

Foreword

The author of this book, Mr. Hisamitsu Arai, Vice-Minister for International Affairs, Ministry of International Trade and Industry of Japan, is one of the leading thinkers working in intellectual property issues today. He has had a great deal of experience as an administrator, having been involved in a large number of international trade negotiations, including the World Trade Organization/Uruguay Round and the preparation of draft policies in the high-technology manufacturing industry. In recent years, as the Commissioner of the Japanese Patent Office, he has been responsible for the domestic reform of patent administration, and has offered a great number of suggestions on the new role that the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) should play in this era of globalization and rapidly-advancing information technology. Following my inauguration as Director General of WIPO, a Policy Advisory Commission was established as one of the advisory bodies that provides expert opinions on WIPO's intellectual property policies. Mr. Arai was one of the founding members of this Commission.

This book covers a wide range of topics, describing how Japan introduced the patent system over a century ago, and used the system as a major tool in the development of its economy. It also discusses how patent strategy has changed in companies in recent years, and what kind of patent administration should be implemented in the future. While this book offers Mr. Arai's suggestions on intellectual property policy to the world, it also acts as an important source of reference on intellectual property policies in various countries. Unfortunately, not many books have been written on intellectual property policy. I believe that the timing of the publication of this book is auspicious, coming during a period of considerable economic change.

With this perspective in mind, Mr. Arai's book has been published as one of a series of studies conceived and initiated by the Policy Advisory Commission.

I truly hope that this book will be widely read and become a source of discussion on intellectual property policy in the 21st century.

Dr. Kamil Idris,
Director General, WIPO