



**OPENING JOINT STATEMENT OF ASEAN
At 61st Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO
Geneva, 21-25 September 2020**

**Delivered by H.E. Dr. LE Thi Tuyet Mai
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the UN, WTO,
and other International Organizations in Geneva
On behalf of the AWGIPC
(21 September 2020)**

Mr. Chair,

1. It is both an honour and a privilege for me to deliver this statement on behalf of the ten (10) Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).
2. First, we would like to congratulate you, Ambassador Omar Zniber, on your election as Chairperson. We are certain that under your Chairmanship and guidance, we will have a very productive and efficient Meeting in the week ahead.
3. We would like to express our gratitude to Director-General Francis Gurry and WIPO Secretariat for their hard work and excellent preparation for these Assemblies. We welcome the Report of the Director-General and look forward to working with all the WIPO Member States to advance our work. It is with ASEAN pride that we would like to congratulate Mr. Daren Tang, on his appointment as the next Director General of WIPO. We are confident that his able leadership and passion for innovation will lead the WIPO to further success, greatly enhance capacity building, IP policy advice, and technical assistance that WIPO provides to its member states.
4. We are all aware of the challenges and hardships that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to our IP Offices, our stakeholders, and the way we do business. However, we believe that one of the key drivers to economic recovery is the promotion of digital transformation and innovation. Digital transformation is what drove us to establish electronic filing and receiving systems, which provided continuity and efficiency in the conduct of our offices' processes. Innovation allows us to maximize the use of remote working arrangements to ensure timely

and quality output in stakeholder services. Innovation is also greatly contributing to solving this pandemic and it will take us all forward towards a better future.

5. In light of this, we congratulate WIPO and its partners on the successful launch of the Global Innovation Index 2020 early this month. The ASEAN Member States have done well in this regard, with some maintaining their positions in the overall rankings in this Index from last year. We are pleased to note that some ASEAN Member States have been making steady gains, with the Philippines and Viet Nam making significant progress in their innovation ranking, with the Philippines breaking into the top 50 this year, and Thailand ranking first in terms of innovative product exports. We are also proud to see Lao PDR and Myanmar making it to the Global Innovation index this year.

6. On accession to the WIPO administered treaties, we are pleased to inform you that since the last General Assemblies, Malaysia has acceded to the Madrid Protocol, Cambodia has acceded to the Berne Convention, Indonesia has acceded to both the Beijing and Marrakesh treaties, and Viet Nam has acceded to the Hague Agreement, and has been in the process of finalizing its internal procedures to accede to the Budapest Treaty by early next year. We greatly appreciate the technical support and assistance WIPO provided that made these milestones possible.

7. We would also like to thank the WIPO Singapore Office (WSO) for their continuous support to the ASEAN region through its collaboration with the various stakeholders which include the raising of awareness and use of the international IP systems to increase innovation and creativity. We look forward to further enhancing our engagement with the WSO in the coming years.

8. With digital transformation and innovation as our priority, we are looking forward to enhancing and strengthening our partnership with WIPO and the cooperation with all the other WIPO Member States. And on that note, on behalf of the ten member states of ASEAN, we would like to express our firm commitment to continue to actively participate and contribute to the discussions during this General Assembly.

Thank you Mr. Chair.