

World Intellectual Property Organization

Distr.: General
23 May 2011

Original: English

MUNSA XVI

30 November– 2 December 2011

Agenda item 1

Promoting Both Domestic and Cooperative Incentives to Prevent the Out-Migration of Intellectual and Technical Personnel from Less Developed Nations to More Developed Nations

Report of the Chair

I. Statement of the Problem

1. Since the advance of the age of globalization, forces have arisen in developed nations that act as magnets to external skilled labor: opportunity in the job market, more consumer demand, and a powerful system protecting the rights of ideas. The focus of this committee will deal with the latter.

2. Intellectual property is one of few abstractions capable of making money for undefined periods of time. Ideas that lead to concrete and tangible objects are all the more profitable, as they can be consumed on a global scale, often regardless of cultural differences (eg., computers, cell phones, etc.). Thus, it is obvious that to have considerable power in and to profit from the global market, it would be beneficial to a nation to have regular production of such ideas. Yet, while a less developed nation may produce a substantial amount of consumer-friendly intellectual property, it is in the idea owners best interest to sell their ideas to a more eager market, which is unlikely to exist in their home nation. The issue lies therein.

3. It affects more than a nations economy to have so many personnel lost to a better environment for ideas. According to the World Health Organization, Unplanned or excessive exits may cause significant losses of workers and compromise the systems knowledge, memory and culture. As this problem becomes more globally obvious, developed countries have become wary of reverse brain drain. If the foreign workers that help power the economic system migrate back to their own countries, these powerhouses of tangible technology and software will suffer, along with the many universities that fuel these developments.

4. The issue is, as expected, double-sided. Research at the University of California at Berkeley has shown that 18% of immigrant entrepreneurs and professionals invest in their

own start-ups and venture funds back in their homeland countries. This complicates the situation a bit: will promoting domestic markets for patent owners hurt not only the country to which personnel are migrating, but also the home country itself?

5. This problem left unaddressed will unarguably widen the gap in the global market between idea profitability in more developed and less developed countries. It is imperative that the committee weigh the issue on multiple sides, considering the tension that surrounds it from the viewpoint of both sides of the global economic spectrum.

II. History of the Problem

6. The brain drain dilemma has undergone noticeable trends in its history, in accordance with catastrophic exoduses from one nation to another. The first modern diaspora occurred from post-World War I Europe across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas. Intellectual personnel had found their economy exhausted, with a frigid environment for ideas. Quickly following this period, the same region of Europe experienced an influx of workers from India, consequential of the collapse of the British imperialist empire formerly dominating the region. The Royal Society coined the actual term brain drain, noting that it was synonymous with human capital flight— in other words, money is lost directly with each out-migration.

7. Historically, situations have arisen in which the diaspora has left a culture scattered with a weakened geographical identity, such as the exile of the Jews from Babylon, the Armenians from Turkey in the early twentieth century, or the Trans-Atlantic slave trade of Africans. These situations prove that a culture displaced through mass migration loses economic fortitude, and is more prone to ubiquitous pity or disrespect.

8. On the modern technological scale, the dilemma has become a tug-of-war between the west and the far east. In reality, both regions fear a loss of influence in global technological affairs from outsourcing of workers to each other. Media on both sides expresses deep concern for steepening trends of inter-exchange.

9. In the modernized West, proponents of national IT fortification argue that education has not changed at the pace that technology has. In the past, standard curricula supported the tangible engineering front. This encompassed, most predominantly, the development of military technology. The modern industry obviously favors those who would choose careers in computer science field, but school courses instead necessitate a fundamental knowledge of physics, chemistry, and biology. Thus, the East and the West continue a race that has been underway since the middle of the twentieth century: who can produce a more efficient, intellectually advanced population.

III. Potential Solutions

10. It is important to balance all the sub-issues in potential solutions. In brief, resolutions should assess whether and to what degree leading nations can afford to lose their immigrant personnel, how damaging it is to the developing nations to lose them, and what incentives could be used to retain these skilled workers within their home nations.

11. A feasible solution could involve the emphasis of foreign investment to ideas produced in less developed nations, as well as creating domestic benefits for intellectual property that stays within its home nation. Consideration should be given to the poor state of local post-

graduate education in less developed nations as well as technical job availability in these nations.

12. Solutions may likely involve basic grants and loans from the World Bank as well as non-governmental organizations, but are not limited to these monetary resources. It would be favorable, however, if all solutions were to be beneficial to all parties affected by its ramifications (i.e, beneficial to both developed and developing nations).

IV. Position and Research Tips

13. Since the issue at hand is concerned with a balance between developed and developing nations, debate should foster input from both spectral poles. Bearing this in mind, all delegates should research and familiarize themselves with the following:

- What is your country's position in the global economy?
- Is a domestic patenting system in place?
- If such a system exists, provide statistics on the patent productivity of your country.
- Assess the state of educational activity within your country. This could pertain to the number of college graduates your country produces, and how many of them retain citizenship in your country after graduating.
- From what countries does your country import most of its technological goods? How strong is your country's dependency on this country?

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