



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST
REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE, GENEVA**

Tel : (022) 919 12 50
Fax : (022) 734 90 84
E-mail : mission@lankamission.org
Web: www.lankamission.org

56, Rue de Moillebeau
1211 Geneva 19
Switzerland.

WIPO commends Sri Lanka for concrete deliverables under IP Action Plan

The Director General of the Geneva based World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Dr. Francis Gurry, commended Sri Lanka for its achievements and concrete deliverables under the 10 Point GoSL-WIPO Intellectual Property Action Plan, which could serve as a good model for other countries similarly placed as Sri Lanka.

Dr. Gurry made these observations when Secretary of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce Mr. T.M.K.B. Tennekoon met him on the sidelines of the 35th Session of the Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications (SCT) held from 25- 27 April 2016 in Geneva.

Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha, Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the World Trade Organization Ambassador R.D.S. Kumararatne and Second Secretary Dilini Gunasekera were associated in the discussion.

Secretary Tennekoon recalled Dr. Gurry's visit to Sri Lanka in November 2013, which triggered the formulation of the WIPO-Sri Lanka 10 point Action Plan, which had become a catalyst in the rejuvenation of the intellectual property field in Sri Lanka, and strengthening of the cooperation between the Government of Sri Lanka and WIPO. The Secretary and the Ambassadors provided an update of several activities completed and in process under the Action Plan and highlighted that Sri Lanka is currently in the process of integrating IP into its national policy formulation, with special emphasis on innovation, science and technology and creativity as a means of economic development and empowerment. The Secretary added that a National Steering Committee on Intellectual Property (SCIP), chaired by him was monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan, and since November 2015 there is an exchange of views between the SCIP and WIPO officials through a video conference held every two months.

Detailed discussions on furthering operationalization of WIPO-Sri Lanka cooperation was also held by the Secretary and Sri Lanka delegation with a group of WIPO officials, headed by the Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific of WIPO, Mr. Andrew Michael Ong. During the discussions Mr. Ong highlighted the importance of strengthening the capacity of the national IP office, in terms of structure, human resources and skills, including the development of middle level management. Mr.Ong also underlined the upcoming WIPO IP Hub Mission to Sri

Lanka scheduled from 13-17 June 2016, which envisages to bring 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, to discuss the uses of many tools of IP, in order to create Intellectual Property Hubs (IP Hubs). This is also expected to complement the ongoing efforts to integrate innovation into IP policy formulation in Sri Lanka.

The objective of the IP Hub Project is to improve the coherence and coordination of existing national innovation policies, devising improved mechanisms to finance innovation and R&D, resolving particular challenges as to the supply and use of scientists and engineers, fostering university-enterprise linkages, identifying and supporting particular innovation clusters and sectors, while drawing on existing local advantages but also building on creating advantages of commercializing inventions at international level.

It was also noted that the CDIP Project titled “Intellectual Property, Tourism and Culture” will be launched in Sri Lanka through a WIPO Mission to be undertaken from 2-6 May 2016 by Ms. Francesca Toso, Senior Advisor to the Office of the Deputy Director General, Development Sector of WIPO. This is co-organized by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA), the coordinating agency for the project implementation in Sri Lanka.

Further, along with the IP Hub Mission to be held in June, Mr. Sacha Wunsch-Vincent, Senior Economist from Economics and Statistics Division of WIPO is scheduled to visit Sri Lanka from 13-14 June 2016, with regard to the formulation of a National Innovation Index, in cooperation with the Coordinating Secretariat for Science, Technology and Innovation (COSTI).

Earlier in his address to the 35th Session of the Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications (SCT) on 25 April, Mr. Tennekoon mentioned that it is essential that the contemporary intellectual property system be responsive to the diversity of needs and the development of all Member States, acknowledging the timely need for international action to prevent the undue registration or use of country names as trademarks, supporting the proposal by the delegation of Jamaica for the development and future adoption of a Joint Recommendation by the SCT to address this issue in a balanced manner. Commenting on the Draft Design Law Treaty, it was pointed out that adequate provisions for building capacity to meet the obligations in the draft Treaty would contribute to realistically achieve its desired outcome.

Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka
Geneva

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