

Joint message for IWD 2024

International Women's Day 2024: "Invest in women: Accelerate progress".

Intellectual property (IP) offices and organizations around the globe are coming together to champion diversity within our offices and organizations and across the entire IP landscape. In countries worldwide, women face challenges and barriers in accessing resources, resulting in their stark underrepresentation in the IP ecosystem. Acknowledging this, our objective is clear: to drive inclusion and diversity to support, inspire, and accelerate increased participation from all women so that they can develop, commercialize, and distribute their innovations and creative works. By investing in women, we believe we can better reach our collective aim to transform the challenges women face in the IP ecosystem into opportunities.

Despite comprising a significant portion of the micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise landscape, women entrepreneurs are facing a \$1.7 trillion finance gap that limits their potential to add \$10 trillion in economic value to the global economy by 2030. Furthermore, in 2023, inventors listed on international patent applications were five times less likely to be female than male. Studies also show women are underrepresented in design applications and copyright registrations. In addition, just one in three researchers is a woman, and women hold only one in five science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) jobs. All these facts underscore the urgent need for immediate and concerted efforts, both financial and strategic, to bridge this substantial gap. It's time to mobilize resources and implement impactful initiatives, to ensure that gender equality is not just an aspiration but a tangible reality.

We acknowledge that the diversity within our innovative, entrepreneurial, and creative community should mirror the diversity of our societies. Recognizing the vital importance of ongoing collaboration between our offices, which has facilitated the exchange of best practices and the implementation of pioneering initiatives, we reaffirm our dedication to collective action. We remain steadfast in our commitment to empower and support women and girls from all segments of society to fully engage in the innovation and creativity economy. By enabling them to leverage their IP, we not only foster sustained growth but also pave the way for enduring success.

We are committed to investing in knowledge and skills-building initiatives designed to empower women in IP matters and, whenever possible, we will provide information about financial resources available to support inventors, creators, and entrepreneurs.

We recognize the importance of undertaking innovative research, enhancing – and being attentive to – the data available to provide insights into the status and needs of women in the IP ecosystem. We also pledge to promote science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM) education which creates career opportunities for women and girls.

We commit to leveraging this year's World Intellectual Property Day theme "IP and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Building our common future with innovation and creativity" to advance our efforts to accelerate women's participation in the global innovation, entrepreneurship, and creativity ecosystem. We fully recognize that achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is integral to each of the 17 SDGs.

As we celebrate International Women's Day, we commit to continuing to work together and we encourage everyone to join us by taking part in this promising future by investing in women to accelerate progress.

Studies referred to in this joint message can be obtained [here](#).

1. World Economic Forum. (2023). *"The finance gap for women entrepreneurs is \$1.7 trillion. Here's how to close it."* Available at www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/10/women-entrepreneurs-finance-banking/.
2. UN Women. (2023). *"Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2023,"* 19. Available at www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-the-gender-snapshot-2023-en.pdf.
3. EUIPO Study: *Women in design* (2023), Available at: https://euiipo.europa.eu/tunnel-web/secure/webdav/guest/document_library/observatory/documents/reports/2023_Report_on_Women_in_Design/2023_Report_on_Women_in_Design_FullR_en.pdf.
4. *Women in the Copyright System: "An Analysis of Women Authors in Copyright Registrations from 1978-2020, UNITED STATES COPYRIGHT OFFICE (2022)"*, p. 17. Available at <https://www.copyright.gov/policy/womenin-copyright-system/Women-in-the-Copyright-System.pdf>.
5. UN Women. (n.d.). *"Women and the Sustainable Development Goals."* Available at www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs