RWANDA-COUNTRY REPORT

by

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Introduction

Intellectual property is a new subject in Rwandan system of higher education and training. Human resources and library resources with respect to intellectual property are almost non-existent. However, with the ongoing reform of curricula at the National University of Rwanda, intellectual property law was introduced as a course in the new programme of the Faculty of Law.

This report presents a picture of the higher education in Rwanda and the current status of teaching and training of intellectual property. It also shows the availability of human and library resources with respect to intellectual property.

1. Higher Education in Rwanda

The first university in Rwanda i.e., the National University of Rwanda (NUR) was created in 1963. Currently, the other public and private institutions of higher education exist in Rwanda include Kigali Institute of Technology and Management (KIST), Kigali Institute of Education (KIE), Kigali Institute of Health (KIH), Institute of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, Higher Institute of Finance, Kigali Independent University (ULK), etc.

The major constraint that the higher education in Rwanda is facing at present is the scarcity of qualified human resources as a result of the genocide of 1994. Considerable efforts are being made to train future lecturers and researchers abroad, mainly in South Africa, USA, Canada, and in European countries. Ongoing reform of higher education curricula is aimed at meeting the new requirements of labour market and the challenges of globalisation. Special attention is given to Science and Technology, particularly to Information and Communication Technology.

2. Teaching and Training of Intellectual Property

Intellectual property is a new subject in higher education of Rwanda.

Ongoing reform of curricula at the National University of Rwanda has introduced a course of Intellectual Property Law in the Faculty of Law. This course will be taught in the final year of Bachelor of Law programme and will start next academic year 2001-2002.

Other faculties of Law in private universities like Kigali Independent University (ULK) will probably adopt the same programme since the National University of Rwanda is a reference to them.

3. Available Resources with Respect to Intellectual Property

As intellectual property is a new subject in education and training in Rwanda, resources with respect to the subject are almost non-existent.

Few books are available in the library of the National University of Rwanda (NUR) and there is no journal or other publication on intellectual property. At National University of Rwanda there is only one lecturer specialised in intellectual property law working in the Faculty of Law.

In the absence of books and journals, information related to intellectual property, which is available on the web, could be useful. Unfortunately, access to internet is still limited at NUR and other Rwandan universities due to limited number of computers. At NUR, a considerable effort was made in creating computer centres and increasing the number of computers but still this infrastructure is insufficient.

Conclusion

Considering the role of intellectual property in economic, social and cultural development, there is a need of developing skills in that field in Rwanda. This requires financial and material resources but Rwanda is facing many challenges of reconstruction and transformation of its society after the genocide of 1994, and the assistance of the World Intellectual Property Organisation is most needed.