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**GENERAL STATEMENT**  
Republic of the Philippines  
51<sup>st</sup> Series of Meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO  
Geneva, Switzerland  
23 September – 2 October 2013

Director General Francis Gurry, Honorable Ministers, Excellencies and fellow Delegates, we are grateful for this opportunity to be reconnected with our colleagues from around the world and join them in taking stock of our endeavours over the past year. We are delighted to share with you stories of success and other notable developments in intellectual property from the Philippines. We share the overwhelming enthusiasm of the member states and other stakeholders to discuss and map out the future plans and policy directions of the organization.

The Philippines joined WIPO in 1980. For nearly 33 years, WIPO has been a formidable partner in making intellectual property work for the country and most important in making the benefits of intellectual property accessible to a wider section of the now 94-million strong Philippine population. The support provided by WIPO to the country has been relentless and it has gotten stronger with time, particularly in the areas of capacity building and technical assistance.

Today is an opportune moment for a stronger partnership between the Philippines and WIPO. The Philippines is now heading towards an economic breakthrough. For four straight quarters, the Philippine economy expanded at rates above 7%. Defying regional economic slowdown, the Philippines is now one of the two fastest growing economies in Asia.

With strong fundamentals in place, the big challenge for the Philippines is how to use intellectual property, among other instruments available, in bolstering and sustaining the already stellar economic performance and, most important in promoting socio-cultural development.

Since the close of the last Meetings of the Assemblies, the Philippines has worked hard to realize new sets of milestones.

We are delighted to share the full deployment of the Industrial Property Automation System or IPAS, making us the first IP Office in Asia to use the latest version of the IPAS. This has resulted in considerable improvements in our processing of patent and trademark applications, a timely development following our recent accession to the Madrid Protocol.

In the area of capacity building, our trailblazing program, the Innovation and Technology Support Offices or ITSOs which is a local spin-off to WIPO's Technology and Innovation Support Centers (TISCs), is a success story. The number of universities, colleges and research institutions supported by the program now stands at 67. The program is proving to be an effective tool in demystifying and democratizing the often considered out-of-reach patent system.

A very recent development with direct impact on the operations of the IP Office is the enactment of Republic Act No. 10372 which amends and updates the copyright laws in the Philippine Intellectual Property Code, and mandates the establishment of a Bureau of Copyright in the IP Office. The amendment introduces the secondary liability provision, a timely measure at this time when IP enforcement reaches the digital media. It also embodies salient provisions on technological protection measures and rights management so that the country can comply with the World Intellectual Property Organization Copyright Treaty and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty.

The law also bestows an enforcement function on the Philippine IP Office, a first among the IP Offices in the whole of Southeast Asia, and a remarkable and trendsetting response to the challenges of IPR enforcement.

In Asia, the Philippines other than blazing a trail in IPR enforcement, has also championed the promotion of alternative dispute resolution as an alternative to the often long and costly litigation process. We are the only IP Office in Asia offering the two (2) ADR mechanisms of mediation and arbitration.

Our experiences in IPR enforcement, ADR, and IP administration, are areas where we see the Philippines carving a niche in the IP regime in the region, and to reciprocate, we are willing to help WIPO in enabling other member states, particularly the Southeast Asian region, in the said areas.

Further, the Philippines has begun taking stock of potential goods and services eligible for protection under the Geographical Indications (GI) and Traditional Knowledge (TK) regimes. We are now moving to open a registration system for GI. With the Philippines a home to a diverse range of flora and fauna, and unique tradition and artistry, the Philippine IP Office is seeing the country having a strong advocacy on these emerging issues in IP.

Indeed, strong partnership and cooperation can bring nations, and humanity to new heights. We may have diverse culture, tradition, and religion but we have common goal and that is, to make this world a place where man's ingenuity and creativeness are recognized, protected and above all, respected.

We would not be where we are right now if not for the help of WIPO and other bilateral partners, and for that we extend our utmost gratitude.

Thank you very much.