



**55th Session of the WIPO Assemblies
5-14 October 2015
Agenda Item 5- General Statement
Statement by H.E. Ravinatha Aryasinha
Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations**

Mr. President,

My delegation wishes you the best in chairing the 55th series of WIPO Assemblies.

Sri Lanka would like to align itself with the statements made on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group.

We thank Dr. Francis Gurry for his Report and welcome the important steps taken by Director General and his team.

We welcome significant achievements of WIPO in the normative area including the conclusion of Marrakesh Treaty in succession to Beijing Treaty and we are encouraged by the progress made in new ratifications for both treaties during this year.

We take note of the developments in the WIPO's work and mainstreaming of the Development Agenda. It is also necessary to develop substantive discussions on the larger conceptual framework of development to ensure that IP regimes will contribute to the socio-economic growth and development in countries. We also welcome the finalization of the revised definition of "Development Expenditure", an agenda item which was pending for many years.

Mr. President,

While we commend the progress made by the WIPO, we are concerned at the slow pace of progress on several outstanding issues in various standing committees.

Sri Lanka attributes the greatest importance to the work carried out by the Intergovernmental Committee on Genetic Resources (GR), Traditional Knowledge (TK) and Folklore (IGC). We hope to see expedited, consensual resolution of all issues related to the IGC, with a view to fulfilling its mandate. As a developing country, we

believe that WIPO should consider as a matter of priority in this General Assembly, to reach agreement on the renewal of the mandate and a decision on a new work plan for the IGC that also sets out a date for a Diplomatic Conference in this regard.

While Sri Lanka takes note of the progress made in the negotiations regarding the Draft Design Law Treaty, we also highlight that further work is needed in reflecting the different levels of development of the member states in the text of the treaty.

We are also encouraged by the progress being made on the Broadcasting Treaty. We believe that a technologically neutral approach should be adopted with regard to the working document and that the protection granted under the new Treaty should be in line with the mandate given to the SCCR in 2007.

Mr. President,

Sri Lanka recognizes the significance of IP as an important tool for technological advancement as well as socio-economic development. Therefore, we are currently in the process of integrating IP into our national policy formulation, with special emphasis on innovation, science and technology and creativity as means of economic development and empowerment. In this context, Sri Lanka wishes to place on record its sincere appreciation of the valuable cooperation extended to the GOSL by the WIPO in developing with Sri Lanka, and supporting the implementation of a 10-Point Action plan, which could serve as a model to countries similarly placed as Sri Lanka.

Under this Action Plan, National Intellectual Property Office of Sri Lanka has already established six Technology and Innovation Support Centers (TISCs) that would facilitate access to a world-wide database of patents and retrieving technological information.

It is also encouraging to note that Sri Lanka is presently ranked 85 among 141 economies in the world according to the Global Innovation Index of 2015. In 2014 Sri Lanka was ranked 105 out of 143 countries. The Coordinating Secretariat for Science, Technology and Innovation (COSTI) has already launched an on-line Sri Lankan Innovation Dashboard(SL-IDB) on Sri Lanka's scientific landscape. It will encompass Sri Lankan patents, publications and resources as well as provide interested parties a bird's eye view of innovation eco system in the country. We are confident that this initiative will spur our knowledge based development and strengthen links with the international community.

A three-day WIPO Workshop “Making a Living in the Film Industry” was organized by WIPO in cooperation with the NIPO and the National Film Corporation of Sri Lanka (NFC) from 15-17 December 2014 in Colombo. Following this workshop, an assessment was made by WIPO which provided a productive framework and a set of recommendations for advancing capacity-building in the areas of Collective Management of Rights and Copyrights in the film and TV industries in Sri Lanka.

Considering increased potential of the tourist industry in the country since the end of the conflict, Sri Lanka has also expressed interest to become one of the 3 pilot countries in the proposed WIPO CDIP project on IP and tourism. Following statements by GOSL during the 14th and 15th Sessions of CDIP, Sri Lanka has made a formal proposal to WIPO expressing its interest to be a part of the pilot project. We look forward to this opportunity.

A National Steering Committee on Intellectual Property (SCIP), chaired by the Secretary of Ministry of Industry and Commerce was convened in July 2015 and a sub Committee was appointed to formulate the national IP policy. Based on a roadmap provided by WIPO, the Government will ensure effective Integration of Intellectual Property into Innovation Policy Formulation of Sri Lanka. This is consistent with the present Government policy of orienting the country towards a knowledge and innovation economy.

Also we have earmarked further development activities to be implemented within the next three years under this 10 Point Action Plan, including:

- reducing of the backlog in the National Intellectual Property Office(NIPO);
- implementing a national strategy on Building Respect for Intellectual Property with an objective to empower law enforcement agencies and enhance greater awareness among all sectors including students and young people;
- preparation of an Innovation Index;
- organizing effective programs to uplift and strengthening Collective Management Societies (CMOs) in order to protect rights of artists and creative industries including film industry professionals;
- preparing a policy frame work for the protection of Traditional Knowledge, Genetic Resources, Folk Lore and Cultural expressions, incorporating certain amendments to the National IP law for protection of GI and Voluntary depositary system for Copyrights;

- proposing Limitations and exceptions to amend the National Copyright Laws to facilitate access to published work for persons who are blind, visually impaired or print disabled, prior to ratifying the Marrakesh Treaty.
- facilitating amendments to the Intellectual Property Act No.36 of 2003 which aim to enable registration of "Geographical Indications" in Sri Lanka and safeguard the interests of the producers and exports of Ceylon Tea and Ceylon Cinnamon.

Mr. President,

During 11th WIPO-SAARC Consultation Meeting on Cooperation in the field of Intellectual Property which was held on 25 September 2015, Sri Lanka highlighted the need to finalize the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen mutual cooperation between WIPO and SAARC countries, which could not be taken up for consideration last year. We welcome the cooperation extended by DG WIPO at this meeting to encourage further review of this proposed MoU by the SAARC Secretariat, which will further contribute to the development of IP regimes in our region. Sri Lanka believes that regular meetings for heads of IP offices in SAARC countries organized by WIPO to enhance opportunities for exchange of experiences, and best practices in the uses of IP in development will be helpful to discuss issues of concern/interest to the group. As a part of its ongoing cooperation with WIPO, Sri Lanka is pleased to host an initial event in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, We look forward to fruitful deliberations during this Session and to contribute to the discussions based on a constructive spirit and support.

I thank You.