

URSB HOSTS LEARNING WEBINAR FOR INNOVATORS ON HOW TO PROTECT THEIR PANDEMIC INVENTIONS

Kampala, 16th July, 2021; Faced with a global pandemic, innovators in Uganda have responded by developing breakthrough solutions to address local and global needs. Intellectual property on the other hand has played an integral role in the creation of innovations to solve most of the challenges from COVID-19.

With multiple businesses and the overall economy brought to a slowdown by the global spread of COVID-19, inventors and creators across various industries are however facing never-seen-before barriers and disruptions when it comes to launching their new products or services, and how to protect them from being duplicated or infringed upon.

To support such innovators, Uganda Registration Services Bureau, who are the country's national intellectual property office on Friday 16th July, 2021 hosted an expert panel discussion under the theme *'Innovation during a Pandemic; The need to protect your Inventions'*.

In the virtual webinar, intellectual property experts took time to reflect on the values of protecting inventions and discussed ways in which businesses can work to protect their brands. They also shared observations from the ongoing disruptions and explored creations protection and regulatory strategies for businesses to consider. Dr. Anthony Kakooza, a leading IP Academic & Lawyer led the discussion together with James Tonny Lubwama, Manager for Patents & Industrial Designs at URSB.

In her opening remarks, the Registrar General, Mercy Kainobwisho emphasized that Uganda's thriving creative industry must become increasingly aware of the legal remedies to enable them benefit from the commercialization and protection of their works. *'The growth of our economy is partly dependent on the MSME sector, and together with government, URSB has been taking all necessary measures to spread awareness on the significance of intellectual property rights in protecting and monetizing our creative inventions'* Kainobwisho said.

Dr. Anthony Kakooza said the role of IP in enabling innovation during this worldwide crisis cannot be understated. *'In Uganda, small and medium enterprises have been the driving force behind*

many innovations. Successful SMEs have been able to reinforce ideas to create products that consumers want, utilized IP rights to protect them and created value for their business. Underlining the inherent innovative abilities of our creative sector must be encouraged and supported to increasingly adapt IP in business operations, especially considering the emerging technological developments. This will give them the edge to commercialise their work while protecting them' Kakooza added

James Tonny Lubwama on his part said protection of innovations would encourage more inventors to work towards solving some of the issues from the pandemic crisis. *'Trade mark registrations are often indicative of future business success, establishing stand-out brands and underlining their distinctiveness in the marketplace. Industries that make intensive use of trademarks are the reason IP applications at URSB have been on the increase for the last two years. We encourage more innovators to come to us for protection.'* Lubwama told participants

The webinar was attended by over 200 participants, including senior policy makers, innovators, IP experts from the industry and the legal fraternity who listened in and tendered their feedback on subjects ranging from the need for an increasingly robust IP ecosystem for Uganda to become a knowledge economy, the key role of IP for the growth and success of MSMEs, and the avenues available for IP rights commercialisation, among others.

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