

Consolidating Measures for Intellectual Property

International Strategies and Cooperation a Must

In May 2010, the Intellectual Property Strategic Program 2010 was announced. Miho Kawasaki speaks to secretary-general **Kenji Kondo** of the Secretariat of the Intellectual Property Strategy Headquarters about the initiatives being taken by the Japanese government in creating, protecting and utilizing intellectual property.

2010 marks the eighth anniversary of the Intellectual Property Strategy Headquarters, headed by the Prime Minister and set up to encourage planned and focused initiatives in the creation, protection and utilization of intellectual property in Japan. What action has been taken so far?

Kenji Kondo: We have sought to establish an environment that facilitates the use of intellectual property by universities and other research institutes, and by private sector companies.

The patent examination system has been improved to ensure it is among the fastest procedures in the world. And the Intellectual Property High Court was established in 2005 to form dedicated handling litigation involving intellectual property rights such as patent rights.

What issue is receiving the greatest amount of effort these days?

That would be the issue of international stan-

dardization of advanced technology. Even if someone creates an excellent product, it cannot be disseminated to

the world unless it conforms to international standards. Domestic businesses have requested prompt international standardization in seven areas: advanced medicine; water; next-generation automobiles; railways; energy management systems (Smart Grid, energy-conservation technology etc.); content-based media (cloud computing, 3-D technologies etc.); and robotics. For these areas, strategic partnership will be sought during fiscal 2010 with the United States as well as European Union and Asian countries.

What contributions has Japan made in the protection and utilization of global intellectual property?

Active measures have been provided for inter-



Kenji Kondo of the Secretariat of the Intellectual Property Strategy Headquarters

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Meeting of the International Organization for Standardization on Environment Management held in Cairo, June 2009

national cooperation in patent examination, such as by simplifying domestic examinations for inventions patented overseas. Recent problems have been posed by counterfeit goods and pirated content. Japan has cooperated in seminars for detecting counterfeit goods in Asian countries that have frequent incidents involving such goods. But international cooperation is essential for strengthening restrictions on distribution of pirated and other content that violate copyrights. Negotiations are underway for the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) scheme, in which eleven parties, including Japan, the United States and European Union, will participate. The scheme, which was proposed by Japan at the G8 Gleneagles Summit in 2005, aims to establish international legal systems for dealing with infringement of intellectual property rights, including Internet sales of copyright-infringing content and counterfeit goods. Japan has assumed a leading role in the negotiations so far, and we hope that final coordination will take place in Japan in 2010.

What are the areas that you believe

have potential for growth, in terms of intellectual property creation?

In addition to the advanced technological capabilities, diverse types of content collectively referred to as “Cool Japan” have become very popular overseas. It is well known that Japanese animated picture shows like *Captain Tsubasa* and *Pocket Monsters* are hits with children in many countries around the world. Meanwhile, the Japanese movie has drawn attention. For example, some Japanese films have been remade in Hollywood. With the support of the Japanese government, even further growth can be expected in these areas.

For this purpose, a Center of Excellence (COE; a university that can serve as a core base) is being created to help develop human talent. It is intended as a place where people with potential can gather from all over the world. A COE should serve as a place of advanced education for world-class creators and producers; both in terms of production and business. We hope the COE will function as a center of exchange for outstanding human resources both from Japan and abroad, and a source for disseminating information.

We have also provided subsidies to content transmitted by domestic small- and mid-sized companies. This should enable people from other countries to more greatly familiarize themselves with the attractive content created in Japan.

We also hope to develop a way to increase the number of people visiting Japan by linking the content with tourism.

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