

All Africa Intellectual Property Summit 2025

6TH EDITION



REPORT

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Executive Summary

The 6th All Africa Intellectual Property (IP) Summit 2025, with the theme “Building an Inclusive IP Ecosystem for Africa’s Future”, with subtheme “What IP Ecosystem Do We Want for Africa?”, was held from 12–14 November. It was the gathering of Africa’s innovation and IP community at the iconic King Fahd Palace Hotel in Dakar, Senegal. The Summit brought together policymakers, innovators, researchers, government agencies, legal experts, business leaders from across the continent, development partners, and private-sector leaders for three days of strategic dialogue and collaboration. The Summit reaffirmed the need to develop IP systems that are accessible, development-driven, and aligned with Africa’s industrialisation and digital transformation agenda.

Dakar was selected by delegates as the host city because of its geopolitical and environmental relevance. As an emerging West African innovation hub and a climate-vulnerable coastal nation, Senegal represents the dual challenge of protecting ecological assets while accelerating sustainable technological development. The Summit discussions consistently aligned with major development priorities, including climate resilience, deployment of green technologies, youth innovation, and regional economic integration. As a coastal nation on the front line of climate change, Senegal is a critical nexus between environmental protection and IP-driven innovation, underscoring the need to commercialise green technologies and strengthen regional cooperation.

The 6th All Africa Intellectual Property Summit addressed key issues to build the ideal IP ecosystem for Africa. Across multiple breakout sessions, roundtable discussions, and fireside chats, experts explored the need to strengthen IP awareness and enhance capacity among SMEs, thereby fostering greater use of regional IPR systems and harmonising fragmented IP systems across the continent. The summit position was that a unified approach would enable African innovators to enjoy greater protection, reduce IP acquisition costs, and enhance competitiveness in global markets.

Day 1: IP ownership, utilisation, and commercialisation, what is the IP Ecosystem we want for Africa?

The first day of the event began with an electrifying welcome address by the Chairman of the Organising Committee, who clearly stated the Summit’s vision as a multi-stakeholder platform to promote and utilise the Intellectual Property system for the benefit of Africa and Africans. He emphasised the need for all countries on the African continent to align IP with access to finance, digital inclusion, technology transfer, and market access, leveraging the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS), and the African Union’s Digital Transformation Strategy (2020-2030). Goodwill messages were delivered by representatives of the European Union, the Nigerian African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Coordination Office, the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), the AfCFTA Secretariat, Ghana and the Senegalese Government. They all spoke passionately about the importance of IP to Africa’s trade and economic development. Thereafter, there was a spoken word performance on IP ownership in Africa, which was followed by multi-stakeholder dialogue and several breakout sessions on the ideal IP ecosystem for Africa, exhaustion of IP rights in the continent, leveraging patent databases and public domain for African innovation and development, as well as promoting a unified regional system for IP registration in Africa, amongst other topics.

Day 2: Operationalising AfCFTA IP Right protocol in combating counterfeiting/piracy in Africa and navigating Trademark and digital trade

Day 2 featured several engagements on critical issues Africa needs to address to promote an inclusive IP ecosystem across the continent. Issues such as piracy, anti-counterfeiting measures, compulsory licensing, digital governance, and the role of development partners in implementing the AfCFTA IP protocols for trade and IP commercialisation across the continent. The interactive sessions also examined the role of youth, innovation, and IP in unlocking and promoting creative potentials in the continent. The breakout sessions built on this by exploring the continent’s strengths in promoting and protecting geographical indications and copyrights, while utilising Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a powerful tool to advance this agenda for Africa’s benefit.

Day 3: Excursion to tourist sites

Delegates visited different tourist sites, including the African Renaissance Monument, a 52-metre-tall bronze statue offering panoramic views of Dakar and the ocean, making it a scenic vantage point and a symbolic landmark. The second tourist site visited by the delegates is the Gorée Island, built in the late 18th century as one of the sites along the West African coast used in the transatlantic slave trade, where enslaved people were held before being shipped across the Atlantic. Some delegates also visited the beach to enjoy the natural freshness and the sea's waves, which bring peace and serenity.

Conclusion

The Dakar Summit concluded with a shared commitment and a call for sustained multi-stakeholder engagement and coordinated funding mechanisms to build a robust, inclusive African IP ecosystem capable of driving long-term economic transformation. The discussions reaffirmed that, with strategic coordination, environmental consciousness, and continental unity, Africa can harness IP as a transformative lever for prosperity, sustainability, and global competitiveness. The Summit closed with a bold commitment to expand collaboration among African institutions and integrate IP into national economic and development strategies.



10 Introduction



The Summit had delegates from the following countries in attendance: Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, the United Kingdom, Spain, Uganda, Finland, European Union, Republic of Congo, Gabon, Cameroon, Dubai, Kenya, Egypt, the Gambia, Japan, Zimbabwe, Italy, United States, Germany,

This year, the 6th Edition for the All Africa IP Summit focused on Building an Inclusive IP Ecosystem for Africa's Future. The summit featured plenary sessions, breakout sessions, interactive sessions, fireside chats, roundtable discussions, high-level panel discussions, and an exhibition of innovative products. It was a thought provoking, yet very insightful and interactive gathering which provided platform for networking amongst delegates across the continent and beyond. For strategic collaboration among Africans for the greater good of Africa and its people. Above all, it was a convergence of people with the same vision of making intellectual property work for the good of Africa and Africans.

The Summit reaffirmed the urgency of developing IP systems that are accessible, development-driven, and aligned with Africa's industrialisation and digital transformation agenda. Key sessions highlighted

technology transfer, digital IP tools, green innovation, and the need to harmonise fragmented IP structures across the continent. The Summit concluded with a strong continental commitment: **to build a unified, modern, and inclusive IP ecosystem capable of shaping Africa's economic transformation, safeguarding indigenous assets, and positioning the continent as a dynamic player in the global knowledge economy.** As stakeholders return to their various sectors and institutions, the momentum generated in Senegal continues to push Africa closer to a knowledge-driven future where innovation flourishes, sustainability prioritised, and intellectual property becomes a true engine of development across the continent of Africa.

The Summit had delegates from the following countries in attendance



 NIGERIA	 GHANA	 ITALY	 SPAIN	 UGANDA	 FINLAND	 JAPAN	 GABON
 CAMEROON	 DUBAI	 KENYA	 EGYPT	 ETHIOPIA	 CANADA	 NAMIBIA	 GERMANY
 SOUTH AFRICA	 UNITED KINGDOM	 EUROPEAN UNION	 UNITED STATES	 REPUBLIC OF CONGO	 THE GAMBIA	 ZIMBABWE	

1.1. Background

The Africa Intellectual Property Centre (Africa IP Centre) was established in 2019 by the International Trade and Research Centre (ITRC), a Public Policy, Research, Analysis, and Engagement Organisation (PPRAEO) think tank dedicated to strengthening Africa's IP ecosystem and other socio-economic development issues across the global south. The Centre's undertaking is to advocate for a comprehensive, Africa-focused IP policy, support institutional capacity, promote IP awareness, knowledge sharing, innovative Africa IP financing, IP protection, and enforcement and foster collaboration among stakeholders to leverage IP as a tool for development across the continent. Over the years, the Centre has hosted several dialogues, policy analyses, capacity building, advocacy, and the flagship annual All Africa IP Summit. The Centre targets diverse stakeholders, including the public and private sectors, academia, NGOs, and intergovernmental and multilateral institutions.

1.2. Summit Objectives & Key Themes

Objectives:

- To **facilitate dialogue** and collaboration that brings together key stakeholders to discuss the current challenges and opportunities in Africa's IP landscape.
- To **foster collaboration** that connects key stakeholders across public, private, and civil sectors to strategise on building an inclusive and future-ready IP environment.
- To **support AfCFTA implementation** by exploring the role of IP in driving regional integration, industrial development, and cross-border collaboration under the AfCFTA Agreement.
- To **promote an inclusive IP framework** by addressing barriers to participation for underrepresented groups, including women, youth, MSMEs, and underrepresented communities, in the African IP landscape.
- To **empower marginalised groups** by highlighting strategies to include women, youth, and indigenous communities in Africa's IP ecosystem.

- **Promoting policy advocacy** by facilitating discussions on harmonising IP policies across Africa to enhance innovation, creativity, and trade competitiveness.
- To **identify and facilitate solutions** to critical challenges in the channels of translating Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) to wealth for Africa and Africans.

Summarised key themes

- **IP for Inclusive Development:** Empowering women and youth through IP capacity building for MSMEs and startups to leverage bridging the digital divide through equitable IP access.
- **The Role of IP in AfCFTA Implementation:** Harmonising IP protocols under the AfCFTA Agreement, Strengthening regional value chains through IP-Boosting industrial development and export competitiveness
- **Fostering Innovation Through IP:** Promoting technological innovation and digital creativity, supporting African-led decarbonisation and green innovation, and harnessing traditional knowledge and cultural expressions for wealth creation.
- **Policy and Legal Reforms for a Future-Ready IP System:** Reviewing national and regional IP frameworks for inclusivity, while ensuring equitable access to benefit sharing for disadvantaged communities, and addressing cross-border challenges in IP promotion, protection, compliance and enforcement.
- **Africa Partnerships and Investments:** Mobilising public-private partnerships to attract investment for the development of IP ecosystem across Africa and building synergies between governments, academia, and industry.



20 Day 1: IP ownership, utilization and commercialisation, what is the IP Ecosystem we want for Africa, AfCFTA's role in building an inclusive IP Ecosystem we desire for Africa



Representatives of the European Union, the Nigerian AfCFTA Coordination Office, WIPO, the AfCFTA Secretariat, and the Senegalese Government delivered goodwill messages. They all spoke passionately about the important role of IP in Africa's trade and economic development.

Moderator: *Master of Ceremony Mr. Ibrahima Diedhiou, a senior Journalist and Presenter at RTS1 Senegal's National Radio and Television Station.*

2.1. Welcome Address

The welcome address was delivered by Mr. Sand Mba-Kalu, Founder, ITRC & Chairman, All Africa IP Summit Organising Committee.

