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USPTO and Ghana sign historic statement of intent for Accelerated Patent Grant arrangement

New agreement with Ghana's IP office is the USPTO's first with an African country

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The U.S Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) has marked a historic first after signing a statement of intent for a new Accelerated Patent Grant (APG) arrangement between the USPTO and Ghana's IP office, the Registrar General's Department, Ministry of Justice (GHIPO).

Under Secretary of Commerce and USPTO Director John A. Squires and the Registrar-General of Ghana, Grace Issahaque, signed the statement of intent July 9 in Geneva, Switzerland, on the margins of the annual meeting of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). The agreement with Ghana is the 10th such agreement to be signed by the USPTO and a partner IP office. It marks the first APG agreement with an African country.

"The USPTO is committed to building its relationships with IP offices in Africa," said Under Secretary Squires. "With the signing of this agreement with Ghana we are building on that commitment, which took a big step forward last year with the installation of the USPTO's first-ever intellectual property attaché for the region, Katherine Hiner, in Johannesburg, South Africa."

Following the historic signing, Under Secretary Squires delivered welcome remarks at a WIPO Assemblies side event with the U.S. Mission and Universal Music Group, "IP for Growth Initiative."

"Support for a strong copyright system not only ensures established artists and performers are compensated for their work and sweat," said Under Secretary Squires, "But it also provides critical support when needed the most for local artists, upstart musicians, and first timers breaking into markets, whether locally or in the broader global economy."

Speaking at a livestreamed panel discussion and performance featuring African musicians and U.S. artist John Legend later that same day, the USPTO's Katherine Hiner detailed the role that the USPTO can play

in empowering creators in Africa.

“In today’s global marketplace, rights holders need to have good, consistent laws that protect IP across borders.” She said, adding that “this includes recruiting and training staff, procurement of the necessary equipment, ongoing review of procedures, and facilitating an open dialogue with rights holders in their markets.”

With a gross domestic product of $114 billion in 2025, Ghana is one of the faster-growing economies in Africa. In 2024, according to the World Intellectual Property Organization, 33% of foreign patent applications in Ghana originated with U.S.-based filers.

Under the APG process, an eligible patent applicant who has been granted a U.S. patent by the USPTO may request that Ghana’s IP office grant a patent on a corresponding Ghanaian patent application pending before GHIPO. This worksharing arrangement will continue for five years from the date of signing.

Guidelines describing GHIPO’s implementation of the program and the process for how a U.S. patent holder can take advantage of the arrangement will soon be available on GHIPO’s website.

For more information about USPTO worksharing programs, visit the USPTO’s patent worksharing webpage.

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