



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST  
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**Sri Lanka accedes to the Marrakesh Treaty to increase access  
to books, magazines and other printed materials for persons with print disabilities**

Sri Lanka on Wednesday ( 5 October 2016) became the 24<sup>th</sup> country to accede to the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled. Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha, handed over the instrument of accession to the Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Dr. Francis Gurry, during the ongoing 56<sup>th</sup> Series of Meetings of Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO, 3-11 October 2016 in Geneva.

More than 75 WIPO member states have signed the Treaty, which entered into force on 30 September 2016, 3 months following the ratification of the 20<sup>th</sup> country. The Marrakesh Treaty is envisaged to facilitate the availability of published works in accessible formats for the people who are blind, visually impaired, and print disabled. – such as Braille - through limitations and exceptions to the rights of copyright right holders. The Treaty is also designed to provide assurances to authors and publishers that their published works will not be misused or distribution to anyone other than the intended beneficiaries.

Earlier delivering Sri Lanka's country statement at the Meeting of Assemblies on Tuesday, Ambassador Aryasinha said, enabling legislation will soon be introduced in Sri Lanka's Parliament to amend the National Copyright Laws to facilitate access to published work for persons who are blind, visually impaired or print disabled. He also provided an update on Sri Lanka - WIPO cooperation in implementing a 10 Point Action Plan, which was embarked upon in November 2013 during the visit of Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Dr. Francis Gurry, to Sri Lanka.

Ambassador Aryasinha said a Steering Committee on Intellectual Property (SCIP) chaired by the Secretary of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce established last year, continued to have an exchange of views with WIPO officials in Geneva every two months through a video conference, to assess progress in the implementation of the 10 Point Action Plan.

He said, among the projects being operationalized - Sri Lanka was selected 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) and a WIPO Mission undertaken in May 2016 brought together the main stakeholders to create a National Steering Committee for the implementation of this Project. WIPO Missions had also been undertaken to Sri Lanka in June to support the creation of Intellectual Property Hubs (IP Hubs) bringing together a group of stakeholders from public and private sectors. A Mission in June also provided technical assistance in the development of a National Innovation Index. An IP Office Diagnostics Mission was undertaken in August to make an assessment of the capacity and resources of the National Intellectual Property Office (NIPO) and to enhance the IP registration system in Sri Lanka. The Government expects to complete accession to the Madrid Agreement and Protocol for the International Registration of Marks by end of 2017/early 2018 and a Madrid awareness raising session is scheduled for November 2016. An inter-Ministerial Working Group is also to be set up, supported by WIPO, in order to achieve the objectives of formulating a national policy for the protection of Traditional Knowledge, Genetic Resources, and Traditional Cultural expressions.

Director General of the National Intellectual Property Office of Sri Lanka, Mrs. Geethanjali Ranawaka, Deputy Permanent Representative Mrs. Samantha Jayasuriya, Counsellor Ms. Sashika Somaratne, and Second Secretary Ms. Dilini Gunasekera participated in this session.

Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka  
Geneva

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