



18th Session of the Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP)
31 October – 4 November 2016
Agenda Item 5: General Statements
Statement by Sri Lanka

Mr. President,

At the 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 statement made on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group.

Sri Lanka 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. 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 also appreciate the work carried out by Mr. Mario Matus, the Deputy Director General in the coordination of the DA in WIPO's work.

While taking note of the significant role played by the Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP), as a body that is mandated for coordinating, promoting, and monitoring the implementation of Development Agenda (DA), we also underline the need to maintain a holistic approach to ensure that IP system is more inclusive and development-oriented.

Mr. President,

We believe that the IP system has a key role to play in supporting innovation and technology, which are essential components of sustainable development. Sri Lanka is currently in the process of integrating IP into our national policy formulation, with special emphasis on innovation, science and technology and creativity as a means of economic development and empowerment. This process is being operationalized in line with the present Government policy of orienting the country towards a knowledge and innovation economy.

We welcome the initiative taken by this Committee to begin discussions on creating linkages between the SDGs and the implementation of the WIPO Development Agenda and look forward to continued discussions in this regard during this Session. We believe that WIPO's work in relation to the SDGs could be recognized under the WIPO Development Agenda, especially through enhancing technical assistance and capacity-building in order to achieve sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth as well as socio-economic development, including through international cooperation.

Sri Lanka is currently implementing a 10 Point Action Plan in cooperation with WIPO, following the visit of Dr. Francis Gurry, Director General of WIPO to Sri Lanka in November 2013. In this context, we wish to place on record our sincere appreciation of the valuable cooperation extended by the WIPO, in developing and supporting the implementation of this Action Plan, which could serve as a model to countries similarly placed as Sri Lanka.

Mr. President,

In January 2016, Sri Lanka was selected as one of the four pilot countries to participate in the CDIP Project titled “Intellectual Property, Tourism and Culture” adopted by this Committee, during its 15th Session held in April 2015. This is the first time Sri Lanka has been selected to participate as a pilot country in a CDIP Project.

We have taken note of the CDIP report (CDIP/18/2) which presents the overall progress achieved with regard to this Project, which is being implemented in four countries including Sri Lanka, Ecuador, Egypt and Namibia. It is encouraging to note that this Project has generated much interest and enthusiasm among the stakeholders in Sri Lanka in promoting awareness of the role of IP in the tourism-related economic activities of the country.

As one of the emerging tourist destinations in South Asia, Sri Lanka has witnessed approximately 17.8 percent year over year growth in the tourist industry in 2015, which increased total revenue by 27.72 percent, and employment has increased by 6.5 percent in 2015. The main target of the tourism sector in the next four years is to achieve a target number of 4.4 million tourist arrivals by 2020. One of the main objectives of the tourism development policy is improving the brand awareness and finally gearing all efforts towards achieving sustainability in the long run as booming sector directly contributing a large share to Sri Lanka’s economic development.

This Project was launched in Sri Lanka through a WIPO Mission undertaken from 2-6 May 2016. This Mission brought together the main stakeholders in the fields of IP, tourism and culture, and a National Steering Committee has been established for the project implementation at national level. In the framework of this Project, the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) has been appointed as the coordinating agency for the project implementation in Sri Lanka.

Earlier this month, following discussions between the National Steering Committee and WIPO, the Cabinet has granted approval for the GoSL to sign the Cooperation Agreement between SLTDA and WIPO. A national consultant was selected by WIPO to undertake a comprehensive study on the relationship between IP and Tourism in Sri Lanka and a preliminary outline of the study has already been submitted to WIPO. Sri Lanka also looks forward to contributing to the development of teaching materials on IP related to tourism and promoting the inclusion of specialized curricula in tourism management schools and in national IP academies.

In conclusion, Mr. President,

Sri Lanka also wishes to commend the excellent work done by the WIPO Secretariat over the past years in the context of this Committee. 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.