



BELIZE

**PATENTS ACT
CHAPTER 253**

REVISED EDITION 2020

**SHOWING THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS AS AT
31ST DECEMBER, 2020**

This is a revised edition of the Substantive Laws, prepared by the Law Revision Commissioner under the authority of the Law Revision Act, Chapter 3 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2020.

This edition contains a consolidation of amendments made to the law by Act No. 16 of 2018.



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CHAPTER 253

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[21st June, 2000]

PART I

Preliminary

1. This Act may be cited as the Patents Act.

Short title.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires—

Interpretation.

“Court” means the Supreme Court;

“foreign application” means any application for a patent filed by an applicant outside Belize;

“International Patent Classification” means the classification according to the Strasbourg Agreement of March 24, 1971;

“invention” means an idea of an inventor which permits in practice the solution to a specific problem in the field of technology;

“Journal” means the Journal of Intellectual Property referred to in section 5 (*d*);

“Minister” means the Minister for the time being to whom the subject of Patents is assigned by the Governor-General pursuant to section 41 of the Belize Constitution;

CAP. 4.

“Paris Convention” means the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property of March 20, 1883 as last revised;

“patent” means the title granted to protect an invention;
 “patentee” means the person to whom a patent has been granted;

“Patent Co-operation Treaty” means the Patent Co-operation Treaty of June 19, 1970;

“priority date” means the date of the earlier application that serves as the basis for the right of priority provided for in the Paris Convention;

“Register” means the Register of Patents referred to in section 7;

“Registrar” means the Registrar of Intellectual Property appointed under section 4;

“utility model certificate” means a certificate granted for an invention under Part VII of this Act.

PART II

Establishment and Functions of the Intellectual Property Office

Establishment of
Intellectual
Property Office.

3.—(1) There shall be and is hereby established in and for Belize, at such place as the Minister may determine, an Intellectual Property Office.

40 of 2005.

(2) The Intellectual Property Office shall be a public office.

4.—(1) There shall be appointed by the Judicial and Legal Services Commission a Registrar of Intellectual Property who shall be the Solicitor General.

Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Assistant Registrars, etc.
16 of 2018.

(1A) The Registrar of Intellectual Property shall be subject to the general directions of the Minister and to the provisions of this Act and be responsible for the administration of this Act performing such functions, and exercising such powers, as are conferred on him by this or any other enactment.

16 of 2018.

(2) There shall also be a Deputy Registrar of Intellectual Property and such number of Assistant Registrars as may be considered necessary for the proper administration of this Act or any other enactment.

(3) The Minister may give the Registrar written directions of a general character which are not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, concerning the exercise and performance of powers and functions in relation to any matter which appears to the Minister to concern the development of industrial property and any other matters connected therewith, and the Registrar shall carry out such directions.

(4) The Deputy Registrar and Assistant Registrars shall perform such functions, and exercise such powers, as the Minister may, by Order published in the *Gazette*, delegate to them from time to time.

5. Without derogating from the generality of the provisions of section 4, the Registrar shall have the following functions and powers, namely to—

Powers and functions of Registrar.

- (a) process all applications made under this Act;
- (b) grant patents and register utility model certificates;
- (c) administer granted patents and registered utility model certificates;

- (d) establish and maintain a Journal of Intellectual Property in which he shall publish all matters that are required to be published under this Act or any other enactment;
- (e) carry out studies, programmes or exchanges of items or services regarding domestic and international patent law; and
- (f) provide patent information services such as making available, for use by the public, in the prescribed manner, and on payment of any prescribed fees, patent literature.

Seal.

6.—(1) The Registrar shall have a seal approved by the Minister, which he shall affix to every document issued by him, and to any copy of a document issued by him *in lieu* of the original document.

(2) Impressions of the Registrar's seal shall be judicially and officially noticed and admitted in evidence.

Register.

7.—(1) The Registrar shall maintain a Register of Patents in which he shall record all matters required by this Act or the Regulations made there under to be recorded, and shall also, in a section of the Register created for that purpose, register utility model certificates.

(2) Any person may, upon payment of the prescribed fee, and in accordance with any prescribed conditions, consult, inspect or make a copy of, or obtain an extract from, the Register.

(3) The Register shall be *prima facie* evidence of anything required or authorized by this Act to be registered, and shall be admissible and sufficient evidence of any such thing.

(4) A certificate signed by the Registrar and certifying that any entry which he is authorized by this Act to make has or has

not been made, or that any other thing which he is authorized to do has or has not been done, shall be *prima facie* evidence, and shall be admissible and sufficient evidence of the matters so certified.

(5) Each of the following, that is to say, a copy of—

- (a) an entry in the Register or an extract from the Register which is supplied under sub-section (2); and
- (b) any document kept in the Intellectual Property Office, or an extract from any such document, or any matter which has been published in the Journal, which is to be a certified copy or a certified extract,

shall be admitted in evidence without further proof and without production of the original, and such evidence shall be sufficient evidence of the matters stated therein.

(6) In this section, “certified copy” and “certified extract” means a copy or extract certified by the Registrar and sealed with his seal.

PART III

Patents

8.—(1) Subject to section 12, a patent may be granted only for an invention which satisfies the following conditions—

Patentable
inventions.

- (a) the invention is new;
- (b) it involves an inventive step; and
- (c) it is capable of industrial application.

(2) An invention may be, or may relate to, a product or a process.

Novelty.

9.—(1) An invention is considered to be new if it does not form part of prior art.

(2) For the purpose of this Act, prior art in relation to an invention means anything which has, at any time prior to the filing date or, where priority is claimed, the priority date, of the application claiming the invention, been disclosed to the public anywhere in the world by oral or written description, by use, or in any other way.

(3) For the purpose of sub-section (2), the disclosure to the public of matter constituting an invention shall not be taken into consideration if it occurred within twelve months immediately preceding the filing date or, where priority is claimed, the priority date of the application, and the disclosure was due to or in consequence of—

- (a) acts committed by the applicant or his predecessor in title; or
- (b) an abuse committed by a third party with regard to the applicant or his predecessor in title.

(4) In the case of an invention consisting of a substance or composition for use in a method of treatment of the human or animal body by surgery or therapy, or of diagnosis practised on the human or animal body, the fact that the substance or composition forms part of prior art shall not prevent the invention from being taken to be new if the use of the substance or composition in any such method does not form part of prior art.

Inventive step.

10. An invention shall be considered as involving an inventive step if, having regard to the prior art relevant to the

application claiming the invention as defined in section 9(2), it is not obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art.

11. An invention shall be considered as being capable of industrial application if it can be made or used in any kind of industry including without limitation agriculture, fishery, handicraft and services.

Industrial application.

12.—(1) The following, even if they are inventions within the meaning of this Act, shall not be protected as patents—

Matters excluded from patent protection.

- (a) a discovery, scientific theory or mathematical method;
- (b) a scheme, rule or method for doing business, performing a mental act or playing a game; and
- (c) methods for the treatment of the human or animal body by surgery or therapy, as well as diagnostic methods practised on the human or animal body.

(2) Sub-section (1)(c) shall not apply to products for use in any of the methods specified therein.

(3) A patent shall not be granted for an invention the commercial exploitation of which it is necessary to prevent in Belize in order—

- (a) to protect public order or morality, including to protect human, animal or plant life or health; or
- (b) to avoid serious prejudice to the environment.

