different aspects of combating counterfeiting and piracy, called together representatives from governments, industry and enforcement agencies.

Together they determined to pool their forces with the objectives of pushing the fight against counterfeiting and piracy up the global political and business agenda; establishing a high level public-private partnership to pursue collective action; and generating conditions which would lead to greater investment of human and financial resources in enforcement measures.

Their overall goal was to improve the understanding of the full range and extent of these costs so as to assist member governments confronting decisions on how investments in IP protection (through legislation and regulatory enforcement) are related to and can improve other social and development priorities, such as economic development, employment, tax base, consumer health and safety, technology transfer, law enforcement and fighting organized crime. Their resolve laid the foundations for a global process, now approaching its seventh session.

Extending from recommendations made at the First Global Congress (Brussels, 2004), the purpose of the Congress has been to raise awareness on the growing counterfeiting and piracy problems, share relevant information, develop strategies to combat the illegal trade and identify practical actions and potential solutions.

The Lyon Declaration, developed at the Second Global Congress in 2005, identified four priority areas which have come to serve as the Congress's mandate and outline for action. These four priorities are: (1) Raising Awareness; (2) Improving Cooperation and Coordination; (3) Building Capacity; and, (4) Promoting Better Legislation and Enforcement.

Drawing from this outline, the Third Global Congress was organized to enable participants to analyze progress made and suggest actions oriented towards the remaining challenges in each of the priority areas. Notably, the Congress also featured a special session on health and safety risks associated with counterfeiting and piracy; and this focus will become a fifth pillar of the Congress' priority focus.

The Fourth Global Congress was the first event held outside of Europe and was co-hosted by WCO and Dubai Customs. It was followed by the Fifth Global Congress, held in Mexico, which drew attention to counterfeiting and piracy in Latin America (LATAM) and engaged senior government leaders from Mexico and throughout the region. Twelve senior Mexican government officials and keynote speakers from Panama, Uruguay, Paraguay, and the Dominican Republic presented their views. Mexico's Intellectual Property Office (IMPI) co-hosted the event, with strong leadership and participation from IMPI Director General Jorge Amigo, underscoring Mexico's commitment to stronger IP

enforcement. LATAM government officials offered proposals for curbing counterfeit and pirated goods in their countries – and committed to build upon work already in place.

The Sixth Global Congress was held in Paris, France, showcasing the French National Exposition on Counterfeiting organized by the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie. France's Intellectual Property Office (INPI) co-hosted the event, with strong leadership and participation from INPI Director General Yves Lapiere.

WCO Secretary General Kunio Mikuriya, will host the Seventh Global Congress on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy to be held in Istanbul, Turkey on 24-26 April 2013.

The Congress will continue the march against counterfeiting and piracy – namely their growing infringement on intellectual property rights and, in diverse economic and societal realities, the costs they impose to consumer health and safety, fair labour legislation, legitimate competitive markets and sources of revenue for national governments and businesses.

With the aim of enhancing public awareness and designing concerted action, the Seventh Global Congress will explore: areas such as building respect for IP, capturing the elusive infringer on the internet, innovative approaches to funding

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activities to counter counterfeiting and piracy, turning the anti-IP sentiment tide, and building capacity to combat transnational organized crime.

The Congress is structured to encourage maximum interaction among the 1,000 expected participants, including: high-level government officials, business leaders, senior law enforcement officials, judges and lawyers, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, consumer groups and academics. ■

For more information and to register, visit: www.ccapcongress.net