GLOBAL CONGRESS
Combating Counterfeiting & Piracy

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Instituto Mexicano de la Propiedad Industrial

NEWS RELEASE

Global Congress calls for co-ordinated response to counterfeits threat

CANCUN, Mexico, 1 December 2009 – Senior decision makers from governments, law enforcement, customs and the private sector are gathering in Cancun for the Fifth Global Congress on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy to identify solutions to the worldwide trade in fake products which pose a threat to health and safety, and the global economy.

More than 500 delegates from nearly 30 countries are attending the three-day meeting (1-3 December) hosted by INTERPOL and the Mexican Institute of Industrial Property (IMPI) to share proposals for reducing the impact of fake goods, identify more innovative solutions and build upon successful strategies already in place.

Supported by the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) with the co-operation of the world's business community, represented by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) through its Business Action to Stop Counterfeiting and Piracy (BASCAP) initiative, the International Trademark Association (INTA) and the International Security Management Association, the Congress provides a unique international public-private sector partnership.

INTERPOL Secretary General Ronald K. Noble opened the Congress saying the threat posed to the health and safety of individuals and the potential damage to economies should not be underestimated, citing recent joint initiatives as evidence of the will and ability to take the fight to the criminals.

"Recent successful operations, such as Operation Pangea II tackling the online sale of counterfeit and illicit drugs, have shown that coordinated action between the public and private sectors does have results, but more importantly it shows that we are taking the fight to the counterfeiters," said Secretary General Noble. "We are tackling this crime in both the real and virtual worlds and INTERPOL will continue to work to ensure that criminals involved in this type of activity can find no safe hiding place."

"The social and economic losses associated with these illegal activities, such as the loss of jobs and tax revenues, constitute a critical concern for governments across the globe," said IMPI Director General Jorge Amigo Castaneda. "We believe that international co-operation is essential to ensure that adequate border measures are enacted to deal with this very delicate situation that threatens every nation and its citizens."_

Speaking on behalf of Francis Gurry, WIPO Director General, Mr Yo Takagi, Assistant Director General said, "WIPO has adopted an inclusive, development-oriented approach to the shared endeavor of building respect for intellectual property which will enable the international community to better calibrate their collaborative efforts."

"The tough economic conditions confronting governments, businesses and citizens around the world, at a time when the trade in fake goods continues to escalate, put into sharp relief the need to find practical, realistic and effective solutions to reduce the negative impact of counterfeiting and piracy and to promote greater respect for intellectual property rights around the world," Mr. Takagi added.

Michael Schmitz, WCO Director of Compliance and Facilitation, added, "Tackling the trade in counterfeit and pirated products requires a multi-pronged approach by all stakeholders. Dangerous counterfeit goods and even more shockingly fake medicines cannot be allowed to continue flowing across borders unhindered. The health and safety of consumers around the world is paramount.

“The WCO will be doing all it can in close co-operation with its international partners to stop this vile trade through enhanced Customs capacity building, an improved Customs-business dialogue, better co-ordinated border management, and rolling multi-agency enforcement operations," Schmitz stressed.

"In the midst of an economic crisis to which no one is immune, the Global Congress continues to be a critical forum for government, industry leaders and organizations such as INTA to find solutions on effective measures against counterfeiting," stated Richard Heath, INTA 2009 President and Vice President of Unilever PLC. "Now more than ever, we need to collectively step up the fight against counterfeiting, especially at a time when counterfeiting networks and activities are transcending borders, utilizing the Internet to sell their illicit goods, and taking advantage of loopholes across jurisdictions to conduct their illegal activities."

“While governments and businesses around the world are dealing with very difficult economic issues, we can’t lose sight of the fact that counterfeiting and piracy is costing all of us billions of dollars, thousands of jobs and exposing consumers to real health and safety risks,” said David Benjamin, Senior Vice President for Anti-Piracy, Universal Music.

“This is not the time to look away, and this Congress can help to focus governments on the necessity to upgrade enforcement measures against intellectual property theft,” Benjamin added.

Leaders at the Congress are expected to present their views on strategies to deal with the increasing trade in counterfeit and pirated products. The OECD estimates that the trade in fakes crossing international borders alone is valued at more than US$200 billion annually. During the Congress, BASCAP will deliver a report to delegates presenting new economic data on the cost of counterfeiting, including the impact on jobs, reduced foreign investment, tax losses, and increased spending on health and law enforcement. BASCAP also will present new research on why consumers buy fake products and what it will take to change those purchase habits.

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