(4) The refusal to grant a patent in respect of an invention referred to in sub-section (3) shall not be based solely on the

ground that the commercial exploitation is prohibited by a law in force in Belize.

Who may apply for a patent.

13. Any person may make an application for a patent, either alone or jointly with another.

Right to a patent.

14.—(1) The right to a patent shall belong to the inventor.

(2) If two or more persons have made an invention jointly, the right to the invention shall belong to them jointly.

(3) Where two or more persons have made the same invention independently of each other, the person whose application bears the earliest filing date or, if priority is claimed, the person whose application bears the earliest validly claimed priority date shall, unless that application is abandoned or withdrawn by the applicant, or rejected by the Registrar, have the right to the patent.

(4) The inventor shall be named as such in the patent unless in a special written declaration signed by him and addressed to the Registrar, he indicates that he does not wish to be so named.

(5) Any promise or undertaking made by the inventor to any person to the effect that he will make such a declaration shall be void.

(6) The right to a patent may be assigned or transferred by succession.

Invention by employee or person commissioned.

15.—(1) Where an invention is made in execution of a contract of employment or for the execution of work, the right to the patent shall, in the absence of any agreement to the contrary, belong to the employer or the person who commissioned the work, as the case may be.

(2) Where an invention referred to in sub-section (1) acquires an economic value much greater than the parties could reasonably have foreseen at the time of concluding the contract

of employment or for the execution of work, as the case may be, the inventor shall be entitled to equitable remuneration which may be fixed by the Court in the absence of agreement between the parties.

(3) Where an employee whose contract of employment does not require him to engage in any inventive activity makes, in the field of the activities of his employer, an invention using information or means placed at his disposal by his employer, the right to the patent for such invention shall be deemed to accrue to the employer in the absence of any provision to the contrary in the contract of employment, provided that the employee shall be entitled to equitable remuneration which, in the absence of agreement between the parties, may be fixed by the Court taking into account his emoluments, the economic value of the invention and any benefit derived from it by the employer.

(4) For the avoidance of doubt, it is hereby declared that when an invention is made by an employee whose contract of employment does not require him to engage in inventive activity, or in a field of activity different from that of his employer, and without using information or means put at his disposal by the employer, the right to the patent for such invention shall accrue to the employee.

(5) The rights conferred on the inventor under sub-sections (1), (2), (3) and (4) shall not be restricted by contract.

(6) This section shall not apply to an invention made before the coming into force of this Act.

16.—(1) Where the essential elements of the invention claimed in a patent or application for a patent have been unlawfully derived from an invention for which the right to the patent belongs to another person, such other person may apply to the Court for an order that the said patent application or patent be assigned to him.

Judicial
assignment of
patent
application or
patent.

(2) The Court shall make such order as it sees fit upon hearing such application.

(3) No application for the assignment of a patent under subsection (1) shall be entertained by the Court after the expiry of five years from the date of the grant of the patent unless it is shown that any person registered as an owner of the patent knew, at the time of the grant or, as the case may be, of the transfer of the patent to him, that he was not entitled to the patent.

PART IV

Patents Application Process etc.

Application for a patent.

17.—(1) Every application for a patent shall be filed with the Registrar in the prescribed form and shall contain—

- (a) a request;
- (b) a description;
- (c) one or more claims;
- (d) one or more drawings where required; and
- (e) an abstract.

(2) The request shall contain—

- (a) a petition that a patent be granted;
- (b) the name of and other prescribed information relating to the applicant, the inventor, and agent, if any; and
- (c) the title of the invention.

(3) Where the applicant is not the inventor or a joint inventor, the request shall be accompanied by a written statement justifying the applicant's right to the patent.

(4) The description shall disclose the invention in a manner which is sufficiently clear and complete to permit a person having ordinary skill in the art to carry out the invention, and shall, in particular, indicate at least one mode known to the applicant in which the invention can be carried out.

(5) The claim or claims shall—

- (a) define the matter for which protection is sought;
- (b) be clear and concise; and
- (c) be supported by the description.

(6) The description and the drawings may be used to interpret the claim or claims.

(7) The Registrar may require an application to file drawings where these are necessary for the understanding of the invention.

(8) The purpose of the abstract is to provide technical information and shall not be taken into account for the purpose of interpreting the scope of the protection sought.

(9) An applicant may, at any time before the patent is granted, withdraw his application.

(10) An application for a patent shall be accompanied by the prescribed application fee.

18.—(1) An application for a patent shall relate to one invention only or to a group of inventions so linked so as to form a single general inventive concept.

Unity of
invention.

(2) The applicant may, at any time before a patent is granted, divide the application into two or more applications (referred to in this section as “divisional applications”), provided that each divisional application shall not include any matter which was not disclosed in the initial application as filed.

(3) Each divisional application shall be accorded the filing date and, where applicable, the priority date, of the initial application.

(4) The fact that a patent has been granted on an application that did not comply with the requirements of unity of invention under sub-section (1) shall not be a ground for the invalidation of the patent.

Amendment of application.

19. The applicant may, at any time before a patent is granted, amend the application, but the amendment shall not include any matter which was not disclosed in the initial application as filed.

Joint applicants.

20.—(1) Where two or more persons apply jointly for a patent, they shall, in the absence of an agreement to the contrary, have equal undivided shares in the application and none of them shall deal with the application in any way without the consent of the other.

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of sub-section (1), if any step is required to be taken to save the application from being abandoned, any applicant may, on his own behalf and on behalf of any other joint applicant, take such step without recourse to the other applicant or applicants.

Right of priority.

21.—(1) An application for a patent may contain a declaration claiming the priority, as provided for in the Paris Convention, of one or more earlier national, regional or international applications filed by the applicant or his predecessor in title in or for any State party to the said Convention or any member of the World Trade Organisation.

(2) Where the application contains a declaration under sub-section (1), the Registrar may require the applicant to furnish, within the prescribed time, a copy of the earlier national, regional or international application certified as correct by the Office with which it was filed.

(3) Where the earlier application is not in English, the Registrar may require a translation thereof in English verified by the translator that the translation is, to the best of his knowledge, complete and faithful.

(4) The effect of the declaration referred to in sub-section (1) shall be as provided in the Paris Convention.

(5) Where any requirement of this section or the Regulations pertaining thereto is not fulfilled, the declaration referred to in sub-section (1) shall be considered as having not been made.

22.—(1) At any time before the grant or refusal of a patent, an applicant for a patent may, upon payment of the prescribed fee, convert his application into an application for a utility model certificate.

Conversion of patent application.

(2) No person may convert an application under sub-section (1) more than once.

23.—(1) The applicant shall, if requested by the Registrar, furnish him with the date and number of any application for a patent filed by him abroad relating to the same or essentially the same invention as that claimed in the application filed with the Registrar.

Information concerning corresponding foreign applications.

(2) The applicant shall also, if requested by the Registrar, furnish him with the following documents relating to any foreign application referred to in sub-section (1)—

- (a) a copy of any communication received by the applicant concerning the results of any search

or examination carried out in respect of the foreign application;

- (b) a copy of the patent granted on the basis of the foreign application;
- (c) a copy of any final decision rejecting the foreign application or refusing the grant requested in the foreign application; and
- (d) a copy of any final decision invalidating the patent granted on the basis of the foreign application referred to in sub-section (1).

