

Trade Policy Unit

Daily news and updates

(1) World Intellectual Property Indicators

“Global intellectual property filings reached new records in 2021”

- According to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), despite the disruption of the coronavirus pandemic, latest data shows “continued and sustained growth” in intellectual property filings, “driven largely by increases from Asia, with other regions also trending mostly upward”. “IP filing strength during the pandemic showed that people across the world continued to innovate and create despite the economic and social disruptions caused by the pandemic”, said WIPO Director General Daren Tang.
- Data published in WIPO’s latest World Intellectual Property Indicators report indicates that innovators filed 3.4 million patent applications globally last year, which was up 3.6 per cent from 2020 – with Asia driving more than two-thirds of requests. Up by 5.5 per cent, China and India showed strong growth in local patent filings along with South Korea, which jumped 2.5 per cent. In the United States, patent filing dropped by 1.2 per cent, in Japan by 1.7 per cent and in Germany by 3.9 per cent, last year.
- “Most countries registered increases in trademark filing activity in 2021, with 18.1 million trademark class counts worldwide in 2021, up 5.5 per cent, on 2020”, the Geneva-based agency explained.

Source: WIPO

(2) AfDB approves US\$ 50 million Trade Finance Risk Participation Partnership

“This is another step towards the realization of the AfCFTA”

- The Board of Directors of the African Development Bank (AfDB) Group has approved a US\$ 50 million Risk Participation Agreement (RPA) for Natixis, a French Bank. The agreement will enable Natixis to support African banks and their small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) clients to undertake more regional and international trade. The agreement is expected to help achievement of a cumulative trade volume of US\$ 430 million over the next three years.
- "With this new operation, we are strengthening the trusting relationship between the various players in the African banking system in order to accelerate the development of trade," said Mohamed El Azizi, Director General of the African Development Bank for North Africa. He added: "This is another step towards the realization of the African Continental Free Trade Area which will unleash the full growth potential of the continent and create new opportunities and jobs."
- The risk-sharing agreement is intended to meet the growing demand from African markets for trade finance in vital economic sectors such as agribusiness, energy, manufacturing, health, and services. It will also help diversify production, creating jobs and additional tax revenues for several African countries.

Source: AfDB

(3) African Statistics Day

Knowledge-intensive services show resilience and promise in Africa

- On African Statistics Day celebrated on 18 November 2022, UNCTAD presented data showing growth in the continent's exports of services like computer and telecommunications services – and why collecting and analyzing such statistics is key for better policymaking.
- Like elsewhere, Africa's services exports took a nosedive during the COVID-19 pandemic. International travel and related services, such as hotels and tour operators, have traditionally driven the continent's services exports. So as the pandemic restricted travel and tourism, Africa's total services exports fell by one third in 2020, dropping to levels last seen in 2009.
- Despite improvements in 2021, overall services exports from African countries remained 20% lower than in 2019. But the overall figure hides the resilience shown during and after the pandemic by particular activities within the sector: knowledge-intensive services. These include for instance insurance and pension services, financial services, telecommunications, computer and information services, research and development, management consulting and other business services, as well as personal, cultural and recreational services.
- Africa's exports of such services continued to grow during the pandemic, overtaking first transport and then travel. Globally, Africa was the region where these exports grew strongest in 2021, increasing by 17.3% compared with 16.5% in Asia, 14.2% in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Europe, and 11.2% in Northern America.

Source: UNCTAD

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