The Chairman of the All Africa Intellectual Property Summit opened the event by welcoming delegates to Dakar with deep honour, emphasising that the Summit had grown into the continent's most inclusive platform for advancing intellectual property discourse. He recalled that since the inaugural edition in 2020, the mission had remained focused on building an IP system that truly served Africans. He highlighted that previous editions, particularly the 2024 Summit in Kigali, had strengthened collaboration among policymakers, academics, innovators, and industry leaders, producing substantial outcomes, including a 300-page co-authored IP publication linked to Africa's development agenda.

He further stated that the 6th edition, themed "Building an Inclusive IP Ecosystem for Africa's Future," coincided with a critical period in Africa's integration efforts following the recent adoption of the AfCFTA Protocol on Intellectual Property Rights. According to him, while the Protocol marked a historic milestone, the crucial task now lay in developing its operational Annexes, which would determine how IP rights would be protected, enforced, and harmonised across the continent. He urged delegates to focus on practical, solution-driven engagement that would reduce fragmentation, support MSMEs, and strengthen cross-border cooperation.

The Chairman also underscored several emerging global

developments, including WIPO's new Treaty on Genetic Resources, the European Unitary Patent System, and evolving AI regulations as important considerations for Africa in shaping future IP frameworks. He concluded by reiterating that intellectual property was not an abstract or elitist concept but a strategic tool for empowerment, prosperity, and Africa's economic renaissance. Delegates were encouraged to use the Summit as a platform for co-learning and co-creation, reaffirming Africa's commitment to becoming a global creator of ideas and innovations.

2.2. Goodwill Messages

Representatives of the European Union, the Nigerian AfCFTA Coordination Office, WIPO, the AfCFTA Secretariat, and the Senegalese Government delivered goodwill messages. They all spoke passionately about the important role of IP in Africa's trade and economic development. The connecting point of these messages highlights the need for collective efforts by all stakeholders in Africa to promote the profitable utilisation of IP provisions to foster creativity, protect innovation, and ensure the profitable commercialisation of innovative products and services across Africa's vibrant markets and beyond. The messages further established the commitment of WIPO, the EU, and AfCFTA to continually promote initiatives that support Africa's creatives, inventors, and innovators, ensuring that IP works for the good of Africa and Africans.

2.3. Spoken word performance

Ms. Oluneye presented a spoken word rendition that highlighted the contributions of Africa and Africans to creativity on the global stage. The presentation emphasised Africa as the architect of creativity and innovation in various fields across the globe. The power and impact of creativity and innovation in Africa are not in protection alone, but in the ability to own them and be recognised as the source of value creation for humanity. The session was inspiring and electrifying. Delegates were charged with collectively promoting IP protection and ownership of creative works and innovative solutions from Africa, by Africans, across the continent's vibrant markets and beyond.

2.4. High Level Panel - A Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue: What is the IP Ecosystem We Want for Africa?

Moderator: Dr. Charlene Musiza

Panelists:

- Desire Loumou, (Head of Division IPRs AfCFTA Secretariat)
- Abdoulie Colley, (Registrar General, The Gambia)
- Mr David Jeng (World Intellectual Property Organisation)
- Dr. Françoise D. FAYE (Agence Sénégalaise pour la Propriété Industrielle et l'Innovation Technologique (ASPIT))

- Ms. Fatima Bello (Nigeria AfCFTA Coordination Office)

Highlights from the session

Mr Desire Loumou highlighted the objective of the AfCFTA to guide harmonisation across different jurisdictions in Africa. He stated that IP harmonisation in Africa is not just about laws; it is a set of rules, principles, tools, and practices across the four pillars of protection, cooperation, promotion, and enforcement. He stated that the AfCFTA Secretariat was working towards incorporating IP into university curricula and financing IP as a means of harmonisation. Ms Fatima Bello stated that the Nigerian AfCFTA Coordination Office works with stakeholders, businesses, and regulators to achieve a thriving IP ecosystem for businesses in Nigeria. This perspective was also shared by Dr. Françoise Faye on the role of ASPIT in Senegal.



Mr Abdoulie Colley stated that the IP office in Gambia supported the AfCFTA IP Protocol but believed there was room for improvement. He emphasised the importance of National Legal Frameworks, which should be updated and not totally abandoned, but be harmonised with Regional Frameworks. He highlighted that in Gambia, there was a strong move to provide mentorship for innovators and support for researchers. Mr. David Jeng highlighted the need to focus on IP research and commercialisation, stating that Africans should not only be consumers of IP but also creators of IP. He further stated that WIPO initiated the Agri-Business project in 20 African Countries to enable businesses commercialise their IP.

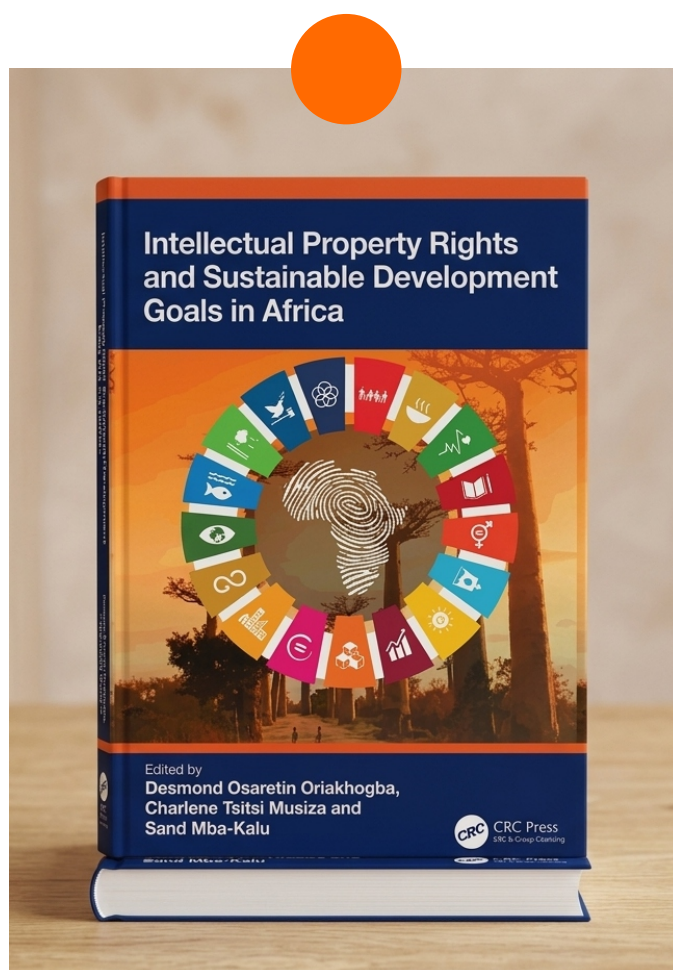
2.5. Book Launch

Prof. Desmond Oriakhogba launched the book titled: Intellectual Property Rights and Sustainable Development Goals in Africa. The book was the outcome of the 5th All Africa IP Summit held in Kigali, Rwanda, in 2024.

The book offers a comprehensive technical analysis of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) in Africa and their role in advancing sustainable development, drawing on case studies from countries including Nigeria, South Africa, Cameroon, Morocco, Tanzania, Egypt, Uganda, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Gambia, and Ghana. It examines how IP frameworks intersect with key sectors such as agriculture, public health, creative industries, finance, and Artificial Intelligence, highlighting their relevance to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those linked to food security, SME empowerment, gender equality, and innovation. The work underscores the need for localised and context-sensitive IP systems that reflect Africa's socio-economic realities, addressing central themes such as AI-generated content, traditional knowledge, and access to medicine. Ultimately, it advocates for balanced IP protection, capacity development, and policy reform to foster innovation while enabling equitable and sustainable development across the continent, making it a valuable resource for academics, researchers, legal practitioners, and policy actors. Delegates were encouraged to pre-order and obtain copies of the book.



The book offers a comprehensive technical analysis of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) in Africa and their role in advancing sustainable development, drawing on case studies from countries including Nigeria, South Africa, Cameroon, Morocco, Tanzania, Egypt, Uganda, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Gambia, and Ghana.



2.6. Paper Presentations/Breakout Sessions

2.6.1 Breakout Session 1

Chair: David Jeng (SN Anku IP firm)

- Moderators:
- Shukurat Amosa (Senior IP Officer – FIIRO)
- Dr. Nogaye Ndour-NIANG (Eenseignante a la FASE/UCAD CAD)

- Presenters:
- Tolu Olaloye (Partner, Jackson, Etti and Edu)
- Sarah Bisamunyi (IP Administrator, Uganda Industrial Research Institute)
- Obambi Wilfred Vivien (Reseau Africain des Magistrats de propriete intellectuelle RAMPI)

1. Rethinking Africa's IP Strategy to Overcome Systemic Barriers

Tolu Olaloye's paper examined Africa's creative and innovation sectors as rapidly growing, but weak and outdated IP systems limit their full potential. The article calls for modern, Afrocentric IP reforms that remove systemic barriers and position IP as a key driver of inclusive development.

Highlights from the paper:

- Africa's creative and innovation sectors are rapidly expanding, driven by youth demographics, digital growth, and rising global recognition, with UNESCO projecting the film industry alone could generate 20 million jobs and US\$20 billion in GDP.
- Existing IP frameworks across the continent are inadequate, under-resourced, poorly integrated into national development agendas, and unable to support creators, innovators, and entrepreneurs effectively.
- An ideal African IP ecosystem should be proactive and Afrocentric, designed to facilitate access for indigenous populations, ensure proper staffing and funding, strengthen enforcement systems, and align with local markets and cultural realities.
- Major systemic barriers persist, including policy inertia, limited public awareness, weak infrastructure, and excessive reliance on outdated foreign models that do not reflect Africa's socio-economic context.
- The article advocates for transformative IP reform, urging Africa to remodel rather than replicate global IP systems, embed IP within development strategies, deepen regional cooperation, and leverage IP as a tool for inclusive growth and global competitiveness.

2. Towards 2040: A Future Study on Building an Inclusive, Impact-Driven IP Ecosystem for Africa

Sara Bisamunyi's study outlined a strategic, future-focused roadmap for building an inclusive, digitally empowered, and economically impactful IP ecosystem for Africa by 2040.