(3) Sub-section (2)(a) and (c) shall not apply where the Office of the Registrar is an elected Office within the meaning of section 55 and has received or will receive an international preliminary examination report.

(4) Any document furnished pursuant to this section—

- (a) shall, if not in English, be accompanied by a translation thereof in English, verified by the translator that the translation is, to the best of his knowledge, complete and faithful; and
- (b) may be used only for facilitating the evaluation of the novelty and inventive step of the invention for which the patent application is made.

Disclosure of matter, etc., between earlier and later applications.

24. Where an application is made for a patent under section 17 and a declaration is made in accordance with section 21(1) in or in connection with that application specifying an earlier application, the first-mentioned application and any patent granted in pursuance thereof shall not be invalidated by reason only of the fact that any subject matter disclosed in the earlier application was made available to the public at any time after the date of filing of the said earlier application.

25.—(1) The Registrar shall accord as the filing date of an application for a patent, the date of receipt of the application, provided that at the time of its receipt, the following requirements are satisfied—

Filing date.

- (a) the documents filed contain an express or implied indication that the granting of a patent is sought;
- (b) the documents filed identify the applicant or applicants;
- (c) the documents filed contain information which, on the face of it, appears to be a description of the invention.

(2) Where the application does not comply with the requirements of sub-section (1), the Registrar shall so inform the applicant in writing and shall invite him, subject to section 19, to file the required amendment.

(3) The Registrar shall then accord, as the filing date, the date of receipt of the amendment referred to in sub-section (2).

(4) Where the applicant fails to make the required amendment, the application shall be treated as if it had not been filed.

(5) Where the application refers to drawings which are not included in the application, the Registrar shall invite the applicant to furnish the missing drawings and, if the applicant complies, the Registrar shall accord as the filing date of the application, the date of receipt of the missing drawings.

(6) Where the applicant fails to comply with sub-section (5), the Registrar shall accord as the filing date of the application, the date of receipt of the application and shall treat any reference to the said drawings as non-existent.

Examination.

26. After according a filing date, and if the application is not withdrawn, the Registrar shall examine the application to determine whether—

- (a) it complies with the requirements of section 17(1), (2), (3) and (10) and the Regulations pertaining thereto;
- (b) it complies with the requirements of this Act;
- (c) it complies with the requirements of the Regulations as have been designated by the Regulations to be formal requirements; and
- (d) information requested under section 23, if any, has been provided.

Refusal or grant
of patent.

27.—(1) Subject to section 25(2) to (4), where the Registrar is not satisfied that the requirements of the Act and the Regulations have been complied with, he shall refuse the application and so inform the applicant in writing, stating the reasons for the refusal.

(2) Where two or more patent applications for the same invention, having the same filing date or the same priority date, are filed by the same applicant or his successor in title, the Registrar may, on that ground, refuse to grant a patent in respect of more than one of the applications.

(3) Where the Registrar refuses an application under subsection (2), he shall so inform the applicant in writing, stating the reasons for his refusal.

(4) Where the Registrar is satisfied that the application, as originally filed or as amended, complies with the requirements of section 26, he shall grant the applicant a patent.

(5) Where the Registrar grants a patent, he shall—

- (a) publish, in the Journal, a notice of the grant of the patent;
- (b) issue a certificate of the grant of the patent and a copy of the patent to the applicant; and
- (c) record the patent in the Register.

(6) The Registrar shall, on payment of the prescribed fee, make a copy of any patent granted under this section available to any person who requests such copy.

(7) The Registrar shall, upon the request of the owner of the patent, amend the text or drawings of the patent in order to limit the extent of the protection conferred thereby, provided that the amendment would not result in the disclosure contained in the patent going beyond the disclosure contained in the initial application on the basis of which the patent was granted.

(8) The patent shall be deemed to be granted on the date on which the Registrar publishes a notice of the grant of the patent in the Journal.

PART V

Terms and conditions, etc., of Grant of Patents

28.—(1) Subject to sub-section (2), a patent shall expire 20 years after the filing date of the application therefore.

Duration and maintenance of patent.

(2) In order to maintain a patent or patent application, the owner of the patent or the applicant shall pay in advance to the Registrar for each year starting one year after the filing date of the application for the grant of the patent, the prescribed annual fee.

(3) Where the period prescribed for the payment of the annual fee expires and payment of the said fee has not been

made, the Registrar shall give the owner of the patent or the applicant, as the case may be, a period of grace not exceeding six months, within which he must pay the annual fee.

(4) The owner of the patent or the applicant, as the case may be, shall, when paying the annual fee in accordance with subsection (2), also pay, to the Registrar, the surcharge prescribed for late payment.

(5) A patent shall lapse or a patent application shall be deemed to have been withdrawn if the annual fee is not paid in accordance with the provisions of this section.

(6) If a patent ceases to have effect under this section, the Registrar shall enter the lapse in the Register and publish it in the Journal.

Surrender of
patent or claim.

29.—(1) The owner of a patent may, at any time by notice given to the Registrar in the prescribed manner, offer to surrender his patent or one or more claims contained in his patent.

(2) Where an offer is made under this section, the Registrar shall advertise the offer in the prescribed manner and any interested person may, within the prescribed period commencing on the date of the publication of the advertisement, give notice to the Registrar of his opposition to the proposed surrender.

(3) Where notice of opposition is duly given under this section, the Registrar shall notify the owner of the patent in writing and determine the question.

(4) Where the Register is satisfied that the patent or any claim or claims contained in the patent may properly be surrendered, he may accept the offer and record his acceptance in the Register and shall, as soon as practicable, publish a notice of his acceptance in the Journal.

(5) From the date of publication of the notice under sub-section (4) of this section, the patent or claim or claims shall cease to have effect, but no action for infringement shall lie in respect of any act done before that date, and no right to compensation shall accrue for any use of the patented invention before that date for purposes of the State.

(6) Where a patent has been granted to two or more persons, a notice in accordance with sub-section (1) of this section, shall be signed by each of them.

30.—(1) Any person who claims to have acquired the property in a patent or application for a patent by virtue of any transaction to which this section applies shall be entitled as against any other person who claims to have acquired that property by virtue of an earlier transaction to which this section applies if, at the time of the later transaction—

Effect of registration, etc., on rights in patents.

- (a) the earlier transaction was not registered;
- (b) in the case of any application, notice of the earlier transaction had not been given to the Registrar; and
- (c) in any case, the person claiming under the later transaction did not know of the earlier transaction.

(2) Sub-section (1) of this section, shall apply equally to the case where any person claims to have acquired any right in or under a patent or application for a patent by virtue of a transaction to which this section applies, and that right is incompatible with any such right acquired by virtue of an earlier transaction to which this section applies.

(3) This section applies to the following transactions—

- (a) the assignment of a patent or application for a patent or a right in it;

- (b) the mortgage of a patent or application or the granting of security over it;
- (c) the grant, assignment of a licence or sub-licence, or mortgage of a licence or sub-licence, under a patent or application;
- (d) the death of the owner or one of the owners of any such patent or application or of any person having a right in a patent or application and the vesting, of any such right, by an assent of the personal representative of the applicant or owner of a patent; and
- (e) any order or directions of a Court or other competent authority—
 - (i) transferring a patent or application or any right in or under it to any person; or
 - (ii) that an application should proceed in the name of any person, and in either case the event by virtue of which the Court or authority had power to make any such order or give any such directions.

