



**56<sup>th</sup> Session of the WIPO Assemblies  
3-11 October 2016  
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 56<sup>th</sup> series of WIPO Assemblies.

Sri Lanka would like to align itself with the statement delivered 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 the significant achievements of WIPO in the normative area especially the Marrakesh Treaty which entered into force on 30 September this year.

We also take note of the developments in 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.

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 welcome the renewal of the mandate of the IGC and wish to see a conclusion of the negotiation process that would result in consensual, legally binding international instrument(s) that would protect and foster the IP rights of genetic resources, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural practices

While Sri Lanka takes note of the progress made in the discussions regarding the Draft Design Law Treaty, we also highlight that further work is still needed in reflecting the different levels of development of the Member States in the text of the Treaty. We believe that the implementation of the proposed Treaty requires augmented capacity by States to carry out its obligations. In this regard, we believe that adequate provisions for building capacity to meet the obligations in the draft Treaty would contribute to realistically achieve its desired outcome.

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.

The decision on the new WIPO external offices for the next biennium should be made in an inclusive, transparent, and consensual manner in line with the approved Guiding principles for external offices, which was adopted by the WIPO GA last year. We believe that priority should be given to Africa, and at the same time that Member States would give objective consideration to proposals submitted by members from the Asia & Pacific Group.

On the issue of the Report of the Office of the Internal Oversight Services, we have taken note of the report and recommendations of former Chairs of General Assembly and Coordination Committee and believe that the issue of revision of the Internal Oversight Charter and WIPO procurement principles and procedures should be undertaken in an objective manner in order to prevent such incidents in the future.

Mr. President,

Sri Lanka recognizes the significance of IP as an important tool for technological advancement as well as socio-economic development. As a developing country, Sri Lanka recognizes the significant benefits of using IP as an important tool for technological advancement as well as socio-economic development, which is in line with the present Government policy of orienting the country towards a knowledge and innovation economy. In this context, Sri Lanka wishes to place on record its sincere appreciation for the valuable cooperation extended to the GOSL by 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.

We are pleased to highlight some of the tangible outcomes in implementing this Action Plan as follows:

- A Steering Committee on Intellectual Property (SCIP), chaired by the Secretary Ministry of Industry and Commerce was convened in July 2015 and a sub Committee was appointed to formulate the national IP policy. Since November 2015, an exchange of views between the SCIP and WIPO officials takes place every two months through a video conference, to assess progress in the implementation of the 10 Point Action Plan between GoSL and WIPO. Representatives from different line ministries also participate in the SCIP meetings and Video Conferences.
- Sri Lanka was selected for the first time as one of the four pilot countries to participate in the CDIP Project titled "Intellectual Property, Tourism and Culture", coordinated by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA). This

Project was launched in Sri Lanka, through a WIPO Mission undertaken from 2-6 May 2016, which brought together the main stakeholders in the fields of IP, tourism and culture, in order to create a National Steering Committee for the project implementation at national level. This Project will contribute to promoting awareness of the role of IP in Sri Lanka and support the tourism-related economic activities of the country.

- The Coordinating Secretariat for Science, Technology and Innovation (COSTI) launched in July 2015 an on-line Sri Lankan Innovation Dashboard (SL-IDB) on Sri Lanka's scientific landscape, which will encompass a bird's eye view of the innovation eco system in the country. WIPO will assist COSTI to further develop the national Innovation Dashboard, and share expertise on developing a National Innovation Index for Sri Lanka. A WIPO Mission was undertaken to Sri Lanka from 13-17 June 2016 to provide technical assistance in the development of a National Innovation index for Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka in 2016 ranked 91 among 128 economies in the world according to the Global Innovation Index of 2016. (In 2014 Sri Lanka was ranked 105 out of 143 countries, In 2015 Sri Lanka was ranked 85 among 141 countries.)
- An IP Hub Mission to Sri Lanka took place from 13-17 June 2016, to discuss the uses of many tools of IP, in order to create Intellectual Property Hubs (IP Hubs). This brought together a group of stakeholders from the public and private sectors, including 21 line Ministries and 64 research institutions, as well as other actors, drivers, service-providers, technology and research professionals, technology businesses, investors and funders, research universities. A follow-up visit was also undertaken by WIPO during the Science and Technology for Society Forum (STS Forum) held in Sri Lanka from 7-10 September 2016. NIPPO conducted one session on Inclusive and Sustainable Innovation eco- systems.
- An IP Office Diagnostics Mission was undertaken in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 22-26 August 2016, in cooperation with the National Intellectual Property Office of Sri Lanka (NIPPO), with a special focus on patent and trademark registries with a view to improving efficiency and effectiveness. This is expected to make an assessment of the capacity and resources of the National IP Office (NIPPO) in order to assist NIPPO to enhance the IP registration system in Sri Lanka through organizational development, backlog elimination and pendency reduction.
- During the WIPO General Assembly this year, on 5 October, Sri Lanka submitted the Instrument of Accession to the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled. This completed Sri Lanka's accession to this Treaty which entered

into force on 30 September this year and enabling legislation is to be introduced soon to the Parliament to amend the National Copyright Laws to facilitate access to published work for persons who are blind, visually impaired or print disabled.

- Steps have been taken to operationalize the accession process to the Madrid Agreement and Protocol for the International Registration of Marks in 2016 and expect to complete accession by end of 2017 or early 2018. Technical assistance will be provided by WIPO in this regard. The Government has allocated funds for the next 2 years to implement an Action Plan in this regard. Already steps have been taken to upgrade the NIPO website and implement an E-NIPO project in order to have a Madrid compatible system. A Madrid awareness raising session is scheduled for November 2016.

Also we have earmarked further development activities to be implemented within the next few years under this 10 Point Action Plan. These include:

- Reducing the backlog in the National Intellectual Property Office (NIPO);
- Preparing a national Innovation Index with technical assistance from WIPO;
- Preparing a policy framework for the protection of Traditional Knowledge, Genetic Resources, Folk Lore and Cultural expressions, incorporating certain amendments to the National IP law for the protection of Geographical Indications (GI) and Voluntary depository system for Copyrights. An inter-Ministerial Working Group is envisaged to be set up in order to achieve the objectives of formulating a national policy for the protection of TK, TCE and GR and a possible legislation.

Mr. President,

During 12<sup>th</sup> WIPO-SAARC Consultation Meeting on Cooperation in the field of Intellectual Property which was held on 20 September 2016, Sri Lanka highlighted the need to finalize the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen mutual cooperation between WIPO and SAARC countries, which is expected to be taken up for consideration at the next SAARC Ministerial meeting.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, Sri Lanka looks forward to expanding on these processes of cooperation with WIPO and to contribute to the current discussions.

I thank you.