Highlights from the paper:

- The study envisioned the kind of inclusive, impact-driven IP ecosystem Africa should build by 2040, focusing on supporting innovators who currently remain outside formal IP systems.
- The study utilised foresight tools, stakeholder mapping, and policy analysis to identify the long-term systemic changes needed to transform IP access, awareness, and economic participation.
- Four major focus areas were highlighted as: expanding access and inclusion, reforming institutions, harnessing digital technologies for IP services, and strengthening commercialisation opportunities for creators and SMEs.
- The study presented an evidence-based, future-oriented strategy to guide African governments, IP offices, academia, and creators in shaping policies aligned with Agenda 2063, the AfCFTA, and the UN SDGs.
- It ultimately imagines an IP ecosystem created by Africa, for Africa, which is grounded in equity, inclusiveness, and the economic empowerment of all innovators, including youth, rural entrepreneurs, and custodians of indigenous knowledge.

3. Intellectual Property in Africa in the Era of the AfCFTA: Challenges and Modernisation Prospects

Obambi Wilfred Vivien highlighted how the AfCFTA creates a major opportunity for OAPI to modernise its IP system through legal reforms, harmonisation, stronger enforcement, and digital transformation to better support innovation and economic integration.

Highlights from the paper:

- The AfCFTA presents a major opportunity for OAPI, but effective IP implementation is essential for success.
- Key challenges include harmonising national and regional IP laws with international standards and the AfCFTA IP Protocol.

- Counterfeiting, piracy, and limited stakeholder capacity threaten innovation and economic growth in the region.
- Deep legal reforms, especially aligning the Bangui Agreement with the AfCFTA and stronger dispute-resolution mechanisms, are urgently needed.
- Digital technologies, improved training, and a modernised legal framework will help OAPI build a robust IP system that supports innovation and future economic integration.

Summary of session presentations

These studies explored how Africa can transform its intellectual property systems to drive inclusive innovation, economic growth, and regional integration. The following are the key summary of the papers:

- The three papers collectively emphasised that Africa's creative, innovation, and entrepreneurial sectors are growing rapidly, but outdated, fragmented, and poorly resourced IP systems continue to limit their full economic and developmental potential.

They each called for bold, future-oriented reforms, ranging from Afrocentric policy redesign and institutional restructuring to digital transformation, improved enforcement mechanisms, and stronger regional harmonisation, to build inclusive and accessible IP ecosystems that reflect Africa's socio-economic realities.

- The studies argued that by 2040, Africa can achieve a modern, equitable, and innovation-driven IP landscape that empowers creators, aligns with the AfCFTA and the African Union Agenda 2063, and positions IP as a key driver of continental development, competitiveness, and economic integration.

2.6.2 Breakout Session 2

Chair: Chioma Egbob-Nwachukwu (G.Elias)

Moderators:

- Shukurat Amosa (Senior IP Officer – FIIRO)
- Dr. Nogaye Ndour-NIANG (Eenseignante a la FASE/UCAD CAD)

Presenters:

- Blessing Oguntuase (Associate, Ahmed Raji & Co)
- Daniel Acquah (Adjunct Professor, University of Turku, Finland)
- June Anindo (Srathmore Law School)

1. IP in Africa: Promise, Paradox or Mirage

Chioma's paper argued that West Africa's IP system must be reformed from a weak, largely theoretical framework into a practical, enforceable tool that drives innovation, protects local industries, and

boosts economic growth.

Highlights from the paper:

- Intellectual property is increasingly recognised as vital for fostering innovation, protecting local industries, and enabling cross-border trade within Africa.
- Despite existing IP laws and institutions, enforcement weaknesses, low public awareness, and poor cross-border cooperation limit IP's effectiveness in driving economic development.
- Ineffective IP enforcement fuels counterfeiting, undermines legitimate businesses, deters investment, and slows economic growth across the sub-region.
- IP systems in Africa must be reimagined to reflect local market realities, strengthen enforcement, and coordinate effectively across states.
- The paper advocates transforming the current IP ecosystem from a largely theoretical framework into a practical, accessible, and trade-enhancing pillar of West Africa's economic future.

2. Exhaustion of Intellectual Property Rights in Africa

Daniel's work examined the 2023 AfCFTA IP Protocol, which introduces regional exhaustion of IP rights in Africa, creating opportunities for harmonisation, trade, and access to essential works while supporting emerging sectors.

Highlights from the paper:

- The concept of exhaustion in IP law has historically received little focus across the African continent.
- Before February 2023, the African Union had no formal stance on IP rights exhaustion, and regional bodies like the African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation (ARIPO) and the African Intellectual Property Organisation (OAPI) had either no policy or inconsistent rules.
- The laws in many African countries lack explicit provisions on exhaustion, with OAPI member states being the notable exception, with mixed rules.
- The 2023 AfCFTA IP Protocol introduces regional exhaustion, offering an opportunity to standardise rules and promote intra-African trade and competition.
- A mixed set of exhaustion rules may be optimal to ensure broad access to protected works, including books and health technologies, while still supporting emerging sectors like the circular economy.

3. From Exclusion to Inclusion: Leveraging Patent Databases and Public Domain Technologies for African Innovation and Development

June's paper examined how Africa could adapt and repurpose existing patents to solve local challenges, particularly in health and agriculture.

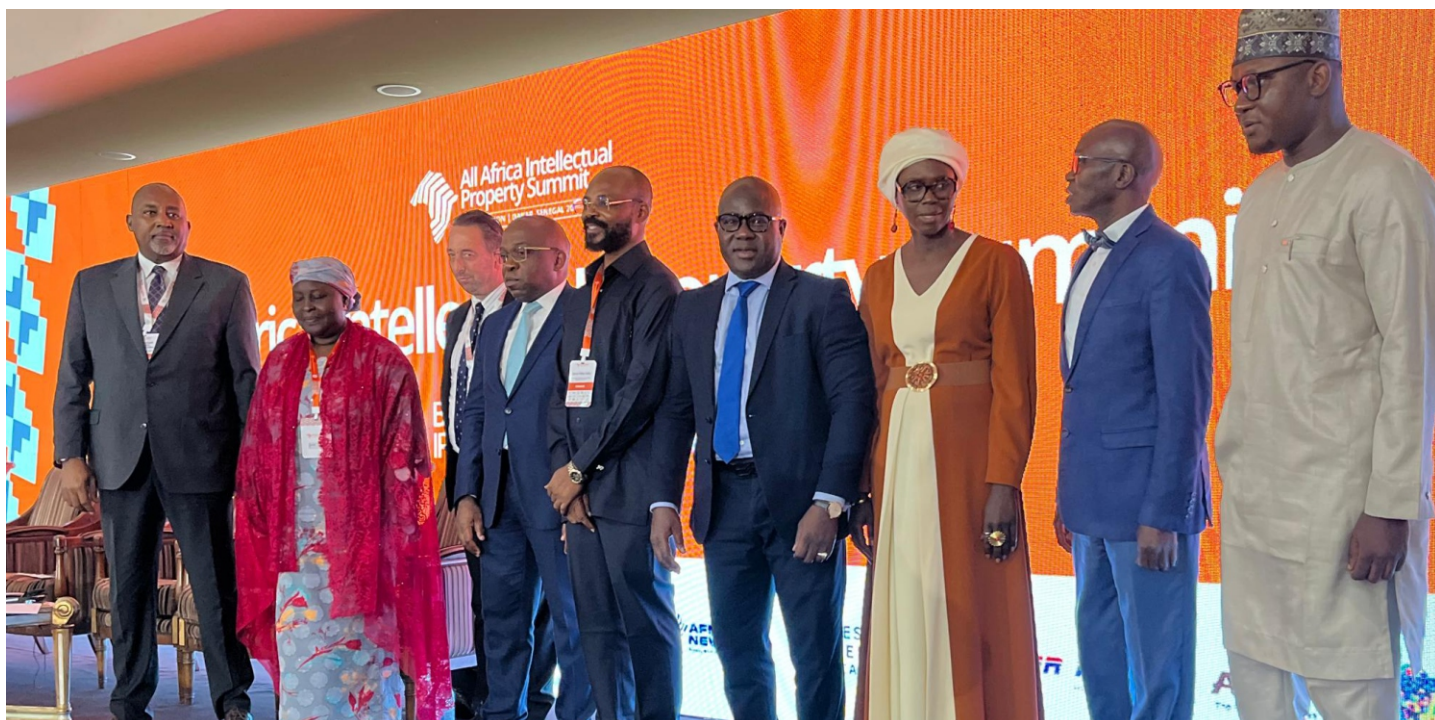
Highlights from the paper:

- Systemic barriers to innovation in Africa include high technology costs, reliance on foreign suppliers, and weak research infrastructure, often rooted in historical colonial divides.
- Strategic use of patent databases and public domain technologies can enable African countries to adapt and localise existing innovations, particularly in health and agriculture, without infringing IP rights.
- Case studies of Morocco, South Africa, and Kenya showed that effectively mining open patent information empowers local innovators, research institutions, and policymakers to create homegrown solutions.
- Capacity building in patent analytics and fostering ecosystems for technology reverse-engineering and frugal innovation can strengthen Africa's development while leveraging existing IP resources.
- Reframing intellectual property as a tool for inclusive development, prioritising access, function, and equity over ownership, novelty, and exclusivity, offers a low-cost, sovereignty-preserving model for technological advancement in Africa.

Summary of session presentations

These studies explored how Africa can transform its intellectual property systems to drive inclusive innovation, economic growth, and regional integration. The following are the key summary of the papers:

- Africa's IP ecosystem must move from a weak, largely theoretical framework to a practical, enforceable tool that drives innovation, protects local industries, and boosts economic growth. We must strengthen IP enforcement and raise IP awareness to transform IP into a practical tool that protects local industries, curbs counterfeiting, and drives innovation and economic development.
- The 2023 AfCFTA IP Protocol introduces regional exhaustion of IP rights, providing a framework to harmonise IP laws, promote intra-African trade, and support emerging sectors, while increasing access to essential works and addressing previous gaps in national and regional policies.
- Strategic use of patent databases and public-domain technologies enables African countries to adapt existing innovations to address local challenges in sectors such as health and agriculture, leveraging patent analytics, reverse engineering, and frugal innovation to foster inclusive, low-cost, and sovereignty-preserving development.