(4) Where an application for the registration of a transaction has been made, but the transaction has not been registered, registration of the application shall, for the purposes of subsection (1)(a) of this section, be treated as registration of the transaction.

(5) For purposes of this section, “transaction” includes an instrument and an event.

PART VII

Property in Patent Application and Patents

31.—(1) A patent or application for a patent is personal property (without being a thing in action), and any patent or any such application and rights in or under it may be transferred, created or granted in accordance with sub-sections (2) to (6) of this section.

Nature of, and transactions in, patents.

(2) Subject to section 32(2)(b), any patent or any such application, or any right in it, may be assigned or mortgaged.

(3) Any patent or any such application or right shall vest by operation of law in the same way as any other personal property and may be vested by an assent of personal representatives.

(4) Subject to section 32(2)(b), a licence may be granted under any patent or any such application for working the invention which is the subject of the patent or the application, and—

- (a) to the extent that the licence so provides, a sub-licence may be granted under any such licence and any such licence or sub-licence may be assigned or mortgaged; and
- (b) any such licence or sub-licence shall vest by operation of law in the same way as any other personal property and may be vested by an assent of personal representatives.

(5) Any of the following transactions, that is to say—

- (a) any assignment or mortgage of a patent or any such application, or any right in a patent or any application; or

- (b) any assent relating to any patent or any such application or right,

shall be void unless it is in writing and is signed by or on behalf of the parties to the transaction (or, in the case of an assent or other transaction by a personal representative, by or on behalf of the personal representative), or in the case of a body corporate, is so signed or is under the seal of that body.

(6) An assignment of a patent or any such application or a share in it, and an exclusive licence granted under any patent or any such application may confer, on the assignee or licensee, the right of the assignor or licensor to bring proceedings by virtue of section 41 for a previous infringement.

Joint ownership
of patent.

32.—(1) Where a patent is granted to two or more persons jointly, each of the patentees shall, in the absence of an agreement to the contrary, be entitled to an equal undivided share in the patent.

(2) Subject to the provisions of sub-section (4) of this section, a joint patentee shall not be entitled, in the absence of an agreement to the contrary, and in the absence of the consent of the joint patentee or patentees, to—

- (a) make, use, exercise, or dispose of the patented invention;
- (b) grant a licence or assign or mortgage the whole or any part of his interest in the patent; or
- (c) take any step or institute any proceedings relating to the patent;

Provided that he may without recourse to any other joint patentee, pay any annual fee which is payable.

(3) Where a patented article is disposed of by a joint patentee, the person who acquires the patent, or any person making a claim through him, shall be entitled to deal with that

article in the same manner as though the article had been disposed of by the patentees jointly.

(4) Any joint patentee may institute proceedings for infringement and shall give notice thereof to any other joint patentee, and any such other joint patentee may intervene as co-plaintiff and recover any damages in respect of any damage he may have suffered as a result of the infringement.

33.—(1) The exploitation of a patented invention in Belize by any person other than the owner of the patent shall require the latter's authorisation.

Rights conferred
by patent.

(2) For the purposes of this section, exploitation of a patented invention means—

- (a) where the patent has been granted in respect of a product—
 - (i) making, importing into Belize, offering for sale, selling and using that product;
 - (ii) stocking such product for the purposes of offering it for sale or selling or using it; and
- (b) where the patent has been granted in respect of a process—
 - (i) using that process; and
 - (ii) doing any act referred to in paragraph (a) of this sub-section in respect of a product obtained by means of that process.

(3) Subject to sub-section (4) and to sections 34, 35 and 38, the owner of the patent shall have the right to bring an action

against any person who exploits the patented invention in Belize without his authorization.

(4) The rights under the patent shall not extend to—

- (a) acts in respect of articles which have been put on the market in Belize by the owner of the patent or with his consent;
- (b) the use of articles on aircraft, land vehicles or vessels of other countries which temporarily or accidentally enter the airspace, territory or waters of Belize;
- (c) acts done only for experimental purposes relating to a patented invention;
- (d) the extemporaneous preparation for individual cases, in a pharmacy, of a medicine in accordance with a medical prescription or acts concerning the medicine so prepared; or
- (e) acts performed by any person who in good faith, before the filing or, where priority is claimed, the priority date of the application on which the patent is granted, and in Belize, was using the invention or was making effective and serious preparations for such use.

(5) The right of prior user referred to in sub-section (4)(e) may be transferred or devolve only together with the enterprise or business, or with that part of the enterprise or business in which the use or preparations for use have been made.

Right to continue use begun before date of filing or priority.

34.—(1) Where a patent is granted for an invention, a person who before the date of filing of the patent application, or if priority was claimed, before the date of priority, does in good faith in Belize, an act which would constitute an infringement of the patent if it were then in force, or makes effective and serious

preparations in good faith to do such an act, shall have the rights specified in sub-section (2).

(2) The rights referred to in sub-section (1) shall be the following, namely—

- (a) to continue to do or, as the case may be, to do that act himself; and
- (b) if the act was done or preparations had been made to do it in the course of a business—
 - (i) to assign the right under paragraph (a);
 - (ii) to transmit the right under paragraph (a) to his heirs on his death or, in the case of a body corporate, on its dissolution, to any person who acquires that part of the business in the course of which the act was done or preparations had been made to do it; or
 - (iii) to authorize the act to be done by any partners of his for the time being in that business,

and the doing of that act by virtue of this sub-section shall not amount to an infringement of the patent concerned.

(3) The rights specified in sub-section (2) shall not include the right to grant a licence to any person to do an act referred to in sub-section (1).

(4) Where a product which is the subject of a patent is disposed of by any person to another in exercise of a right conferred by sub-section (2), that other and any person claiming through him shall be entitled to deal with the product in the same way as if it had been disposed of by a sole owner of the patent.

Exploitation by
Government or
person
authorized
thereby.

35.—(1) Where—

- (a) the public interest, in particular, national security, nutrition, health, or the development of other vital sectors of the national economy so requires; or
- (b) the Minister has determined that the manner of exploitation, by the owner of the patent or his licensee, is anti-competitive, and he is satisfied that the exploitation of the invention in accordance with this sub-section would remedy such practice,

the Minister may decide that, even without the agreement of the owner of the patent, a Government agency or a third person designated by the Minister may exploit the invention.

(2) The exploitation of the patented invention shall be limited to the purpose for which it was authorized and shall be subject to the payment to the said owner of an adequate remuneration there for, taking into account the economic value of the Minister's authorization, as determined in the said decision, and, where a decision has been taken under sub-section (1)(b), the need to correct anti-competitive practices.

(3) The Minister shall make his decision after hearing the owner of the patent and any interested person.

(4) A request for the Minister's authorisation to exploit a patented invention shall be accompanied by evidence that the owner of the patent has received, from the person seeking the authorisation, a request for a contractual licence, but that that person has been unable to obtain such a licence on reasonable commercial terms and conditions and within a reasonable time.

