

**Opening Statement of the AWGIPC Chair  
55<sup>th</sup> Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO  
5-14 October 2015, Geneva, Switzerland**

**Ms. Shahrinah Yusof Khan  
Chairperson  
ASEAN Working Group on  
Intellectual Property Cooperation**

Mr. President,

ASEAN will achieve a significant milestone at the end of this year with the launch of the ASEAN Community comprising the three-pillared communities of the ASEAN Political-Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community.

In respect of the ASEAN Economic Community, ASEAN has succeeded in offering its stakeholders an integrated and fast developing region, with duty-free internal trade covering 96% of its tariff lines, a liberalised investment regime and improved market access in more than 100 services sectors. In addition, a more predictable and competitive business environment is also being put in place, including through the adoption of competition laws and improved IP legislation and administration to better serve the business community.

The Assembly may be interested to note that ASEAN's GDP last year was US\$ 2.6 trillion in 2014, was almost double the size of the region's economy in 2007 when the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint was first adopted. Real GDP growth is projected to be sustained this year at 4.6 per cent in 2015 before increasing further to 5.1 per cent in 2016. There are challenges ahead such as the anticipated low-growth global economy and volatility in financial markets.

But the figures give confidence and provide good ground to support the view that ASEAN will continue to flourish on the economic front.

It was more than five years ago when the ASEAN IPR Action Plan 2011-2015 was first drawn up. The IP Action Plan is a key component of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint. It was designed to transform ASEAN into an innovative and competitive region through the use of IP.

I am pleased to let you know that good progress has been made since then. We are on our way to complete a good number of the initiatives in the action plan as we approach the 2015 timetable. This was despite ASEAN's strong economic growth which has seen a corresponding surge in IP protection applications and hence a greater workload placed on ASEAN IP offices.

Our accomplishments would not have been made possible without the support extended by WIPO for our regional programs and activities. <sup>[SG]</sup>In the region, WIPO Singapore Office (WSO) has successfully completed some 20 technical assistance activities and 11 study visits covering areas such as IP administration systems, accession to WIPO treaties and copyrights. ASEAN look forward to WSO's continued support as we progress beyond the current ASEAN IPR Action Plan 2011 – 2015.

In recognition of the need to sustain this momentum and having in mind that intellectual property is an important component of economic policies, ASEAN started gathering ideas early last year to put together the framework on which to build the IPR action plan for the next ten years. Again, WIPO has supported us through a study that assessed the achievements of the current Plan and provided recommendations for the new ten-year post-2015 ASEAN IP Strategic Action Plan.

With the recommendations in the paper, we were guided in our drafting of the new post-2015 IP plan that would sustain efforts to provide a foundation for a competitive region and support regional IP platforms that reflect an integrated ASEAN. ASEAN has now completed this new IP Plan for implementation in 2016.

As we move forward to a more vibrant collaboration with WIPO in the implementation of our next Plan, we would like to acknowledge that the proposed Program and Budget for the next biennium provide continued focus on ASEAN by assisting in the implementation of the next ten years, and are aligned with country plans and national IP strategies. We could not be more grateful for the attention that WIPO has given to ASEAN as this ensures that the region will remain an active player in the international IP community.

On that note and on behalf of the ten countries of ASEAN, I would like to extend my congratulations to the Chair for taking the lead in the 55<sup>th</sup> Assemblies Meeting to facilitate consultations among the WIPO Member States. I would also like to convey my appreciation to the WIPO Secretariat for the hard work rendered to ensure an environment that is conducive for a focused discussion of issues referred to in the agenda.

Being entrusted with these responsibilities is not an easy undertaking, but I am confident that the excellent stewardship by the Chair and thorough preparations by the WIPO Secretariat will lead to a successful conclusion of the Assemblies Meeting.

Thank you Mr. President.