2.7. Roundtable Discussion

Balancing Multilateral IP Commitments with Continental Regional and National Needs

Moderator: Prof. Rose Rameau

Discussants:

- Mr. David Jeng (WIPO)
- Yauri Adamu (Registrar, Nigeria Trademark Office)
- Mme Françoise D. FAYE (Director General ASPIT: Agence Senegalaise pour la Propriete Industrielle et l'Innovation)
- Aly Bathily, SODAV (Societe Senegalaise du Droit d'Auteur et des Droits Voisins, Senegalese Copyright and Related Rights Office)

Highlights from the paper:

- The importance of countries' IP policies and strategies in balancing multilateral IP commitments.
- The role of State Parties in Multilateral Treaties.
- The benefits of the AfCFTA IP Protocol and the need for regional IP protection.

Summary

- These studies explored how Africa can transform its intellectual property systems to drive inclusive innovation, economic growth, and regional integration. The following are the key summary of the papers:
- There is a need for countries to have their own IP policies aligned with their needs to balance these needs with multilateral IP commitments.
- It is the State Parties that bring multilateral treaties to life. Therefore, African countries are instrumental in bringing multilateral treaties to life within these countries.
- The goal is to maintain a balance between protecting IP and granting access to it.
- There is a need for IP Policy and Strategies that provide for low registration fees, consistent publication and fast registration, as is the case in Nigeria.
- Discussants emphasised the importance of regional protection of IP rights.

2.8. Paper Presentations/Breakout Sessions

2.8.1 Breakout Session 3

- *Chair: Chioma Egboh-Nwachukwu (G.Elias)*

Moderators:

- Youssouf Diallo (Doctoral Researcher, Africa and Postcolonial Studies)

Presenters:

- Chidi Okorro (Data and Systems Analyst, University of Warwick)
- Cynthia Nzuki (Research Consultant, MK Legal Consultancy)
- Martha Iyambo (Research Assistant, Centre for Intellectual Property and Information Technology Law - CIPIT)

1. Prompt Engineering for Responsible AI Use: Enforcing IP Rights in Generative Systems

Chidi's paper argued that prompt engineering with empirical backing and legal alignment can become a scalable tool for responsible AI use, advancing IP respect within generative systems while fostering innovation in Africa and beyond.

Highlights from the paper:

Generative AI systems can inadvertently replicate copyrighted material, creating significant intellectual property infringement risks.

Carefully structured prompts can guide AI outputs, reducing similarity to copyrighted training data and serving as a

proactive, "soft" enforcement mechanism.

Techniques like chain-of-thought prompting, task-instruction prompting, and guided diffusion methods have been shown to lower infringement risks without retraining AI models.

Prompts themselves can be treated as IP artefacts, and tiered copyright approaches recognise human creativity in prompt design; OECD assessments highlight broader governance concerns in AI training data.

The paper suggested including IP-respectful constraints in prompts, guiding users away from infringing commands, and standardising prompt-engineering best practices; while not replacing legal enforcement, prompt engineering is a cost-effective, scalable method for responsible AI use.

2. Intellectual Property and Artificial Intelligence in Africa: Integrating IP into the Continent's Emerging AI Strategies and Policies.

Cynthia argued that African AI strategies currently underrepresent intellectual property, yet integrating IP is essential to empower local creators, drive innovation, and build inclusive, culturally relevant AI ecosystems.



Highlights from the paper:

- Recent analyses of AI frameworks in countries like Kenya, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe, as well as regional initiatives such as the AU Continental AI Strategy, show that intellectual property considerations are largely overlooked.
- AI ecosystems especially in system development, training, and output generation, interact closely with IP regimes, making IP crucial for governing innovation and protecting creators.
- The paper examined how regions like the EU, US, Brazil, and China handle IP in AI, highlighting lessons and potential influences for shaping African policy.
- It proposed practical, context-specific strategies for African policymakers and regional bodies to integrate IP into AI frameworks effectively.
- The study emphasised that IP should not be a secondary concern but a core element to ensure inclusive, innovation-driven, and culturally relevant AI ecosystems in Africa, supporting the economic and legal empowerment of local AI stakeholders.

3. Governing AI, IP, and Digital Trade in Africa: Balancing Innovation with Equity

Marhta argued that Africa's IP systems face urgent pressure from AI and digital trade, requiring inclusive reforms that balance innovation, equitable technology access, and ethical governance.

Highlights from the paper:

- The rise of AI in Africa, exemplified by the patent granted to DABUS in South Africa, exposes tensions in IP systems that typically require human inventors, highlighting the need for reforms in patentability, data access, and trade secrets.
- While some African countries are beginning to address AI and IP through national strategies, their approaches remain inconsistent and uncoordinated across the continent.

- IP regimes can either facilitate or restrict access to innovations, with restrictive copyright laws and underutilised patent databases limiting AI development and knowledge sharing in sectors like education, agriculture, and healthcare.
- Despite TRIPS flexibilities like compulsory licensing, many African countries face legal, enforcement, and transparency issues that hinder equitable access to medicines.
- The paper advocates for an African IP system that promotes inclusive innovation, ethical governance, and equitable access to digital and public goods.

Summary of session presentations

Integrating intellectual property into Africa's AI strategies and using tools like prompt engineering are essential to ensure responsible AI use, empower local creators, and promote inclusive, innovation-driven development across the continent. Africa's AI and digital innovation landscape requires integrating intellectual property into policies, adopting tools like prompt engineering to manage AI risks, and reforming IP systems to balance innovation, equitable access, and ethical governance. The following are the key summary of the papers:

- Prompt engineering in generative AI can act as a cost-effective, scalable method to reduce intellectual property (IP) infringement risks, guide responsible AI use, and recognise human creativity in Africa and beyond.
- African AI strategies currently underrepresent IP, but integrating IP into AI policies is essential to empower local creators, foster innovation, and build culturally relevant and inclusive AI ecosystems.
- Africa's IP systems face pressure from AI and digital trade, requiring coordinated reforms that balance innovation, equitable access, and ethical governance to support development across sectors.



Africa's AI and digital innovation landscape requires integrating intellectual property into policies, adopting tools like prompt engineering to manage AI risks, and reforming IP systems to balance innovation, equitable access, and ethical governance.



2.8.2 Breakout Session 4

Chair: Olugbenga Adewinle (IP Manager, OAU)

Moderators:

Youssef Diallo (Doctoral Researcher Africa and Postcolonial Studies)

Presenters:

- Ifeanyi Okonkwo (Partner, Stillwaters Law Firm)
- Racheal Kyomuhangi (Managing Partner of Jade Advocate)
- Dr. Abdallah Nour El Dien (IP Expert, Alliance Law Firm)

1. Patents, Kleptoparasites & Innovation: A path towards an inclusive IP Ecosystem for Africa's future.

Ifeanyi's paper stated that patents drive economic development by granting inventors exclusive rights, while the concept of kleptoparasitism metaphorically illustrates how innovative use of others' ideas can create disruptive, inclusive growth in Africa's IP ecosystem.

Highlights from the paper:

- Patents are key measures of a country's innovation and economic development.
- A patent grants inventors exclusive rights to commercialise their invention for up to 20 years.
- A patent is a government-issued license that allows the holder to exclude others from making, using, or selling the invention.
- An invention is a new idea or device, whereas innovation improves or significantly contributes to existing ideas, methods, or devices.

- The concept of kleptoparasitism, where one benefits from others' efforts, is used metaphorically to explore disruptive innovation that can drive inclusive development in Africa's IP ecosystem.

2. Intellectual Property Law in Africa Confronted with the Challenges of Artificial Intelligence

Racheal's paper argued that African intellectual property frameworks are outdated and ill-equipped to address AI-generated works, authorship, and enforcement challenges, making it imperative for Africa to modernise laws, build institutional capacity, and adopt context-sensitive protections to foster innovation and secure its position in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Highlights from the paper:

- African intellectual property laws are largely pre-digital and ill-equipped to address the unique legal and ethical challenges posed by AI technologies.
- Current laws struggle with defining authorship and inventorship when AI plays a significant role, risking inadequate protection for creators and innovators.
- Existing IP enforcement mechanisms are often ineffective against AI-enabled infringements like automated piracy and counterfeit production.
- African jurisdictions and regional bodies such as ARIPO and OAPI face systemic gaps in statutory language, institutional capacity, and policy guidance.

- African IP regimes need updates, including revised definitions of authorship and inventorship, sui generis protection for AI outputs, stronger cross-border enforcement, and improved technical capacity to leverage AI for IP management, positioning the continent strategically in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

3. Towards a Unified Regional System for Intellectual Property Registration in the African Union

Abdallah's research argues that establishing a unified African intellectual property registration system drawing on lessons from the EU and harmonised with the AfCFTA would strengthen the legal infrastructure, reduce administrative barriers, promote innovation, and enhance investment and equitable market access across the continent.

Highlights from the paper:

- The research investigates the feasibility of a unified regional IP registration system within the African Union to support economic integration, sustainable development, and AfCFTA implementation.
- A harmonised IP framework is essential to strengthen legal infrastructure, facilitating trade liberalisation and the intra-African movement of goods, services, and investments under the AfCFTA.
- Current IP systems in Africa, OAPI, ARIPO, and national frameworks face challenges such as regulatory fragmentation, jurisdictional overlap, and poor coordination.
- The study draws lessons from the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) to identify legal and operational practices that could guide the development of an African regional IP system.

- A unified IP system covering trademarks, patents, industrial designs, and geographical indications would improve investment climates, reduce administrative burdens, enhance legal predictability, and promote innovation and equitable market access across Africa.

Summary of session presentations

- A modernised and harmonised African intellectual property ecosystem combining robust patent protections, AI-adapted laws, and a unified regional registration system can drive inclusive innovation, strengthen legal infrastructure, and enhance investment and equitable growth across the continent. The following are the key summary of the papers:
- Patents drive innovation and economic development in Africa, while metaphorical concepts like kleptoparasitism highlight how creative use of existing ideas can foster disruptive and inclusive growth in the continent's IP ecosystem.
- African intellectual property laws are outdated and ill-suited for addressing AI-generated works, making it crucial to modernise legal frameworks, build institutional capacity, and adopt AI-sensitive protections to safeguard creators and promote innovation.
- A unified regional intellectual property registration system within the African Union, harmonised with the AfCFTA and modelled on EU practices, could reduce fragmentation, strengthen legal infrastructure, enhance investment, and promote equitable innovation across Africa.