(5) Sub-section (4) shall not apply in cases of—

- (a) national emergency or other circumstances of extreme urgency provided, however, that in such cases the owner of the patent shall be notified of the Minister's decision as soon as reasonably practicable;
- (b) public non-commercial use; and
- (c) anti-competitive practices determined as such by the Minister in accordance with sub-section (1)(b).

(6) The exploitation of a patented invention in the field of semi-conductor technology shall only be authorized for public non-commercial use or where a judicial or administrative body has determined that the manner of exploitation of the patented invention, by the owner of the patent or his licensee, is anti-competitive, and if the Minister is satisfied that the issuance of the non-voluntary licence would remedy such practice.

(7) The authorization shall not exclude—

- (a) the conclusion of licence contracts by the owner of the patent;
- (b) the continued exercise, by the owner of the patent, of his rights under section 33(2); or
- (c) the grant of a non-voluntary licence under section 38.

(8) Where a third person has been designated by the Minister, the authorization may only be transferred with the enterprise or business of that person or with the part of the enterprise or business within which the patented invention is being exploited.

(9) The exploitation of the patented invention by the Government agency or third person designated by the Minister shall be predominantly for the supply of the market in Belize.

(10) Upon the request of the owner of the patent, of the Government agency or of the third party authorized to exploit the patented invention, the Minister may, after hearing the parties, vary the terms of the decision authorizing the exploitation of the patented invention to the extent that changed circumstances justify such variation.

(11) Upon the request of the owner of the patent, the Minister shall terminate the authorization if he is satisfied, after hearing the parties, that the circumstances which led to his decision have ceased to exist and are unlikely to recur, or that the Government agency or third person designated by him has failed to comply with the terms of the decision.

(12) Notwithstanding sub-section (11), the Minister shall not terminate the authorization if he is satisfied that the need for adequate protection of the legitimate interests of the Government agency or third person designated by him justifies the maintenance of the decision.

Prevention of
indirect use of
invention.

36.—(1) While in force, a patent shall confer, on its owner, the right to prevent all persons not having his authorization, from supplying or offering to supply in Belize, a person (other than a person entitled to engage in commercial working of the patented invention) with means relating to an essential element of that invention, for putting it into effect therein, provided that the person knows, or it is obvious to a reasonable person in the circumstances that those means are suitable for putting, and are intended to put, that invention into effect.

(2) Sub-section (1) shall not apply where the means referred to therein are staple commercial products, except where the person induces the person supplied to commit acts which the owner of the patent is entitled to prevent by virtue of section 33 of this section.

(3) Any person who commits an act referred to in section 33(4)(c) or (d) shall not be considered to be a person entitled to engage in commercial working of the invention for the purposes of sub-section (1).

PART IV

Voluntary, Non-Voluntary Licences, Infringements and invalidation of Patents Licences

37.—(1) Subject to section 32, the owner of a patent application or patent may grant a licence in respect of the relevant invention.

Voluntary
licences.

(2) Any licence contract concerning a patent or an application therefore shall be filed with the Registrar who shall keep its contents confidential but shall, upon payment of the prescribed fee, record it in the Register and publish a reference thereto in the Journal in the manner prescribed.

(3) Until such contract has been so recorded, the licence shall have no effect against third parties, unless otherwise decided by the Court.

(4) In the absence of any provision to the contrary in the terms of a licence contract, a licensee may not extend, to another person, the authorisation conferred on him by the owner in accordance with sub-section (1), nor may he assign or mortgage his licence.

(5) In the absence of any provision to the contrary in the terms of a licence contract, the owner of a patent may continue to enjoy the rights conferred on him by sections 33 and 36.

(6) To the extent that the licence has been granted as an exclusive licence, the owner may not grant a licence in respect of the invention to a third person and may not himself do any of the acts referred to in sections 33 and 36.

(7) If, before the expiration of the licence contract, any of the following events occur with respect to any patent application or patent, the subject of that contract—

- (a) the patent application is withdrawn or is deemed to be withdrawn;
- (b) the patent application is treated as if it had not been filed;
- (c) the grant of the patent is refused; or
- (d) the patent is invalidated,

the licensee shall, from the date of the event, no longer be bound to make any payment directly relating to that patent application or patent.

(8) In any case referred to in sub-section (7), the licensee shall have the right to repayment of the payments already made and directly relating to the patent application or patent in question, provided that he has not benefited from the licence.

Non-voluntary
licences.

38.—(1) At any time after the expiration of four years from the date of filing of a patent application or three years from the date of the grant of a patent, whichever happens later, any interested person may apply to the Court for the grant of a non-voluntary licence under the patent on the grounds that the patented invention is not being exploited or is being insufficiently exploited by working the invention in Belize, or by importation into Belize.

(2) Notwithstanding sub-section (1), a non-voluntary licence shall not be issued if the owner of the patent satisfies the Court that circumstances exist which justify the non-exploitation or insufficient exploitation of the patented invention in Belize.

(3) The Court shall, where it grants a non-voluntary licence, fix—

- (a) the scope and function of the licence;
- (b) the time limit within which the licensee must begin to exploit the patented invention; and
- (c) the amount of the remuneration to be paid to the owner of the patent, and the conditions of the payment thereof.

(4) The beneficiary of the non-voluntary licence shall—

- (a) have the right to exploit the patented invention in Belize in accordance with the Court's order;
- (b) commence the exploitation of the patented invention within the time stipulated in the said order; and
- (c) thereafter, exploit the patented invention sufficiently.

(5) Where the invention claimed in a patent (referred to in this section as “later patent”) cannot be exploited in Belize without infringing a patent granted on the basis of an application benefiting from an earlier filing, or, where appropriate, priority date (referred to in this section as an “earlier patent”), and provided that the invention claimed in the later patent involves an important technical advance of considerable economic importance in relation to the invention claimed in the earlier patent, the Court may, upon the application of the owner of the later patent, issue a non-voluntary licence to the extent necessary to avoid infringement of the earlier patent.

(6) Where a non-voluntary licence is issued in accordance with sub-section (5), the Court shall, upon the application of the

owner of the earlier patent, issue a non-voluntary licence in respect of the later patent.

(7) In the case of an application for the issuance of a non-voluntary licence in accordance with sub-sections (5) and (6), sub-section (3) shall apply *mutatis mutandis*, except that no time limit need be fixed by the Court.

(8) In the case of a non-voluntary licence issued under sub-section (1), the transfer may be made only with the later patent, or, in the case of a non-voluntary licence issued under sub-section (5), only with the earlier patent.

(9) An application for a non-voluntary licence shall be subject to payment of the prescribed fee.

(10) No licence shall be granted under this section in respect of a patented invention in the field of semi-conductor technology.

(11) Section 35 (2) to (12), and 62 (2) shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

Exercise of powers on applications under section 38.

39. The powers of the Court on an application under section 38 shall be exercised with a view to ensuring that the inventor or other person beneficially entitled to a patent receives adequate remuneration having regard to the economic value of the licence.

Infringement.

40. Subject to the provisions of sections 33 (4), 35 and 38, the performance, in relation to a patent, of any act referred to in sections 33 and 36, without the authorization of the owner of the patent shall, while it is in force, constitute an infringement.

Proceedings for infringement.

