

## THE IMPORTANCE OF INNOVATION HIGHLIGHTED

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The Business & Intellectual Property Authority (BIPA) held an Information Session with students from the **International University of Management (IUM)** on 19 October 2017, as part of its drive to raise awareness on Intellectual Property (IP) and its benefits for both individuals and the Namibian economy at large.

The information session, which was attended by more than 60 students, covered topics such as the laws regulating intellectual property in Namibia, the different types of intellectual property (*copyright, patents and trademarks*), and what it protects as well as the mechanism applied to determine if the creation/invention can be protected or not.

One of the concerned students wanted to find out if the Namibian laws is adequate or effective to protect the innovators and their creations and if the Namibian laws are at par with those of neighboring countries such as South Africa. The students were informed that the laws are outdated and are currently under review.

Another issue discussed at the session was whether IP protection is territorial or whether the creations must be registered in each country where inventors/creators seek protection.

The students were adeptly informed that trademarks and patents are territorial and that BIPA can assist innovators to register their creations in other countries, through organisations such as the **World Patent & Trademark Organisation (WPTO)** and **African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO)**.

The students invited BIPA staff to hold more sessions at the university to create more awareness.

BIPA was established to administer and protect business and intellectual property. And BIPA's objective is to create an environment where business and innovation can flourish.