3.0 Day 2: Combating counterfeiting and piracy in Africa, operationalising the AfCFTA IP right protocol, Balancing IP rights and public health in an inclusive Africa context and navigating Trademark and digital trade



Collectively, the sessions reaffirmed a shared commitment to positioning intellectual property as a practical engine for inclusive innovation, sustainable development, and Africa's

The second day of the summit opened with the recap of the first day's event by Esohe Olajide. The first day of the 6th All Africa Intellectual Property Summit set a strong tone for continental collaboration. Through the welcome address, goodwill messages from the EU, WIPO and AfCFTA institutions, a powerful spoken-word performance, a high-level multi-stakeholder panel, book launch, and multiple breakout sessions, discussions emphasised the urgent need to transform Africa's fragmented and outdated IP systems into accessible, development-driven tools aligned with AfCFTA, digital transformation, and industrialisation goals. Day One highlighted Afrocentric and future-ready IP reforms, stronger enforcement, harmonisation of policies, inclusion of women, youth, MSMEs and indigenous communities, and practical pathways for commercialisation, while also addressing emerging issues such as AI, digital trade, patent utilisation, and regional integration. Collectively, the sessions reaffirmed a shared commitment to positioning intellectual property as a practical engine for inclusive innovation, sustainable development, and Africa's economic transformation.

3.1. Plenary Session – Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy in Africa: A multi-Stakeholder Approach to IP Enforcement Mechanisms

Moderator: Tolu Olaloye (Jackson Etti & Edu)

Panelists:

- Schneider Gregor (European Union)
- Taisuke Goto (Japan External Trade Organisation - JETRO)
- Aly Bathily (SODAV) La Brigade Nationale de Lutte contre la Piraterie et la Contrefaçon (BNPLC)
- Muhammad Habeeb Bello (National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control – NAFDAC)

Discussion points

What is counterfeit, what are the effects of counterfeiting, and what are the ways to combat the counterfeit menace in Africa? Enforcement and Implementation of IP Protection Measures.

Highlights from the discussion

- Incidences of counterfeit cut across all of Africa including the counterfeiting of drugs, goods, technological devices, music etc.
- Most African countries are dumping grounds for fake and counterfeit goods. This has led to loss of many lives and Business losses.
- Most consumers have no knowledge of how to differentiate counterfeit goods from original goods.
- Panellists discussed ways in which counterfeiting is combated. They highlighted the need to combat counterfeiting through the use of technology, collaboration and data sharing.
- There is a need for enforcement and collaboration between the right holders and enforcement agencies in order to combat counterfeiting.

3.2. Fire Side Chat with AfCFTA Secretariat – Operationalising the AfCFTA Intellectual Property Rights Protocol, evolving and emerging development

Moderator: Olusegun Olutayo (Nigeria AfCFTA Coordination Office)

Panelists: Desire Loumou (AfCFTA Secretariat, Ghana)



Discussion points:

- Where do we stand with the AfCFTA IP Protocol?
- What is the guarantee that IP will be protected across Africa under the AfCFTA?
- How will AfCFTA's IP framework evolve to address emerging forms of creativity?
- Protection of African indigenous knowledge systems and genetic resources while ensuring equitable benefit-sharing.
- How Africa can leverage AfCFTA's IP Protocol to negotiate fairer terms in global IP regimes.
- Private Sector participation in driving the AfCFTA's IP Protocol

Highlights from the discussion:

- The object of the AfCFTA's IP Protocol is to harmonise IP laws across Africa. It also provides the business community, researchers, innovators, and creators with a continental layout of protecting their IP.
- There are annexes on marks, patents, industrial designs, utility models, copyright and related rights, plant varieties,

geographical indications, traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions, and genetic resources, AfCFTA IP Office. 8 annexes have been approved, while the annex of AfCFTA IP Office will be approved by 2026.

- On emerging technologies, state parties concluded that these areas need to be well understood before annexes can be drafted.
- The AfCFTA's IP Protocol provides a system where IP protection can be made in designated States according to the choice of the right holder.
- The Protocol does not negate the right of countries to protect IP within their National Policies and Strategies.
- The intention of the protocol is to recognise the rights of traditional knowledge, cultural expression and genetic resources so as to prevent them from misappropriation. When it is related to any other form of IP, disclosure must apply and proof of prior consent and agreement on benefit sharing.

- The fragmented market does not position Africa as having a common front globally. This is the need for a continental agreement.
- The AfCFTA Secretariat consults with key stakeholders to ensure the system being created benefits the end users, especially businesses, farmers and the private sector.
- The AfCFTA Secretariat will work towards incorporating the All Africa Intellectual Property Summit as part of its regular annual programme.
- The Secretariat will work towards the development of a continental framework on the enforcement of IP rights and a continental report on IP.
- The existing IP blocs will not be excluded from the AfCFTA's IP regime, the AfCFTA will build on the existing system.

3.3. Paper Presentations/Breakout Sessions

3.3.1 Breakout Session 5

Chair: Jean-Pierre Nyemeg (Managing Partner Bissek Owona & Partners)

Moderators:

- *Bolaji Gabari (Associate Partner S.P.A. Ajibade & Co)*

Presenters:

- Ifeanyi Okonkwo (Partner, Stillwaters Law Firm)
- Isioma Ewelukwa (PhD Candidate, University of Leicester)
- Boluwatife Sanya (Managing Partner, Paddle Solicitors)
- King Florian Simba (Ministere de la justice Gabon)
- Isaac Kundakogo Kunko (Junior Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Innovation and Competition)

- 1. Balancing IP Rights and Public Health in an Inclusive African Context: The case study of Nigeria's Patent Act.

In this paper, Isioma pointed out that Nigeria's outdated patent law, compounded by weak use of TRIPS flexibilities and institutional gaps, continues to restrict access to life-saving medicines, underscoring the need for targeted legal and regional reforms that balance pharmaceutical innovation with public health priorities.

Highlights from the paper:

- Limited access to medicines persists in Africa despite global scientific and pharmaceutical advancements, with low-income countries most affected.
- Patent law significantly influences drug availability and pricing, often constraining access to life-saving medicines in African countries.
- Nigeria's patent legislation is outdated, limiting its ability to address high disease burdens and support equitable pharmaceutical access.
- Key barriers include weak use of TRIPS flexibilities, non-substantive patent examination, regulatory gaps, and poor political will.
- Regional integration frameworks (AfCFTA, AMA, OAPI, ARIPO) offer opportunities to improve access through fairer IP negotiations, local production, and regulatory harmonisation.



2. Balancing Patent Rights and Public Health: The Role of Compulsory Licensing in Improving Access to Essential Medicines in Africa.

Boluwatife argued that despite the legal availability of compulsory licensing across international and African patent frameworks, its limited use, particularly in countries like Nigeria, continues to undermine efforts to improve affordable access to essential medicines in Africa.

Highlights from the paper:

- High medicine prices in many African countries, especially Nigeria, are driven largely by dependence on imported pharmaceuticals and raw materials.
- Compulsory licensing is legally permitted under international, regional, and national frameworks, but is rarely used across Africa.
- There exist legal, institutional, and political barriers that limit the effective use of compulsory licensing to improve access to medicines across the African continent.
- The study examines five countries: Nigeria, Sudan, Kenya, South Africa, and Cameroon, representing different African sub-regions.
- The research combines legal analysis with empirical data to propose practical strategies for strengthening access to affordable medicines in Africa.

3. Access to Medicines and Equity in Intellectual Property Regimes

King's paper argued that balancing intellectual property protection with public health imperatives is essential to ensuring equitable access to medicines, particularly in developing and low-income countries.

Highlights from the paper:

- Intellectual property is a key driver of innovation, economic development, and business growth, particularly in African economies.
- Patent monopolies, while encouraging innovation, can create barriers to equitable access to medicines and healthcare.
- The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted how pharmaceutical patents can negatively affect public health needs in low-income countries.
- Achieving equitable access to medicines requires balancing intellectual property regimes with public health priorities.
- Mechanisms such as TRIPS flexibilities, compulsory licensing, and strengthened health systems are crucial for sustainable access to medicines under the AfCFTA framework.



4. Compulsory Licensing as a Remedy for Excessive Pricing Under the African Patent System

Isaac stated that patent law, through compulsory licensing, has the potential to address excessive pricing of essential health products in African countries, but its effectiveness is undermined by unclear pricing assessment frameworks and narrow product scope within national patent laws.

Highlights from the paper:

- Excessive pricing of essential health products is widely studied in competition law but remains underexplored within patent law.
- Patent law, especially through compulsory licensing, could regulate excessive pricing in eight African pharmaceutical economies (South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia).
- Practical use of compulsory licensing is limited by unclear frameworks for assessing excessive pricing and a narrow focus on medicines/pharmaceuticals, excluding other essential health products like diagnostics.

- These limitations undermine broader goals of access to health technologies under TRIPS flexibilities and the AfCFTA framework.
- Comparative experiences from India and Thailand suggest that addressing these limitations could improve the effectiveness of compulsory licensing in controlling excessive pricing.

Summary of session presentations

Despite the potential of patent law and mechanisms like compulsory licensing to improve access to affordable medicines in Africa, outdated legislation, limited use of TRIPS flexibilities, and regulatory and institutional gaps continue to restrict equitable access to essential health products. The following are the key summary of the papers:

- Nigeria's patent legislation is outdated and, combined with the weak implementation of TRIPS flexibilities, continues to restrict access to life-saving medicines, highlighting the need for targeted legal and regional reforms.