41.—(1) The owner of the patent shall, in addition to any other right, remedy or action available to him, have the right, subject to sections 33(4), 35, 38 and 42, to institute court proceedings against any person who infringes the patent by performing, without his authorization, any of the acts referred to in section

33(2) or who performs acts which make it likely that infringement will occur.

(2) A plaintiff in proceedings for infringement shall be entitled to relief by way of—

- (a) an injunction;
- (b) the seizure, forfeiture or destruction of—
 - (i) any infringing product or article, or of any product or article of which the infringing product or article forms an inseparable part; and
 - (ii) any article, instrument or thing by means of which any infringing product or article was produced;
- (c) damages;
- (d) an account of the profits derived from the infringement; or
- (e) any other relief provided for in the general law.

(3) The Court shall not, in awarding damages under this section, also order, in respect of the same infringement, that the plaintiff be given an account of the profits derived from the infringement.

(4) In any proceedings for infringement, the defendant may counter-claim for the invalidation of the patent and, by way of defence, rely upon any ground on which a patent may be invalidated.

(5) In any proceedings under this section, the plaintiff shall, before instituting the proceedings, give notice thereof to every

licensee under the patent in question whose name is recorded in the Register, and any such licensee shall be entitled to intervene as co-plaintiff.

(6) Where a licensee requests the owner of a title of protection granted under this Act to institute court proceedings for a specific relief and the owner fails to do so, the licensee may bring an action under this section and the Court shall grant him any relief specified in sub-section (2) or any other relief provided for in the general law.

(7) In any proceedings for infringement other than criminal proceedings, where the subject matter of the patent is a process for obtaining a product, the burden of establishing that the product was not made by the process shall rest on the defendant if—

- (a) the product is new; or
- (b) a substantial likelihood exists that the product was made using another process and the owner of the patent has been unable through reasonable efforts, to determine the process used.

(8) In requiring the production of evidence, the court shall take into account the legitimate interests of the defendant in not disclosing his manufacturing and business secrets.

(9) The Court shall, in awarding damages under this section, calculate such damages taking into account the amount of a reasonable royalty which would have been payable by a licensee or sub-licensee in respect of the patent concerned.

Restrictions on
recovery of
damages for
infringement.

42.—(1) In proceedings for infringement of a patent, damages shall not be awarded, and no order shall be made for an account of profits, against a defendant who proves that at the date of the infringement he was not aware, and had no reasonable grounds for supposing that the patent existed; and a person shall not be

taken to have been aware or to have had reasonable grounds for so supposing by reason only of the application to a product of the word “patent” or “patented”, or any word or words expressing or implying that a patent has been obtained for the product, unless the number of the patent accompanied the word or words in question.

(2) Where an amendment of the description of a patent has been allowed under the provisions of this Act, no damages shall be awarded in proceedings for an infringement of the patent committed before the decision to allow the amendment, unless the Court is satisfied that the description as published was framed in good faith and with reasonable skill and knowledge.

43.—(1) If the validity of a patent is put in issue in proceedings for infringement of the patent and it is found that the patent is only partially valid, the Court may, subject to sub-section (2), grant relief in respect of that part of the patent which is found to be valid and infringed.

Relief for infringement of partially valid patent.

(2) Where in any such proceedings it is found that a patent is only partially valid, the Court shall not grant relief by way of damages, costs or expenses, except where the plaintiff proves that the description was framed in good faith and with reasonable skill and knowledge and, in that event, the Court may grant relief in respect of that part of the patent which is valid and infringed, subject to the discretion of the Court as to costs or expenses and as to the date from which damages should be reckoned.

(3) As a condition of relief under this section, the Court may direct that the description be amended to its satisfaction upon an application made for that purpose under section 48 and an application may be so made accordingly, whether or not all other issues in the proceedings have been determined.

44.—(1) Where in any proceedings before the Court the validity of a patent to any extent is contested and that patent is found by the Court to be wholly or partially valid, the Court may certify

Certificate of contested validity of patent.

the finding and the fact that the validity of the patent was so contested.

(2) Where a certificate is granted under this section and in any subsequent proceedings before the Court for infringement of the patent concerned or for invalidation, a final order or judgment is made or given in favour of the party relying on the validity of the patent as found in the earlier proceedings, that party shall, unless the Court otherwise directs, be entitled to his costs or expenses as between attorney-at-law and client (other than the costs or expenses of any appeal in the subsequent proceedings).

Proceedings for
infringement by
exclusive
licensee.

45.—(1) Subject to the provisions of this section, the holder of an exclusive licence under a patent shall have the same right as the owner of the patent to bring any proceedings in respect of any infringement of the patent committed after the date of the licence; and references to the owner of the patent in this Act relating to infringement shall be construed accordingly.

(2) In awarding damages or granting any other relief in any such proceedings, the Court shall take into account any loss suffered or likely to be suffered by the exclusive licensee as such as a result of the infringement, or, as the case may be, the profits derived from the infringement, so far as it constitutes an infringement of the rights of the exclusive licensee as such.

Effect of non-
registration on
infringement
proceedings.

46. Where by virtue of a transaction, instrument or an event to which section 30 applies, a person becomes the owner or one of the owners or an exclusive licensee of a patent and the patent is subsequently infringed, the Court shall not award him damages or order that he be given an account of the profits in respect of such subsequent infringement occurring before the transaction, instrument or event is registered unless—

- (a) the transaction, instrument or event is registered within the period of six months beginning with its date; or

- (b) the Court is satisfied that it was not practicable to register the transaction, instrument or event before the end of that period and that it was registered as soon as was practicable thereafter.

47.—(1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, the Court may, on the application of any interested party, invalidate a patent on any of the following grounds—

Invalidation of patent.

- (a) that the invention is not an invention as defined in this Act;
- (b) that the patent concerned is not patentable under section 8 or does not satisfy the requirements of section 9(1), (2) and (3), and sections 10 and 11;
- (c) that the invention is a matter which should, in accordance with section 12, have been excluded from patent protection;
- (d) that the patent was granted to a person who was not entitled thereto under section 14 or 15, as the case may be;
- (e) that the patentee's application did not satisfy the requirements of section 17(4) to (7);
- (f) that the subject matter of the patent extends beyond the content of the patent application as filed or, if the patent was granted on a divisional application, it extends beyond the content of the relevant earlier application as filed; or
- (g) that the protection conferred by the patent has been extended by an amendment which should not have been allowed.

(2) Any invalidated patent, claim or part of a claim shall be regarded as being null and void from the date of the grant of the patent.

(3) An application for the invalidation of a patent shall be served on the patentee and filed with the Court in the manner and within the time prescribed.

(4) The Registrar of the Supreme Court shall notify the Registrar of the final decision of the Court and the Registrar shall forthwith record it and publish reference thereto in the Journal.

Amendment of
patent in
infringement or
invalidation
proceedings.

48.—(1) Subject to sub-section (5), in any proceedings before the Court in which the validity of a patent is put in issue, the Court may allow the owner of the patent to amend the patent in such manner, and subject to such terms as to advertising the proposed amendment and as to costs, expenses or otherwise, as the Court thinks fit.

(2) Any interested person may give notice to the Court of his opposition to an amendment proposed by the owner of the patent under this section, and if he does so the Court shall notify the owner and consider the opposition in deciding whether the amendment should be allowed.

