

# WTO extends intellectual property deadline

November 29 2005

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The world's least-developed nations were given more time Tuesday to provide intellectual property protections.

The World Trade Organization agreed to extend the deadline by seven years until July 1, 2013 to give struggling economies more "flexibility" in developing protections for patents, copyrights and other intellectual property.

Such protections have been a major concern for industrialized nations eager to expand their high-tech exports but fearful of wholesale piracy occurring in countries without adequate legal protections.

The WTO considered 32 countries around the world to be "least developed"; however the organization decided to grant the extension to the entire group rather than on a country-by-country basis.

In return for the extension, the least-developed nations agreed not to weaken or roll back any current IP laws already on their books.

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