- Although compulsory licensing is legally permitted under international and African frameworks, it is rarely used in countries like Nigeria, limiting its potential to improve affordable access to essential medicines.
- Intellectual property protection drives innovation and economic growth, but patent monopolies can create barriers to equitable access to medicines, especially in low-income countries, making a balance with public health priorities essential.
- Patent law has the potential to regulate excessive pricing of essential health products through mechanisms like compulsory licensing, but unclear pricing assessment frameworks and narrow product scope limit its effectiveness.
- African regional frameworks such as AfCFTA, AMA, OAPI, and ARIPO offer opportunities to improve medicine access through local production, harmonised regulations, and fairer IP negotiations.

3.3.2 Breakout Session 6

Chair: Onyinyechukwu Dortsey (SN Anku IP Firm)

Moderators:

- Bolaji Gabari (Associate Partner S.P.A. Ajibade & Co)

Presenters:

- Prof. Desmond Oriakhogba (University of Western Cape, South Africa)
- Bill Clifford Akakwenzire (Alvarez Advocates LLP)
- Antonio Saez Ramos (IP Lawyer & Partnership Specialist, Smart Protection)

1. Assessing collaboration for digital knowledge governance under AfCFTA in the ARIPO region

Desmond's paper argued that while the AfCFTA IP, Competition and Digital Trade Protocols emphasise collaboration as a pathway to quality and inclusive education under Agenda 2063, there was a clear lack of empirical evidence on how national IP offices, CMOs, and LAMs in the ARIPO region actually collaborate to implement these frameworks for effective knowledge access in the digital environment.

Highlights from the paper:

- The AfCFTA IP, Competition, and Digital Trade Protocols recognise collaboration as essential for sustainable development and quality education under AU Agenda 2063.
- Existing studies show that unequal knowledge governance regimes create legal barriers to education and information access in the ARIPO region.
- There was a significant empirical research gap on actual collaboration among national IP offices, CMOs, and LAMs in implementing AfCFTA protocols.

- The paper used qualitative methods, including desk research and stakeholder interviews, to assess current and potential collaborative practices.
- Key challenges to effective collaboration are identified, alongside actionable recommendations to improve knowledge access for inclusive digital education in the ARIPO region.

2. Navigating Trademarks and Digital Trade: The Emerging IP Barriers To Africa's Export Ambitions.

Bill's paper argued that the AfCFTA Protocol on Digital Trade offers major opportunities for African businesses, but unresolved trademark and domain name conflicts within global digital platforms risk turning international IP enforcement into a non-tariff barrier that constrains the cross-border growth of African SMEs.

Highlights from the paper:

- The AfCFTA Protocol on Digital Trademarks a significant milestone in promoting Africa's participation in cross-border e-commerce, digital services, and global value chains.
- Trademark and domain name governance on international digital platforms pose underexplored legal and commercial risks for African businesses expanding beyond national borders.
- Conflicts between local African trademarks and globally established brands, as illustrated by the Ugandan "TARGET" case, can function as non-tariff barriers to digital trade.
- Structural asymmetries exist between Africa's emerging digital branding systems and entrenched global IP regimes under WIPO, WTO-TRIPS, and multinational corporations.
- A more harmonised AfCFTA-aligned regional IP framework is needed to balance global IP protection with the growth, inclusivity, and innovation needs of African SMEs.

3. Anti-Counterfeit Measures: The Role of Private Sector Actors in Combating Online Infringement

Antonio's paper argued that as counterfeiting increasingly shifts to digital platforms, effective intellectual property enforcement depends less on traditional litigation and more on proactive, collaborative, and data-driven private-sector strategies that combine legal expertise with digital intelligence, particularly in fast-growing digital economies such as Africa.



Highlights from the paper:

- Digital counterfeiting has intensified the importance of private-sector actors, brands, enforcement partners, and legal representatives as frontline defenders of intellectual property online.
- Companies in highly vulnerable sectors such as fashion, luxury, sports, and technology are increasingly relying on proactive digital monitoring and strategic takedown actions to curb online infringement.
- Collaboration between brand owners, law firms, and digital enforcement service providers enables scalable and efficient anti-counterfeiting systems without disclosing proprietary tools.
- Extra-judicial, technology-driven enforcement strategies are often faster, more cost-effective, and more adaptable than traditional litigation in addressing rapidly recurring online infringements.
- In Africa's rapidly expanding digital economy, adaptable, data-informed digital IP enforcement models are especially critical to addressing emerging risks across trademarks, patents, and copyright.



Summary of session presentations

Together, the papers show that while AfCFTA's IP and Digital Trade frameworks promise inclusive education, expanded digital trade, and stronger IP protection in Africa, their success ultimately depends on closing empirical gaps, harmonising trademark governance, and fostering effective collaboration between public institutions and private-sector actors in the digital environment. The following are the key summary of the papers:

- The AfCFTA IP, Competition, and Digital Trade Protocols place strong emphasis on collaboration to advance inclusive education and sustainable development, yet there is limited empirical evidence on how key institutions in the ARIPO region work together to enable digital knowledge access.
- Weak and unequal knowledge governance frameworks in the ARIPO region continue to create legal and institutional barriers to education and information access, highlighting the need for coordinated implementation of AfCFTA commitments.

- While the AfCFTA Protocol on Digital Trade creates new opportunities for African businesses, unresolved trademark and domain name conflicts on global digital platforms risk becoming non-tariff barriers to the cross-border growth of African SMEs.
- Structural imbalances between Africa's emerging IP systems and entrenched global IP regimes expose African brands to enforcement risks, underscoring the need for a more harmonised, AfCFTA-aligned regional trademark framework.
- As counterfeiting increasingly shifts online, effective IP enforcement in Africa is driven less by litigation and more by collaborative, data-driven private-sector strategies that combine legal expertise with digital monitoring and rapid takedown mechanisms.

3.4. Roundtable Discussion

The Role of Development Partners in AfCFTA IP Protocol (European Union, Japan External Trade Organisation JETRO)

Moderators:

Dr. Nilce Ekanzdi (Associate Researcher, CEIPI Research Department)

Discussants:

- Dr. Falou Samb (President IAPC)
- Schneider Gregor (European Union)
- Mr. David Jeng (World Intellectual Property Organisation)
- Taisuke Goto (IP Attache of Japan Office for Middle East and Africa JETRO)
- Olusegun Olutayo (Nigeria AfCFTA Coordination Office)

Highlights from the discussion

Support by International Partners towards the AfCFTA's IP Protocol. The role of Development Partners in the protection of geographical indications and traditional knowledge.

Summary

- There is a strategic partnership between the European Union (EU) and the AfCFTA Secretariat. The EU created the Technical Assistance Facility (TAF), which channels financial aid and institutional assistance to the Secretariat. The EU, through the EUIPO initiative AfrIPI, which is a 17 million Euros project for capacity building and experience sharing.
- Japan Patent Office (JPO) provide training and capacity on IP, such as patent examination, technology transfer, and ways to support Small and Medium Enterprises (SME).
- The Japanese Government provide funds to WIPO, which are used for awareness and training for several African countries.

- WIPO has actively supported its member states in capacity building, in order to ensure that IP gets to the actors of IP.
- WIPO worked with JETRO in an Agri-Business project in order to meet the need of Business owners especially women. There are other interventions in Southern and Northern Africa.
- EU works towards the protection of Geographical Indications and Traditional Knowledge through AfrIPI projects. Protection of Geographical Indications and Traditional Knowledge is also at the heart of WIPO's projects.

3.5. Interactive Session

Unlocking Africa's Creative Potential: Youth, Innovation, and the Power of Intellectual Property

Moderators:

- *Sarah Bisamunyi (IP Administrator, Uganda Industrial Research Institute)*

Panelist:

- Isaac Kunko Kundakogo (Junior Research Fellow, MaxPlanck Institute for Innovation and Competition)
- Abel John (Managing Partner Elessa & Partners Law Firm)
- Patricia Opio (Team Lead Me Story Media)
- Onyinyechukwu Mary (Head of Chambers, SN ANKU IP Firm)

Discussion points

- The Impact of AI on young creatives, especially in the film and music industry.
- What IP reforms and policies will be beneficial to the Youths?
- The future of the youth in relation to IP.

Highlights from the discussion

- Creators should harness AI to boost their creativity and innovation, most especially in film production, storytelling and scriptwriting.
- IP has been underrated a lot in our educational system in Africa. To make radical progress, IP education should start early.
- IP reforms should incorporate simplified and affordable IP registration processes, which are important for young persons to register their IP.

- IP reforms should include protection of online-generated property like NFTs because young people are mostly online and on social media.
- IP should evolve to be utilised as a means of obtaining collateral.
- Youths have a lot to offer and therefore should protect what they put out.

3.6. Paper Presentations/Breakout Sessions

3.6.1 Breakout Session 7

Chair: Jean-Pierre Nyemeg (Managing Partner Bissek Owona & Partners)

Moderators:

- Arome Matthew (Senior Law Firm)

Presenters:

- Abel-John Ngollo (Managing Partner, Elessa & Partners Law Firm)
- Prof. Rose Rameau/Dr. Nilce Ekandzi (Professor, Albany Law School)
- Dr. Tshimangadzo Donald Mukwewho (Senior Lecturer, North-West University, South Africa)

1. The Challenge of Africa's - The Challenge of Africa's Global Conquest through Geographical Indications in the Era of the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement, the AfCFTA Protocol on Intellectual Property Rights, and

Economic Partnership Agreements

Abel-John's paper stated that Africa's global competitiveness through geographical indications depends on effectively transforming its rich cultural and agricultural heritage into sustainable economic value through strong legal protection, balanced trade frameworks, and active local community participation.

Highlights from the paper:

- Africa possesses an exceptionally rich mineral, agricultural, artisanal, and cultural heritage that remains underexploited economically.
- Geographical Indications are identified as a key intellectual property tool for converting this heritage into socio-economic development.
- Increased international recognition of GIs creates new opportunities for African countries to build profitable markets around emblematic products.
- Significant benefits include higher rural incomes, job creation, preservation of local know-how, and access to global markets.
- Achieving success requires overcoming legal, technical, and organisational challenges while balancing trade openness, cultural sovereignty, and legal protection.



2. Geographical Indications in Africa: Enhancing Local Products and Traditional Knowledge

Rose and Nilce's paper argued that geographical indications offer a viable and inclusive mechanism for protecting and valorising traditional knowledge in Africa by legally linking local products to their geographic origin, traditional know-how, and community-based development objectives.