(3) An amendment of a description under this section shall have effect and shall always be deemed to have effect from the grant of the patent.

(4) Where an application for an order under this section is made to the Court, the applicant shall notify the Registrar who shall be entitled to appear and be heard, and shall appear if so directed by the Court.

(5) No amendment shall be allowed under this section if it discloses matter which extends beyond that disclosed in the description of the granted patent or extends the scope of the protection conferred by the patent.

PART VII

Utility Model Certificates and International Arrangements

49.—(1) Except as otherwise provided under this Part, the provisions of this Act relating to patents and applications shall apply to utility model certificates and applications therefor.

Application of provisions relating to patents.

(2) Sections 8, 10, 28 and 47(1) shall not apply to utility model certificates and to applications therefore.

50.—(1) An invention shall qualify for a utility model certificate if it is new and industrially applicable.

Qualification of invention for utility model certificate.

(2) An invention for which a utility model certificate is applied for shall not be considered new if it differs from earlier inventions only in minor respects or in details which are immaterial to the function or application of the invention.

51. A utility model certificate shall expire seven years after the filing date of its application and shall not be renewed.

Duration of utility of model certificate.

52.—(1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, the Court may, on the application of any interested person, invalidate a utility model certificate on any of the following grounds—

Invalidation of utility model certificate.

- (a) that the invention relating to the certificate is—
 - (i) not new or industrially applicable; or
 - (ii) contrary to public order or morality;
- (b) that the description and claim or claims do not disclose the invention in a manner which is sufficiently clear and complete to permit a person having ordinary skill in the art to carry out the invention, and do not indicate at least

one model known to the applicant for carrying out the invention;

- (c) that the claim or claims do not define the matter for which protection is sought;
- (d) that the claim or claims are not clear or concise and are not fully supported by the description;
- (e) that the drawings necessary for the understanding of the invention have not been filed as required under this Act; and
- (f) that the person to whom the utility model certificate has been granted is not the inventor or his successor in title.

(2) An application for the invalidation of a utility model certificate shall be served on the person to whom the certificate has been issued and filed with the Court in the manner and time prescribed.

(3) The Registrar of the Supreme Court shall notify the Registrar of the decision of the Court to invalidate a utility model certificate and the Registrar shall forthwith record it and publish a reference thereto in the Journal.

Conversion of application for utility model certificate.

53.—(1) At any time before the grant or refusal of a utility model certificate, an applicant may, upon payment of the prescribed fee, convert his application for a utility model certificate into an application for a patent, and the latter application shall be accorded the filing date of the initial application.

(2) No person may convert an application under sub-section (1) more than once.

PART XIII

International Arrangements

54. The provisions of any international treaty in respect of industrial property to which Belize is party shall apply to matters dealt with by this Act and, in case of conflict with the provisions of this Act, shall prevail over the latter.

Application of treaties.

55.—(1) The Patent Cooperation Treaty (referred to in this section as “the Treaty”), the Regulations made there under, and the Administrative Instructions made under those Regulations shall be given full effect.

Implementation of Patent Cooperation Treaty.

(2) Where reference is made in this section to the Treaty, such reference shall include the Regulations and Administrative Instructions referred to in sub-section (1).

(3) The Intellectual Property Office shall process international applications in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty, and in accordance with the provisions of this Act and the Regulations made there under.

(4) Where the provisions of this Act and the Regulations made there under conflict with those of the Treaty, the provisions of the Treaty shall prevail.

(5) An international application designating Belize shall, subject to this section, be treated as an application for a patent or a utility model certificate filed under this Act having, as its filing date, the international filing date accorded under the Treaty.

(6) The Intellectual Property Office shall act as a receiving Office in respect of any international application filed with it by a resident or national of Belize.

(7) An international application filed with the Intellectual Property Office as receiving Office shall be filed in a prescribed language and the prescribed transmittal fee shall be paid to the Registrar within one month of the date of receipt of the international application.

(8) The Intellectual Property Office shall act as a designated office in respect of an international application in which Belize is designated for the purposes of obtaining a national patent or a utility model certificate under this Act.

(9) The Intellectual Property Office shall act as an elected Office in respect of an international application in which Belize is designated as referred to in sub-section (8), if the applicant elects Belize for the purposes of an international preliminary examination under Chapter II of the Treaty.

(10) The Intellectual Property Office, as designated Office or elected Office, shall not commence the processing of an international application before the expiration of the time limit referred to in sub-section (11), except if the applicant complies with the requirements of that sub-section and files, with the Intellectual Property Office, an express request for the early commencement of such processing.

(11) The applicant in respect of an international application designating Belize shall, before the expiration of the time limit applicable under Article 22 or 39 of the Treaty, or of such later time limit as may be prescribed in the Regulations—

- (a) pay the prescribed fee to the Intellectual Property Office; and
- (b) if the international application was not filed in, and has not been published under the Treaty as a translation into, a prescribed language, file, with the Intellectual Property Office, a translation of the international application,

containing the prescribed contents, into such language.

(12) Where the applicant does not comply with the requirements of sub-section (11) within the time limit referred to in that sub-section, the international application shall be considered as having been withdrawn for the purposes of this Act.

(13) In this section, the terms “designate”, “designated Office”, “elected Office”, “international application”, “international filing date”, “international preliminary examination” and “receiving Office” have the same meanings as in the Treaty.

56.—(1) Judicial notice shall be taken of the Paris Convention, the Patent Co-operation Treaty, or any other industrial property Convention or Treaty to which Belize may become party, and of any bulletin, journal or *gazette* published under such Convention or Treaty.

Judicial notice of certain treaties.

(2) Any document referred to in any such bulletin, journal or *gazette* shall be admissible as evidence of any instrument or other act thereby communicated, or of any institution established by or having functions under any Convention or Treaty referred to in sub-section (1).

PART VIII

Miscellaneous

57.—(1) Any changes in the ownership of a patent or utility model certificate or in the ownership of the application therefore shall be in writing and shall, upon the request of any interested party to the Registrar, be recorded and, except in the case of an application, be published in the Journal.

Changes in ownership.

(2) A change under sub-section (1) shall be of no effect against third parties until it has been recorded.

Correction of errors.

58.—(1) The Registrar may, of his own volition or upon the written request of any interested person, correct any clerical error or error in translation or transcription in any application filed under this Act, or in any document filed in pursuance of such application, and the Registrar may also correct any clerical error in the Register.

(2) Sub-section (1) shall not be construed as giving the Registrar any power to correct in the Register, any application or document in a material way.

Extension of time.

59.—(1) Where the Registrar is satisfied that the circumstances justify it, he may, upon the written request of any interested person, and upon such terms as he may direct, extend the time for doing any act or taking any proceeding under this Act and the Regulations made hereunder.

(2) The extension may be granted even though the time for doing the act or taking the proceeding has expired.

(3) The Registrar shall give written notice of any extension to the parties concerned.

Exercise of discretionary powers.

60. The Registrar shall, before exercising any discretionary power vested in him by this Act or the Regulations made there under, give any party to a proceeding before him the opportunity of being heard if his decision might adversely affect that party.

Agents.

61. Every applicant whose ordinary residence or principal place of business is outside Belize shall be represented by an attorney-at-law who is resident in Belize and practising in Belize in accordance with the relevant law.

Jurisdiction of Court.

