

**WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANISATION
55TH SERIES OF MEETINGS OF THE ASSEMBLIES**

NATIONAL STATEMENT BY SINGAPORE

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Your Excellencies

Mr Chairman

Director-General Dr Francis Gurry

Distinguished Delegates

1 Mr Chairman, we would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of this meeting. We would also like to express our appreciation to Director-General Dr Francis Gurry for your leadership in guiding the discussion of this Assembly with your Senior Management team, and to members of the Secretariat for the excellent support.

2 2015 is of special significance to Singapore. In addition to celebrating our Golden Jubilee, it is also the year Singapore started operations as an International Authority under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT).

Singapore operationalises as an International Authority

3 Last year, we saw an increase of 4.5% in PCT filings across the globe. This is a strong endorsement of the good work of WIPO in supporting innovations from around the world.

4 We look forward to supporting WIPO in meeting the growing global demand for PCT services from emerging markets in Asia. Singapore's location in Asia and our R&D focus have enabled us to put together a highly qualified examination team with a good spread of Asian language capabilities.

5 We wish to convey our most sincere thanks to members of the PCT Union Assembly. With your support and endorsement in the last General Assembly, I am pleased to announce that the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore has since begun shouldering the role as an International Searching and Preliminary Examining Authority (ISA/IPEA) on 1 September 2015. Patent applicants from ASEAN, Japan and Mexico will be amongst the first to enjoy Singapore's new services as an ISA/IPEA. We are delighted to report that as of 30 September 2015, we have received more than 30 patent applications utilizing this Service. We stand ready to work closely with WIPO and other International Authorities to strengthen the PCT system, and to raise the quality of PCT search and examination work.

Singapore completes her Chairmanship of the AWGIPC

6 With the support of ASEAN and our dialogue partners, Singapore has had the privilege of chairing the ASEAN Working Group on Intellectual Property Cooperation (AWGIPC) over the past two years. I would like to express my sincere thanks to WIPO for its strong support during Singapore's term as Chair. We have successfully completed a stock take of the current five-year Action Plan. I am pleased to report to the Assembly that the working group has accomplished more than 80% of the 108 initiatives in the current plan. Amongst others, our achievements include the accession to WIPO treaties by ASEAN member states, of which eight out of the ten ASEAN member states are now party to the PCT, and four are members of the Madrid Protocol, to be followed shortly by the rest of the IP offices in ASEAN. Seven ASEAN member states have adopted the WIPO CASE system to enhance patent work sharing in a secure and expeditious manner. These efforts work in tandem with other highly successful regional initiatives such as the ASEAN Patent Examination Cooperation (ASPEC) programme and the ASEAN TMview which are now available online through the ASEAN IP Portal. WIPO's involvement has been instrumental in the development of the IP ecosystem in ASEAN.

7 During Singapore's chairmanship, we are particularly grateful for WIPO's support in formulating the ASEAN IP Rights Strategic Action Plan (AIPSAP) for 2016 to 2025. The new plan will expand the suite of services to the IP community in the region. Beyond raising the quality and timeliness of IP applications, stakeholders can expect the establishment of an IP marketplace, a virtual IP academy and the provision of an ASEAN helpdesk, amidst other ambitious and important targets.

8 It has been a privilege and an enriching journey for Singapore working with ASEAN and dialogue partners like WIPO in deepening IP cooperation as the region establishes the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015. Even as we hand over the chair to Brunei, Singapore remains committed to working closely with WIPO to implement the new ten-year IPR Action Plan with the aim of developing a balanced and effective international IP system in ASEAN that enables innovation and creativity for the benefit of all.

Singapore has helped to advance WIPO's agenda in ASEAN

9 Singapore continues to be fully supportive of WIPO's normative agenda both at the regional and national level. I am happy to update the Assembly that Singapore has acceded to the Marrakesh Treaty. Since 30 March 2015, we have amended our Copyright Act to allow the visually impaired community better access to copyrighted works. We urge more member states to come forward and join us in this meaningful endeavour, and look forward to the coming into force of the Marrakesh Treaty.

10 The unequivocal support of WIPO, in particular through the WIPO Singapore Office, has made possible these normative, as well as developmental, outcomes in the region. With funding from the Singapore Government, we are pleased to work with the WIPO Singapore Office to deliver yet another year of quality technical assistance programmes and capacity building activities to the region. To date under the Singapore Cooperation Programme, Singapore and WIPO have jointly trained some 500 officials from over 24 countries in the Asia-Pacific and Middle East. These training programmes are conducted at the WIPO Singapore Office. In 2014 alone, the WIPO Singapore Office completed some 20 technical assistance activities and 11 study visits covering areas such as IP administration systems, accession to WIPO treaties and copyrights.

11 I should also report that IP Week@SG 2015 had an attendance of over 2,000 at the various events, with delegates from close to 40 countries and a record 20 Heads of IP Offices this year. This would not be possible without the committed support of the Asia-Pacific IP stakeholders, WIPO Singapore Office, WIPO Asia-Pacific Bureau and most importantly DG Francis for spending time to share his insights on the IP development trajectory. The Mediation Seminar was oversubscribed and the participants gained important learning about the potential of mediation for IP disputes through case studies and experience sharing by the panel. As an early adopter, we shall continue to promote the mediation and expert determination options offered under collaboration with WIPO Center. During the same period, Singapore also played host to WIPO's 2nd Heads of Intellectual Property Office Conference (HIPOC) involving countries in South Asia and Southeast Asia. The WIPO Singapore Office has made possible WIPO's reach to the larger IP community in both ASEAN and the Asian region.

Conclusion

12 In closing, we would like to reaffirm Singapore's strong commitment to the international IP regime. Singapore's position as the seventh most innovative nation in the Global Innovation Index 2015 (GII 2015) is testament to our pursuit for excellence in the promotion and protection of innovation. This achievement would not have been possible without the strong support of WIPO and our overseas partners, including some 23 IP offices to which we are now connected through the Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH), including more recently the European Patent Office.

13 As we begin operation as an International Authority under the PCT, we look forward to the continued support of this Assembly. We would also like to reaffirm Singapore's commitment to WIPO, the WIPO Singapore Office, and our fellow IP Offices so that together we can build a business friendly and pro-growth IP ecosystem. Thank you.