Highlights from the paper:

- Traditional knowledge is a critical but under-protected intangible asset in Africa, contributing significantly to sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, and environmental management.
- Conventional intellectual property systems are poorly suited to protect traditional knowledge because of its collective, intergenerational, and localised nature.
- Recent international and regional developments, including the 2024 WIPO Treaty and the rise of sui generis laws, reflect growing global attention to traditional knowledge protection.
- Geographical indications provide a context-appropriate legal tool to recognise, protect, and economically valorise products derived from traditional knowledge.
- Aligning geographical indications with development models like the OVOP initiative under the AfCFTA can promote rural development, cultural heritage, and inclusive economic growth in Africa.

3. Regional Trade Agreements as Tools for the Protection of Indigenous Knowledge: An Analysis of the Protocol to the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area on Intellectual Property Rights

Tshimangadzo's paper argued that the AfCFTA Agreement and its Intellectual Property Protocol offer a promising yet currently underdeveloped framework for protecting indigenous knowledge, requiring a sui generis, Afrocentric, and holistic approach to effectively recognise and advance the collective socio-economic, cultural, and legal interests of indigenous communities in Africa.

Highlights from the paper:

- Traditional intellectual property regimes are inadequate for protecting indigenous knowledge (IK), which is typically collective, communal, and perpetual.
- The paper proposes the Integrated Indigenous Knowledge Protection Theory (IIKPT), a novel, holistic model

combining biopiracy prevention, decolonisation, FPIC, Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS), and customary law to protect IK.

- Regional Economic Communities (RECs) provide a foundation for Africa's economic integration and can facilitate the inclusion of IK within trade and IP frameworks, but gaps remain that need to be addressed.
- While the AfCFTA IP Protocol recognises IK, its definitional ambiguities, implementation challenges, and lack of restorative justice measures limit its effectiveness.
- With proper adaptations and fast-tracking of legal reforms, Africa can reclaim, commodify, and commercialise IK, supporting the African Union's Agenda 2063 and enhancing socio-economic development.

Summary of session presentations

Africa's rich cultural, agricultural, and traditional knowledge assets hold immense economic potential, and tools such as geographical indications, regional trade agreements, and the AfCFTA's Intellectual Property Protocol provide viable pathways for their legal protection, valorisation, and sustainable commercialisation, but realising these benefits requires tailored, holistic, and community-centered approaches that address legal, technical, and organisational challenges. The following are the key summary of the papers:

- Africa possesses a rich cultural, agricultural, artisanal, and mineral heritage that remains largely underutilised economically; effectively leveraging it through legal protection, trade frameworks, and community participation can enhance global competitiveness.
- Geographical Indications (GIs) serve as a key intellectual property tool to legally link local products with their geographic origin and traditional know-how, enabling the protection, valorisation, and commercialisation of Africa's traditional knowledge and rural products.
- Traditional and indigenous knowledge in Africa is collective, intergenerational, and localised, making it poorly suited to protection under conventional IP regimes like patents and trademarks.
- The AfCFTA Agreement and its IP Protocol offer a promising framework for protecting indigenous knowledge, but definitional ambiguities, implementation gaps, and insufficient restorative justice measures limit their effectiveness.

- Innovative models, such as the Integrated Indigenous Knowledge Protection Theory, which combine biopiracy prevention, decolonisation, FPIC, Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS), and customary law, are essential for reclaiming, commodifying, and sustainably commercialising Africa's traditional and indigenous knowledge in alignment with Agenda 2063.

3.6.2 Breakout Session 8

Chair: Esohe Olajide (Integrated Legal Consultants)

Moderators:

- Arome Matthew (Senior Law Firm)

Presenters:

- Prince Amadi (Doctoral Researcher, European University Institute)
- Rachael Kyomuhangi (Managing Partner, Jade Advocates)
- Dr. Ghati Nyehita (Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Cape Town)

1. Copyright in Algorithmically Challenged Africa: A Critique of the Copyright Incentive Argument in the Context of Generative AI in Nigeria

Prince argued in his paper that the use of copyrighted works for training generative AI raises concerns about authors' economic earnings and that copyright protection alone does not guarantee economic

benefit, suggesting that justice and fairness offer a more appropriate framework for addressing the tension between copyright and Gen AI.

Highlights from the paper:

- The use of copyrighted works for generative AI (Gen AI) training may affect authors' economic earnings and potentially discourage creative production.
- The paper examined both Gen AI technology (which generates content from data) and copyright law, highlighting the intersection of innovation and legal protection.
- Copyright aims to provide economic incentives to authors for creating artistic works, as reflected in U.S. law (Title 17 USC) and Nigeria's Copyright Act.
- Copyright protection does not automatically guarantee economic benefits for authors, challenging the notion that Gen AI training necessarily undermines authors' earnings.
- The paper proposed using the principles of justice and fairness, rather than purely economic incentives, to address conflicts between copyright law and Gen AI.





2. Intellectual Property Law in Africa Confronted with the Challenges of Artificial Intelligence

Rachael's paper argued that the accelerating adoption of AI in Africa exposes outdated intellectual property laws that struggle to protect creators' rights and support technological innovation, making the modernisation of IP regimes a strategic imperative for the continent's economic transformation.

Highlights from the paper:

- African intellectual property laws, designed for the pre-digital era, are ill-equipped to address the legal and ethical challenges posed by AI technologies.
- Current IP systems struggle with defining authorship and inventorship when human input is minimal, leaving AI-generated works and inventions largely unprotected.
- African IP regimes face difficulties in addressing AI-enabled infringements such as automated piracy and counterfeit production due to gaps in institutional capacity and statutory language.
- International cases, like the UK's *Thaler v Comptroller General of Patents* (2021), illustrate that AI cannot currently be named as an inventor under existing patent law, highlighting the need for reform.
- Practical solutions include updating definitions of

authorship and inventorship, introducing sui generis protections for AI outputs, strengthening cross-border enforcement, and building technical capacity to leverage AI in IP administration.

3. Intellectual Property as a Tool for Empowering Refugee Women in Africa

This paper argued that by leveraging an Afrocentric, gender-sensitive intellectual property framework, refugee women in Africa can transform historical and structural inequities into economic opportunities, enabling them to monetise creativity, protect traditional knowledge, and actively participate in regional innovation and trade ecosystems.

Highlights from the paper:

- Colonial legacies and systemic discrimination continue to limit migration, refugee experiences, and economic opportunities for refugee women in Africa.
- IP is proposed as a practical mechanism to promote economic inclusion, gender equality, and decolonial repair for refugee women.
- Refugee women can monetise creative outputs through copyright, build brands via trademarks and industrial designs, protect traditional knowledge, and participate in patent pooling and open innovation.

- Initiatives like Kasi Artisans, Zetu Africa, Thundafund, Woza Moya, and Whole World Women Association showcase refugee women monetising arts, traditional crafts, and digital storytelling while exploring local and cross-border trade.
- Despite progress, challenges persist in IP education, licensing, enforcement, and dismantling structural inequities rooted in colonial exploitation.

Summary of session presentations

Across Africa, the intersection of intellectual property and emerging technologies highlights both opportunities and challenges, while generative AI and outdated IP laws raise concerns about authors' economic earnings and the protection of AI-generated works, a gender-sensitive, Afrocentric IP framework can empower marginalised groups, such as refugee women, to transform historical inequities into economic and creative opportunities. The following are the key summary of the papers:

- The use of copyrighted works to train generative AI raises concerns about authors' economic earnings, showing that copyright protection alone does not guarantee financial benefit; principles of justice and fairness may offer a better framework for addressing conflicts between copyright and AI.

- Rapid AI adoption in Africa exposes the limitations of pre-digital intellectual property laws, which struggle to define authorship, protect AI-generated works, and prevent AI-enabled infringements, highlighting the need to modernise IP regimes to support innovation and economic transformation.
- Intellectual property can serve as a practical tool for refugee women in Africa to convert creativity and traditional knowledge into economic opportunities, promoting gender equality and inclusion while addressing historical and structural inequities.
- Programs like Kasi Artisans, Zetu Africa, Thundafund, Woza Moya, and Whole World Women Association demonstrate how refugee women can monetise arts, crafts, and digital storytelling, leveraging IP tools such as copyright, trademarks, industrial designs, and patent pooling.
- Despite the potential of IP and AI for economic and creative empowerment, significant hurdles remain, including gaps in IP education, enforcement, licensing, institutional capacity, and structural inequities rooted in colonial legacies.



4.0 Summit Wrap-up and Dakar declaration



Delegates called for the effective operationalisation of the AfCFTA Protocol on Intellectual Property Rights.

4.1. Summit Wrap-up

Upon conclusion of all the papers and discussions, and review of the breakout sessions and key take aways, the Summit was wrapped up with a summary by Ms Bolaji Gabari and the proposed declaration outlined below.

4.2. Dakar Declaration on Africa's IP Future

Proposed for adoption at the 6th All Africa Intellectual Property Summit

King Fahd Palace, Dakar, Senegal | 13 November 2025

Preamble

We, the delegates of the 6th All Africa Intellectual Property Summit, representing governments, regional and international organisations, industry leaders, academia, innovators, inventors, creators, and civil society, convened in Dakar, Senegal, from 12–14 November 2025, under the theme “Building an Inclusive IP Ecosystem for Africa's Future.”

Recognising that intellectual property (IP) is a cornerstone of innovation, trade, and industrial transformation in Africa, Affirming our collective aspiration to design an inclusive, development-oriented, and context-appropriate IP ecosystem, Acknowledging the progress made through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the adoption of the Protocol on Intellectual Property Rights, Guided by the goals of Agenda 2063.

We hereby adopt this Dakar Declaration on Africa's IP Future, reaffirming our shared commitment to reimagining the IP ecosystem that Africa wants and needs.

I. Vision

We envision an African Intellectual Property ecosystem that:

- Empowers creators, innovators, and entrepreneurs across all regions and demographics;
- Drives industrialisation, trade, and sustainable development through innovation;
- Protects traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, and biodiversity;

- Bridges informal and formal economies by making IP accessible to MSMEs and local creators;
- Upholds equity, inclusivity, and digital transformation as pillars of Africa's innovation-led growth; and
- Positions Africa as an active architect, not merely a participant, in shaping global IP norms.

