



15th Session of the Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP)
20-24 April 2015 – Geneva
Agenda Item 4: General Statements
Statement by Sri Lanka

Mr. Chairman,

At the very outset, my delegation wishes to congratulate you on your election as the Chairman of this Committee, which plays a pivotal role in leveraging Intellectual Property for development.

Sri Lanka would like to align itself with the statements made on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group and the Development Agenda Group (DAG).

As a body that is mandated for coordinating, promoting, and monitoring the implementation of Development Agenda (DA) as a whole, this Committee, as in the case of previous sessions, deals with issues which are of critical importance to both Member states as well as the organization. While we believe that it is necessary to develop substantive discussions on specific areas of interest in realizing this objective, it is also important that we maintain a holistic approach to ensure that IP system is more inclusive and development oriented.

We note that during its previous meeting, this Committee had managed to resolve some of the longstanding issues on its agenda. In this regard, we welcome the progress achieved in the finalization of the Terms of Reference for the Independent Review of the DA Recommendations, which would help this Committee to enhance the quality of its work. We also take note of the Committee's constructive engagement in finalizing the list of speakers for the International Conference on IP and Development, which would be held in the near future. Considering the progress made on the above areas, we believe that during this Session this Committee would be able to focus on other pending issues such as the discussion on the implementation of the relevant recommendations of the External Review of WIPO Technical Assistance in the Area of Cooperation for Development, which would bring uniformity, better organization and clarity to existing processes and practices.

Mr. Chairman,

As a founding member and current Chair of the G15, Sri Lanka believes that South-South cooperation should be a tool for developing important and strategic partnerships which could play an important role in achieving the objectives outlined in DA Recommendations in promoting sustainable development.

Against this background, Sri Lanka welcomes the decision this Committee made during its 13th Session last year to extend for one more year, the duration of the WIPO Project on “Enhancing South-South Cooperation on IP & Development among Developing Countries and LDCs.” We hope that this project would further strengthen the institutional capacity of national IP systems in developing countries and LDCs in addressing the specific challenges faced by them.

Mr. Chairman,

Sri Lanka recognizes the importance 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 by the WIPO, in particular the Director General, in the developing 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 three Technology and Innovation Support Centers that would facilitate access to a world-wide database of patents and retrieving technological information. The second phase of an online Patent Drafting Programme, which aims at enhancing the knowledge of our IP stakeholders was commenced last year and further, based on a roadmap provided by WIPO, the Government will soon be setting up a coordinating committee to ensure effective Integration of Intellectual Property into Innovation Policy Formulation of Sri Lanka. This is in consistent with the present Government policy of orienting the country towards a knowledge and innovation economy.¹

Also we have earmarked further development activities to be implemented within the next three years under this 10 Point Action Plan, including preparation of an Innovation Index, 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, organize effective programs to uplift and strengthen Collective Management Societies (CMOs) in order to protect rights of artists and creative industries including film industry professionals and 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. Limitations and exceptions will be proposed to amend the

¹ Manifesto of H.E. the President Sirisena, p.g 49.

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. Amendments to the Intellectual Property Act No.36 of 2003 which aim to facilitate registration of "Geographical Indications" in Sri Lanka and safeguard the interests of the producers and exports of Ceylon Tea and Ceylon Cinnamon, have been approved by the Cabinet of Ministers recently.

Additionally our Coordinating Secretariat for Science, Technology and Innovation (COSTI) will soon launch an on-line innovation dashboard 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 in the country. We are confident that this initiative will spur our knowledge based development and strengthen links with the international community.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman,

Sri Lanka also wishes to commend the excellent work done by Dr. Francis Gurry, Director General of WIPO over the past years in the context of this Committee. My delegation also takes note of the DG's report on the implementation of the DA recommendations. Sri Lanka is confident that under his leadership, the WIPO will continue its maximum contribution in mainstreaming of the Development Agenda within WIPO's work.

We look forward to fruitful deliberations during the Session and to contribute to the discussions in this Committee based on constructive spirit and support.

Thank you very much.