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India may win patent claims due to Traditional Knowledge Digital Library: Manmohan Singh



India could win 105 claims on international patents due to its Traditional Knowledge Digital Library, Manmohan Singh said today.

HYDERABAD: India could win 105 claims on international patents due to its Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL), Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said here today, opening the high-level segment meeting at the Conference of Parties to Convention on Biological Diversity.

"We decided to build this knowledge database because of the patent on the use of neem extract in Europe and another patent on the use of turmeric as a healing agent. Since then, because of this database, over 1000 cases of biopiracy have been identified and over 105 claims withdrawn or cancelled by patent offices," he said.

The treasure trove of traditional knowledge should be used for the benefit of all humankind rather than for private profit, he said. In recent years, there has been concern that this public knowledge may become restricted in its use because of the application of the modern intellectual property system, he said.

India has tried a unique approach to protect its traditional knowledge by establishing a Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL), which promoted the objectives of the Nagoya Protocol on the issue of protection of codified traditional knowledge systems such as Ayurveda, he said.

The vast database created by India has 34 million pages of information in five international languages in formats easily accessible by patent examiners, he said.

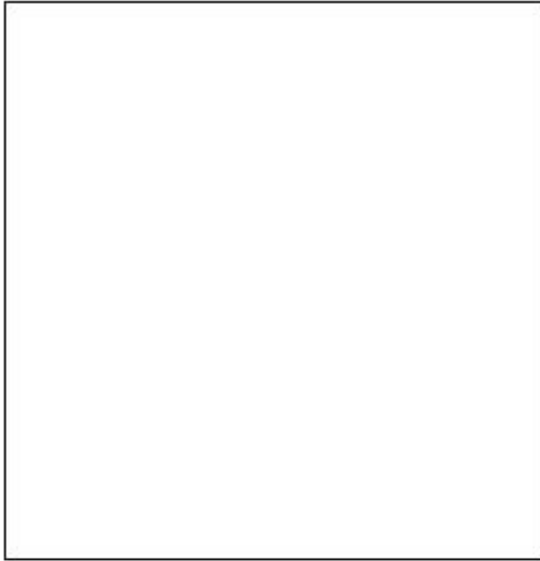
He said that the government of India would continue to work to strengthen its institutions to record this knowledge, to value its science and to provide benefits to its custodians.

Multilateral agencies like the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and some countries have approached India for assistance in setting up such libraries and the government would be happy to provide assistance, he told delegates from over 190 countries attending the CoP-11 of which India assumed presidency during the ongoing convention.

India's approach to protecting and promoting biodiversity has been guided by the belief that all three objectives of the Convention on [Biological Diversity](#) - conservation, sustainable use and sharing of benefits from the utilization of genetic resources - should receive adequate and equal focus, he said.

"This approach is the basis of India's Biological Diversity Act of 2002. The 2008 National Biodiversity Action Plan further identifies specific action points by various government agencies," he said.

Despite the pressure on land, India has more than 600 protected areas, covering approximately five per cent of the total geographical area, in a network of national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and conservation reserves.



"We have special programmes for some high-profile endangered species like tigers and elephants. In 2010, the country level status assessment for tigers showed an increase in their number to an estimated 1706 from an estimated 1411 in the year 2006," he said.

He said that there was a need to look beyond large animal species and take a "more organic approach" towards conservation. Work has been initiated on a species recovery programme covering 16 identified endangered species including the snow leopard, hangul and lion. Such country-level efforts at preservation should be complemented by enhanced global collaboration to check wildlife crime, he said.

Union Minister of State for Environment and Forests Jayanti Natarajan said resource mobilisation was the most important "unfinished agenda" that was inherited from CoP-10 as "we could not succeed in adopting targets for resource mobilisation" as a means to achieve the Aichi Targets.

"I urge parties to CBD to agree to some measures, commitments and targets on resource mobilisation, even on an interim basis, to infuse confidence and generate momentum for implementation of Aichi Targets," she said.