

## **Director General Tang's Remarks to the 55<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM)**

**Daren Tang**

**20 August 2023**

Your Excellency, Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, Secretary-General of ASEAN,

Your Excellency, Zulkifli Hasan, Minister of Trade of Indonesia and AEM Chair,

Excellencies, Colleagues,

Good afternoon. It is a great pleasure to be back at the AEM. I am also joined here today by my colleagues, Deputy Director General Hasan Kleib, Director of the WIPO Singapore Office, Thitapha Wattanapruttipaisan, and Senior Regional Manager, Jang Juneho.

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate Dr. Kao Kim Hourn on your appointment as ASEAN Secretary-General. WIPO is deeply encouraged by your emphasis on partnerships, people and prosperity, and we look forward to strengthening our close and meaningful partnership with you and your team in ASEC in the years to come.

It is also a great pleasure to be back in Indonesia and for the first time in Semarang. I congratulate our Indonesian hosts for organizing this meeting and for developing the timely theme, "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of growth".

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When I spoke last year at the AEM, I focused on ASEAN's journey to becoming a region of innovation, technology, digitalization and entrepreneurship. This journey continues to be strong.

- Gross R&D expenditure has risen five times over the past two decades to over USD 50 billion.

- ASEAN is the fastest growing internet market in the world, home to 460 million internet users and a digital economy worth USD 200 billion.
- And the value of high tech exports has doubled over the past 10 years, generating over half a trillion dollars for ASEAN economies last year.

Despite the challenging financial and economic headwinds, ASEAN attracted USD 110 billion in venture capital investments last year, up 60 percent on pre-pandemic levels, and the number of ASEAN unicorns has grown from 2 in 2014 to over 50 today.

Data connected to IP and innovation also reflect this ASEAN growth story.

- Trademark applications from ASEAN Member States have grown 300% over the past ten years, with patent applications up by 60 percent and design filings up by 30 percent. Today, only China and the United States file more trademark applications than ASEAN Member States combined.
- We are seeing similar growth in many of the region's creative economies as well. 4 ASEAN Members – Viet Nam, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand – are among the top 10 exporters of creative goods from the developing world. In 2020, these flows were worth close to 40 billion dollars.

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Along with the transformation of ASEAN into a digital, technology and entrepreneurial economy, IP in ASEAN must likewise transform from a technical vertical of interest only to specialists to a horizontal catalyst for growth and development.

At the same time, IP must become more inclusive, supporting not just big corporations but also start-ups and SMEs, youth and women, and helping especially developing countries and the least developed countries to use IP to develop.

Some of this work has already started. For example, the WIPO Academy has trained 21,000 persons from ASEAN in the past 5 years. And you have heard from the Secretary-General of

ASEAN some of our pilot projects in the recent past regarding IP and tourism as well as the IP management clinics.

But with the signing today of the ASEAN-WIPO Memorandum of Understanding, we enter a new chapter in our work together and our joint vision will come alive through cooperation in four key areas.

First, empowering SMEs to use IP in support of trade and exports. Second, using IP to leverage digital technologies for business success. Third, unlocking IP and intangible assets for collateralization and monetization. And, fourth, supporting ASEAN's creative industries.

To achieve these goals we will need to translate them into concrete action. In particular, we will

- Customize tools and platforms for ASEAN business owners, including using WIPO's IP Diagnostics tool, which has helped 22,000 SMEs understand their IP rights since its launch 18 months ago. These tools will be modified and adjusted, and also translated into local languages.
- Provide bespoke training and mentoring programs for those at the grassroots, including in fast-moving digital sectors such as AI and videogames, which is already a USD 5 billion market in South-East Asia.
- Step up work on IP-backed finance and valuation, with the goal of supporting firms of all sizes to leverage their intangible assets to access the financing that they need to grow.
- And develop new ways of tracking and measuring the value of the creative industries, as well as using new platforms such as WIPO for Creators to help struggling musicians earn a living from their creative outputs.

These new areas of work complement our longstanding cooperation through the ASEAN Working Group on Intellectual Property Cooperation (AWGIPC) and current ASEAN IPR Action Plan, where 80 percent of deliverables are now complete. We also hope that it will inform the framing of the post-2025 IPR Action Plan, and we are pleased to be assisting this and other programs under Laos' chairpersonship of the AWGIPC.

Another major initiative that will be launched today is the ASEAN IP Register.

Data is not just the fuel of the modern IP office, it is the fuel of world economy. The more data that we have at our disposal, the better able we are to make informed decisions and identify issues at source.

In creating the ASEAN IP Register, we have designed an engine that enables critical IP data to flow across ASEAN and around the world. This is a single, one-stop portal that gives free online access to all the region's patent, trade mark and design records.

It is designed to be accessible and mobile friendly, and will give policy makers, businesses and individuals access to real-time IP data and trends to help them in decision making, as well as provide the foundation for IP offices to provide additional business services to enterprises.

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Excellencies,

With this forward-looking MoU and ground breaking ASEAN IP Register, WIPO's collaboration with ASEAN will enter into a new chapter. WIPO looks forward to supporting the future growth of this dynamic and exciting region, and to bring the benefits of IP to innovators, creators and people of ASEAN.

I look forward to our conversation and hearing your views.

Thank you very much.