

Dti working on finalising intellectual property policy

PRETORIA: The Department of Trade and Industry (dti) is finalising an Intellectual property (IP) policy to preserve and defend the intellectual property of South Africa's citizens.



Explaining the rationale behind the move, Minister Rob Davies said that over time, there have been progressive innovations but without an overarching framework that allowed for optimal IP protection.

"To address this, it is envisaged that the policy will introduce remedial measures to tackle infringements. At the same time, we will make sure that our IP laws do not become a barrier to doing business," said Davies.

The policy will focus on issues of health, traditional knowledge and geographic indicators.

The minister was addressing national, regional and private sector stakeholders at the opening of the Intellectual Property Conference at Gallagher Estate on Tuesday, 26 February 2013.

Davies said that South African products had been pirated all over the world and that the department was now intensifying efforts to secure the country's intellectual property.

"The importance of protecting our IP is again under the spotlight, with a French company wanting to register "Rooibos" as their intellectual property. I have written a letter to the French embassy strongly objecting to this and will support the industry in its fight to protect this name," added Davies.

Counterfeits were a threat to the South African economy, Davies said, adding that these have caused substantial damage to the livelihoods of artists.

"It is for this reason that our anti-piracy campaign will be enhanced to get rid of counterfeit and pirated goods.

"It is a scourge we have to root out. Substandard products that do not meet compulsory specifications are detrimental to our citizens as well. The struggle against counterfeits is very important to our cause," said Davies.

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