



**51st Session of the WIPO Assemblies
23rd September – 02nd October 2013
Agenda Item 05: General Statements**

**Statement by H.E. Ravinatha Aryasinha
Sri Lankan Permanent Representative to the United Nations**

Madam Chairperson,

My delegation congratulates and wishes you the best in chairing this 51st Series of the WIPO Assemblies, and would also like to align itself with the statements made on behalf of the Asian Group and on behalf of the Development Agenda Group.

Sri Lanka would also like to thank the Director General, Dr. Francis Gurry for his comprehensive report and congratulates his efforts at spearheading the conclusion of two successful Diplomatic conferences, the Beijing Treaty on Protection of Audiovisual Performances in June 2012 and the Marrakesh Treaty on Visually Impaired Persons in June 2013. Sri Lanka is looking forward to ratifying these two important instruments that further strengthens the international IP regime. Sri Lanka also endorses the Director General's initiatives such as the Strategic Realignment Program and wishes every success in these activities. Sri Lanka looks forward to receiving Dr. Gurry as a state guest, in November this year when he visits Colombo to deliver a memorial lecture honoring the late Sri Lanka Foreign Minister and former Director of the Asia Pacific Bureau of WIPO Lakshman Kadirgamar.

We have gathered here today with the understanding that the strategic development of IP policies would contribute immensely to the socio economic growth of our countries. Thus, we all agree that the innovations and the well-managed mechanisms for protection of intellectual property rights play a crucial role in enhancing the social and economic development of a nation. As the world is looking beyond the year 2015 for way forward through a comprehensive development agenda, IP has a crucial role to play in enriching the lives of vulnerable sections of humanity and creating greater opportunities for growth and prosperity. Therefore we look forward to benefiting from the WIPO's other innovative concepts such as WIPO Re-search and WIPO Green which will steer all of us towards a new era.

This is particularly true in Sri Lanka's context, for as my country strives towards achieving its true economic potential we are constantly reminded of the need for equitable and sustainable development that would benefit all of our citizens. In this regard my delegation believes IP is not only a tool for innovation and creativity but also an important catalyst for economic and social empowerment of a wide spectrum of people.

Looking from this perspective Sri Lanka attributes significant importance to the work carried out by the Intergovernmental Committee on Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC) and its efforts to formalize international legal instruments that would offer the necessary protection to the human and natural resources that could be enormously beneficial to the people of the developing world. We endorse the call for a diplomatic conference to finalize the IGC negotiations and call on all member states to endorse the 'urgency of now' to see a fruitful conclusion to this process.

In Sri Lanka, recent amendments proposed to the Intellectual Property Act will facilitate for a voluntary depository system for copyright owners. Sri Lanka is also taking positive steps in introducing new provisions to the national laws under Geographical Indications to protect the products originating from Sri Lanka, such as Ceylon tea, and cinnamon in addition to the protection provided under Certification Marks. We appreciate the assistance extended by WIPO in organizing information sessions and for sending expert missions to Sri Lanka in 2012 and 2013 after which a working committee was appointed by the Hon. Minister to propose new measures. This committee will consider the possibilities in accession to the Lisbon Agreement as well during 2014. In the case of Industrial Designs Sri Lanka has been following the Locarno classification and will consider whether to introduce new provisions to the national laws to accept Utility model applications. I am also pleased to note that Sri Lanka has already started to implement the Technology Innovation Support Centre (TISC) project in Sri Lanka as recommended by the WIPO Development Agenda. Our country is in the process of upgrading our laws to protect Geographical Indications under the existing IP legal framework in order to enhance the protection granted for important export commodities.

Madam Chairperson,

In conclusion I wish to once again place on record the appreciation of my delegation of the Secretariat and assure WIPO of our fullest cooperation.

Thank you
