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Sri Lanka's efforts to draft a national policy on Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Cultural Expressions commended

The Director General of the Geneva based World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Dr. Francis Gurry has commended Sri Lanka's efforts to draft a national policy on Traditional Knowledge (TK) and Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCEs) and has expressed hope that the WIPO supported twin national and cross-regional workshops on this theme to be held in Colombo in April 2017 will lead to legislation that will protect and give value to the intellectual property rights associated with Traditional Knowledge (TK), and Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCEs) unique to Sri Lanka. He also praised Sri Lanka for the enhancement of national capacities in several spheres of intellectual property in the country in recent years and for its continued cooperation and active engagement with WIPO.

The Director General made these observations when he met Secretary to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce Mr. Chinthaka S. Lokuhetti in Geneva on 30th March 2017, on the sidelines of the 37th Session of the Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications (SCT) held from 27-30 March 2017 in Geneva.

Earlier in his address to the Standing Committee Meeting, Secretary Lokuhetti, noted that the Cabinet of Ministers had approved amendments to the Intellectual Property Act No.36 of 2003, which aims to facilitate registration of "Geographical Indications" in Sri Lanka and safeguard the interests of the producers and exports of Ceylon Tea and Ceylon Cinnamon. The proposed amendment as an interim measure to protect Geographical Indications (GIs) has now been gazetted, and will be tabled in Parliament shortly and National Intellectual Property Office of Sri Lanka (NIPO) is making preparations to issue GI registration certificates accordingly.

Secretary Lokuhetti also met with Mr. Minelik Getahun, Assistant Director General of the Global Issues Sector of WIPO who has been invited by the Government of Sri Lanka to participate in the national workshop and G-15 member States workshop on Traditional Knowledge, and Sri Lanka's celebration of 'World IP Day' to be held in the week of 24th April 2016 in Colombo. The visit of Mr. Getahun will be the most high-level official visit from WIPO since the visit of DG Gurry's visit to Sri Lanka in November 2013, when a 10 Point GoSL-WIPO Intellectual Property Action Plan was initiated, and under which significant progress has been made in all spheres of cooperation.

The Secretary also met the Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific of WIPO, Mr. Andrew Michael Ong, where the support of WIPO was sought in the formulation of the national IP policy for Sri Lanka, accession to Madrid Protocol, development of IP Hubs within Sri Lanka and in strengthening the capacity of the National IP office (NIPO), in terms of structure, human resources and skills, including the development of middle level management. It was agreed that relevant officials from Sri Lanka undertake a Study Visit to the Republic of Korea in June 2017, with the objective of learning from the best practices in establishing a coherent IP strategy.

Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha, Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ambassador R.D.S. Kumararatne, Director General of the National Intellectual Property Office of Sri Lanka (NIPO), Mrs. Geethanjali Ranawaka, Second Secretary of the Geneva Mission Ms. Dilini Gunasekera, and Mr. Gihan Indraguptha, Head of the G-15 Secretariat were associated in the discussions.

Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka
Geneva

31 March 2017