

**56th Assembly of the Member States of WIPO
General Statement of the Republic of the Philippines**

(Mr.) Chair, Director General Francis Gurry, Distinguished Delegates, on behalf of the Philippine government, we are pleased to join the 56th Assembly of the WIPO Member States, and we look forward to another productive assembly this year.

The Philippines is pleased to inform this august body that it has sustained its momentum in building an innovation hub in the region. From the time the country started scaling up the capacity needed to launch a conducive innovation ecosystem in the country, it was able to lay down a solid foundation that now requires continuous nurturing and enhancement. This year, it has positively advanced in Global Innovation Index by 9 notches and 6 notches in the Index of Economic Freedom.

Indeed, innovation and creativity know no boundaries, race and geographical location. As human capital and research have been one of the significant advances of the country, we believe that through the IP system, we can further equalize the playing field so that we can attain the objective of diffusing knowledge across continents.

The country's Innovation and Technology Support Offices (ITSO) network is now taking the lead in IP creation, IP protection and hopefully, IP commercialization. We are thankful that WIPO and other international partners have noticed what the Philippines has started, and with the influx of assistance, attention, and activities in the country relating to innovation, we are confident that we can attain our national goal for a demystified, democratized and development-oriented IP system by 2020.

Currently, the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines crafted a seven-point IP Agenda that will further strengthen and support the Philippine innovation ecosystem. Coined as SMELT-IP, the Agenda encompasses the entire spectrum of IP from Creation to Commercialization to bring out the best of Filipino inventions, creations and innovations to the world. SMELT-IP would likewise ensure that IPOPHL will be ready to meet the requirements and challenges of a thriving innovation ecosystem as the initiatives under the Agenda would entail a rigid housekeeping of internal policies, procedures and infrastructures to make IP services more accessible to those that generate IP. SMELT-IP is also anchored on initiatives that would espouse an aggressive dissemination of IP knowledge to ensure addressing the challenge of lack of awareness and appreciation thereof. We believe that the use of the system by local industries resulting in creation of innovative local products contributes to an environment conducive to an IP culture of mutual respect and understanding.

In the field of IP adjudication and enforcement, we are pleased to note that the legal and institutional reforms initiated in 2011, such as the implementation of the Special IP rules and procedures on IP cases, IPOPHL's enforcement functions, and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) has made significant strides that countries and stakeholders in the region have taken noticed of.

On Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Cultural Expression (GRTKTCE), as we already made a positive development to ensure the protection of the Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices of our Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Communities, and prevent their misappropriation, we hope that in the international arena we can already move forward so that these invaluable assets will not only be protected but will remain as vestiges of human ingenuity.

Finally, we would like to extend our utmost gratitude to WIPO and other trading partners who are also member states of this noble organization for your continuous support to the Philippines. Your guidance and unconditional cooperation sets the momentum and positive results of our work.

Thank you.