62.—(1) The Court shall have jurisdiction in cases of disputes relating to the application of this Act and the Regulations, made

there under and in matters which, under this Act, may be brought before it.

(2) Any person who has been aggrieved by a decision of the Minister or the Registrar under this Act may, within two months of that decision, appeal to the Court.

63.—(1) Any person who intentionally or wilfully performs any act which constitutes an infringement as defined under section 40 of this Act commits an offence and is liable to a fine of not less than fifteen thousand dollars but not more than forty thousand dollars, or to imprisonment for a term of not less than five years but not more than twelve years, or to both such fine and such imprisonment.

Offences.

(2) Any person who, knowing the same to be false—

- (a) makes or causes to be made a false entry in the Register;
- (b) makes or causes to be made any document falsely purporting to be a copy of an entry in the Register; or
- (c) produces, tenders or causes to be produced or tendered as evidence any such entry or copy thereof,

commits an offence and is liable to a fine of not less than ten thousand dollars, but not more than thirty thousand dollars, or to imprisonment for not less than three years, but not more than ten years, or to both such fine and such imprisonment.

(3) Any person who, knowing the same to be false, makes a false statement or representation that—

- (a) a patent or utility model certificate has been granted to him or to any other person in respect of any invention; or

- (b) he has been granted an exclusive or non-voluntary licence to use any patent or utility model certificate,

which statement or representation induces another person to act thereon, commits an offence and is liable to a fine of not less than five thousand dollars, but not more than twenty thousand dollars, or to imprisonment for a term of not less than two years, but not more than five years, or to both such fine and such imprisonment.

(4) Any person who falsely represents that anything disposed of by him for value is a patented product or process, subject to sub-sections (5) to (7), commits an offence and be liable to a fine of not less than four thousand dollars, but not more than ten thousand dollars.

(5) For the purposes of sub-section (4), a person who for value disposes of an article having stamped, engraved or impressed on it or otherwise applied to it the word “patent” or “patented” or anything expressing or implying that the article is a patented product, shall be taken to represent that the article is a patented product.

(6) Sub-section (4) shall not apply where the representation is made in respect of a product after the patent for that product or, as the case may be, the process in question has expired or been invalidated and before the end of a period which is reasonably sufficient to enable the accused to take steps to ensure that the representation is not made (or does not continue to be made).

(7) In proceedings for an offence under this section, it shall be a defence for the accused to prove that he used due diligence to prevent the commission of the offence.

(8) Any person who represents that a patent has been applied for in respect of any article disposed of for value by him, and—

- (a) no such application has been made; or
- (b) any such application has been refused or withdrawn,

commits an offence and is liable to a fine of not less than four thousand dollars, but no more than ten thousand dollars.

(9) Sub-section (8)(b) shall not apply where the representation is made in respect of a product after the patent for that product or, as the case may be, the process in question has expired or been invalidated, and before the end of a period which is reasonably sufficient to enable the accused to take steps to ensure that the representation is not made (or does not continue to be made).

(10) For the purposes of sub-section (8), a person who for value disposes of an article having stamped, engraved or impressed upon it or otherwise applied to it the words “patent applied for” or “patent pending” or anything expressing or implying that a patent has been applied for in respect of the article, shall be taken to represent that a patent has been applied for in respect of the article.

(11) Where an offence under this Act which has been committed by a body corporate is proved to have been committed with the consent or connivance of, or to be attributable to, any neglect on the part of, a director, manager, secretary or other similar officer of the body corporate, or any person who was purporting to act in any such capacity, he, as well as the body corporate, commits an offence and is liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly.

(12) Where the affairs of a body corporate are managed by its members, sub-section (11) shall apply in relation to the acts and defaults of a member in connection with his functions of management as if he were a director of the body corporate.

Immunity
regarding official
acts.

64. Neither the Minister nor any person employed by the State or the Intellectual Property Office shall—

- (a) be taken to warrant the validity of any patent granted under this Act; or
- (b) incur any liability by reason of or in connection with any examination or investigation required or authorized by this Act or any report or other proceeding consequent upon any such examination or investigation.

Registrar's
annual report.

65. The Registrar shall, before 1st June in every year, make an annual report to the Minister with respect to the operation of this Act and the discharge of his functions there under.

Saving in respect
of rights to sell
forfeited articles.

66. Nothing in this Act shall affect the right of the State or any person employed by it to dispose of or use articles forfeited under the laws relating to customs and excise.

Time limit for
prosecution.

67. A prosecution for an offence under this Act shall not be commenced after the expiration of five years after the commission of the offence or one year after the discovery thereof, whichever occurs last.

Regulations.

68.—(1) The Minister may make Regulations providing for any matter which is to be prescribed under this Act, or for giving effect to the purposes of this Act.

(2) Without derogating from the generality of sub-section (1) of this section, the Minister may make Regulations providing further details for the processing of international applications by, and other functions of, the Registrar in connection with the Patent Co-operation Treaty, including the fees payable, time limits, prescribed languages and other requirements relating to international applications.

69. The Registrar may issue administrative instructions relating to the procedures under this Act, the Regulations made there under, and any other enactment relating to industrial property, as well as relating to the general functions of the Intellectual Property Office.

Administrative instructions.

70. This Act binds the State.

Act binds State.

71. The Patents and Designs Act, Cap. 212 R. E. 1980-1990, and the Registration of United Kingdom Patents Acts of 1949 and 1977 (in so far as they have effect as part of the law of Belize) (referred to in this section as “the former Acts”) are hereby repealed, save that all Orders, Rules or Regulations made there under shall, in so far as they are not inconsistent with this Act, continue in force until revoked by Regulations made under this Act.

Repeals.
R.E. 1980-1990.

72.-(1) Notwithstanding the repeal of the former Acts, patents granted there-under shall remain in force but shall, subject to sub-section (2) and (3), be deemed to have been granted under this Act.

Transitional.

(2) Patents thus granted shall remain in force for the unexpired portion of the period of protection provided under this Act subject to the payment of annual maintenance fees or renewal fees provided for in this Act.

(3) A person who on the date of the entry into force of this Act is the owner of a patent granted in the United Kingdom or a European patent designating the United Kingdom or has filed an application in the United Kingdom for the grant of a patent or an application for the grant of a European patent designating the United Kingdom may, within 12 months of the entry into force of this Act, file an application for the grant of a patent for the same invention under this Act, and such application shall be accorded the filing date or priority date accorded to the application or grant by the United Kingdom Patent Office or by the European Patent Office, as the case may be.

(4) Where, upon the entry into force of this Act, an application made under the Patents and Designs Act, Cap. 212 R. E. 1980-1990, is pending, such application shall, notwithstanding the provisions of sub-section (1) of this section, be dealt with under the said 1980-1990 Patents and Designs Act but the grant shall thereafter be subject to this Act.

(5) Notwithstanding sub-section (1), the Patents and Designs Act, Cap. 212 R. E. 1980-1990, shall continue to apply so far as it is necessary to enable any person applying for a patent before this Act comes into force to do so, but any patent thus granted shall be deemed to have been granted under this Act.

(6) The Minister may by Order published in the *Gazette* make any further transitional or saving provisions which appear to him to be necessary or desirable.

Commencement.

73. This Act comes into force on the 21st day of June, 2000.