II. Key Outcomes and Policy Priorities

1. Reimagining Africa's IP Architecture under the AfCFTA Delegates called for the effective operationalisation of the AfCFTA Protocol on Intellectual Property Rights, ensuring it:

- Harmonises IP rules across state parties while preserving national policy space;
- Facilitates cross-border IP registration, mutual recognition, and enforcement cooperation;
- Establishes a continental IP coordination mechanism linking ARIPO, OAPI, national IP offices, and the AfCFTA Secretariat; and
- Promotes IP as an enabler of trade, innovation, and investment within Africa's 1.4 billion-person market.

2. Promoting IP for Industrialisation and Economic Transformation Participants underscored the strategic role of IP in advancing Africa's industrial and digital economy.

We resolved to:

- Embed IP in trade, industrial, and export development policies;
- Support technology transfer and local production through balanced licensing and patent systems;



- Encourage value addition in agriculture and creative industries using IP tools such as geographical indications (GIs) and design rights; and
- Develop public–private IP partnerships to drive innovation hubs, industrial clusters, and sustainable value chains.

3. Empowering Women, Youth and indigenous innovators IPDelegates reaffirmed the central role of women and youth in Africa's creative and innovation economy.

The Summit called for:

- National IP strategies that integrate gender-responsive and youth-inclusive policies;
- Dedicated IP awareness and mentorship programs for young creators, researchers, and entrepreneurs;
- Financial inclusion mechanisms that link IP assets to credit and investment opportunities; and
- Recognition of grassroots innovation and indigenous creativity within national IP frameworks.

4. Protecting Traditional Knowledge, Cultural Expressions, and Genetic ResourcesThe Summit

celebrated Africa's rich cultural and biodiversity heritage, urging governments to:

- Domesticate the principles of the WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge (2024);
- Establish national frameworks for disclosure of origin, benefit-sharing, and custodianship;
- Recognise community custodianship of traditional knowledge; and
- Integrate IP protection tools such as GIs, collective trademarks, and cultural property registries into cultural policy and tourism strategies.

5. Leveraging IP in the Digital Age Participants acknowledged the growing influence of artificial intelligence (AI), digital trade, and blockchain on IP systems. They resolved to:

- Promote digital transformation of IP offices through e-filing, data integration, and regional IP databases;
- Develop policies to address AI-generated works, digital piracy, and online enforcement;

- Explore blockchain-based IP traceability systems for African creative products; and
- Strengthen cooperation between ICT ministries, copyright agencies, and innovation bodies to build a resilient digital IP environment.

6. Strengthening IP Education, Research, and Capacity Development

Delegates recognised that a future-ready IP ecosystem depends on a skilled and informed workforce. They urged:

- Integration of IP education into universities, technical institutions, and professional training;
- Development of centres of excellence for IP research, policy analysis, and enforcement studies;
- Regional cooperation for examiner training, data sharing, and enforcement coordination; and
- Expansion of collaboration between WIPO, AfCFTA Secretariat, ARIPO, OAPI, and national IP offices.

7. Enhancing IP Enforcement and Anti-Counterfeiting Cooperation

The Summit stressed the need for collective enforcement strategies to combat counterfeiting, piracy, and IP theft.

Delegates agreed to:

- Establish continental taskforces integrating customs, police, IP offices, and consumer protection agencies;
- Harmonise evidence and enforcement procedures across regional trade blocs;
- Leverage digital traceability technologies to identify counterfeit goods; and
- Strengthen public-private cooperation in enforcement, especially in pharmaceuticals, food, and digital products.

III. Thematic Commitments

Inclusion and Accessibility

- Mainstream IP within public education and national innovation strategies.
- Empower underrepresented groups through awareness, training, and policy participation.

Sustainability and Climate Responsibility

- Use IP tools to promote green innovation, renewable energy technologies, and environmental solutions.

Regional Integration and Cooperation

- Encourage coordination among AfCFTA, AU, ARIPO, OAPI, WIPO, and national agencies.

Investment in IP Infrastructure

- Advocate for digital modernisation and cross-border interoperability of IP systems.

Monitoring and Accountability

- Establish a biennial All Africa IP Progress Forum to review commitments made under the Dakar Declaration.

IV. The Dakar Commitment

The All Africa Intellectual Property Summit, hereby:

- Commit to building an inclusive IP ecosystem that reflects Africa's diversity and aspirations.
- Call upon African governments, private sector actors, development partners, and international organisations to align IP reform with Africa's industrial, cultural, and trade agendas.
- Encourage the operationalisation of the AfCFTA IP Protocol with full stakeholder engagement; and
- Resolve to ensure that IP becomes a driver of opportunity, innovation, and prosperity for all Africans, from the fashion designer in Aba to the filmmaker in Dakar, the herbal innovator in Kumasi, and the software developer in Nairobi.

We affirm that:

“IP is not a privilege for the few, but a pathway to prosperity for all.” We, therefore, commit to transforming Africa from a consumer of ideas to a creator of global innovations, building a future where IP powers inclusion, equity, and sustainable growth for generations to come.

Adopted this 13th day of November 2025, at the King Fahd Palace, Dakar, Senegal.

Signed:

Sand Mba-Kalu, Chairman, All Africa IP Summit Organising Committee and Delegates of the 6th All Africa IP Summit

5.0

Closing, Conclusion



The Dakar Summit concluded with a shared commitment and a call for sustained multi-stakeholder engagement and coordinated funding mechanisms to build a robust, inclusive African IP ecosystem capable of driving long-term

The Summit was brought to a close with closing remarks delivered by Mr. Ibrahima Thiam Secretary of State, to the Minister in charge of Small and Medium Enterprises and Industries, He expressed his excitement and pleasure that Dakar was selected as the venue for the 6th All Africa IP Summit and highlighted a summary of the core discussions that had taken place during the Summit, He encouraged all delegates and development partners present to take all necessary steps to implement the ideas and actions identified from the Summit towards building the IP ecosystem that Africa needs. He encouraged the IP regional development institutions to strengthen the IP rules in Africa as a step in the right direction. He further emphasised the need to strengthen human capital and capacity building to promote innovation and technology transfer in Africa while allowing innovators and inventors to protect their inventions without technical barriers.

He proposed that the relevant stakeholders and policymakers in Africa should collate the recommendations from the Summit and establish a committee to review them to ensure their effective implementation across the continent. He concluded by

reminding all present that we needed to work together to make IP work better for Africa's development and effectively brought the summit to a close.

The Dakar Summit concluded with a shared commitment and a call for sustained multi-stakeholder engagement and coordinated funding mechanisms to build a robust, inclusive African IP ecosystem capable of driving long-term economic transformation. The discussions reaffirmed that, with strategic coordination, environmental consciousness, and continental unity, Africa can harness IP as a transformative lever for prosperity, sustainability, and global competitiveness. The Summit closed with a bold commitment to expand collaboration among African institutions and integrate IP into national economic and development strategies.

6.0 Hosting Next Summit in 2026

Delegates participated in a consultative poll to indicate their preferences for the next Summit host city, with South Africa receiving the most votes, followed by Kenya. Building on this outcome, the Summit Secretariat and Advisory Council undertook a broader stakeholder consultation, taking into account strategic and operational considerations, including logistics, connectivity, and ease of travel for delegates. Following this process, stakeholders

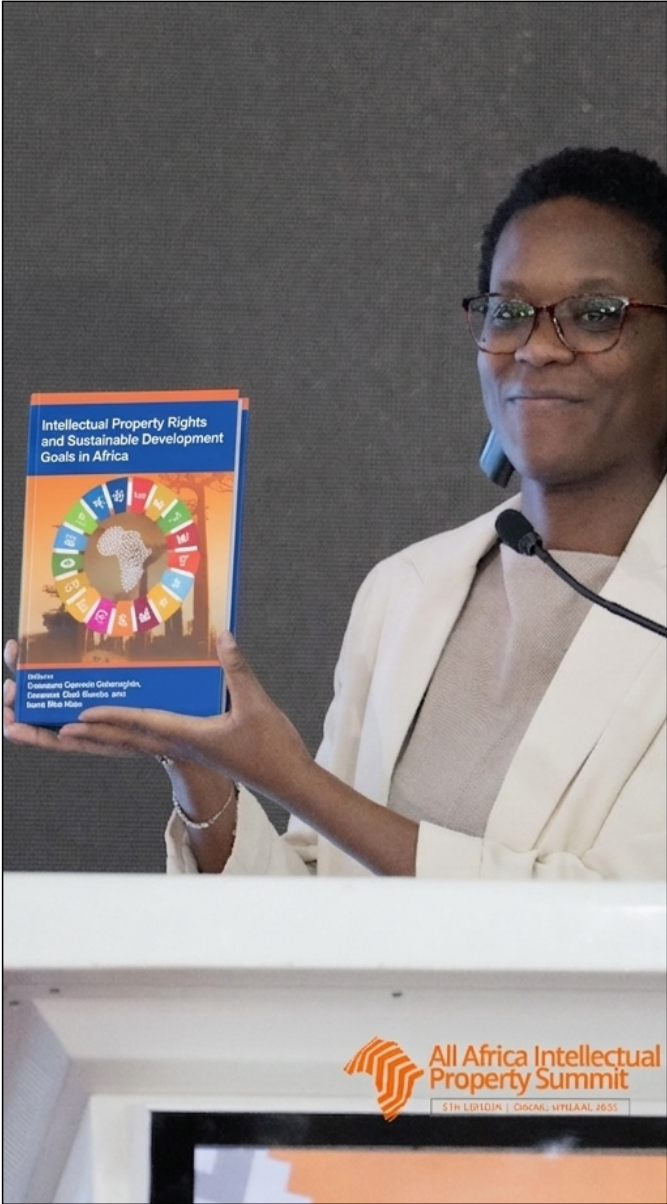
agreed that Nairobi, Kenya, would host the 7th All Africa IP Summit in November 2026. This decision reflects a sequencing approach aimed at optimising participation and regional balance, while reaffirming South Africa's strong standing and continued leadership within the Summit series. Specific dates will be communicated in due course.



Photo Highlights from the Summit



















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