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Chairperson, ASEAN Working Group on Intellectual Property Cooperation
(AWGIPC) On behalf of the AWGIPC**

Madam Chair,

1. It is both an honour and a privilege to deliver this statement on behalf of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on the occasion of the 64th Assembly of the Member States of WIPO.
2. First of all, we would like to express our gratitude to you, Ambassador Tatiana Molcean, for the tremendous work you have done and continue to do, as Chairperson of these Assemblies. On behalf of the ASEAN Working Group on IP Cooperation, we would like to congratulate you for your effective chairmanship thus far and we look forward to a week of productive meetings under your guidance.
3. To Director General Daren Tang and the WIPO Secretariat, ASEAN expresses our sincerest gratitude for the work and arrangements that have gone into the meetings that surround the General Assembly.
4. Over the past year since the 63rd General Assembly, WIPO has presented ASEAN with unwavering support and key regional initiatives that have spurred us towards the completion of our ASEAN IPR Action Plan 2016-2025 whilst also laying the groundwork for a more harmonized and enhanced intellectual property system. A number of these key activities included:
 - i. Work towards the completion of the Feasibility Study for an ASEAN Patent System;
 - ii. Work towards the harmonization of formality requirements for Industrial Designs in ASEAN;
 - iii. Work towards a best practice manual for Collective Management Organizations in ASEAN; and
 - iv. IP Policy and IP valuation project.
5. These high-level studies and projects are key towards ASEAN's goals as we embark upon the ASEAN Economic Community's post-2025 vision and move towards a more economically-harmonized ASEAN with stronger intellectual property regimes for the facilitation of free trade.

6. The work above could not have been achieved without the important coordination that the WIPO Division for Asia and the Pacific (DAP) and the WIPO Singapore Office (WSO) extends to the AWGIPC. We would like to thank the WIPO DAP and WSO as being the focal points for ASEAN IP projects. Support from the various WIPO patent, design, copyright, business services divisions and the WIPO Academy, has been of utmost importance to ASEAN IP development and without this support, we certainly would not have achieved progress in so many key areas. We would also like to express our great appreciation for the WIPO DAP and WSO for attending the 68th and 69th AWGIPC meetings in person. The AWGIPC certainly encourages this in-person interaction and hopes that WIPO will continue to attend these meetings where appropriate to discuss important projects with the ASEAN Heads of IP offices.
7. ASEAN also looks forward to a year ahead of planning and launching new initiatives that will shape ASEAN IP in the years to come. The AWGIPC is beginning its planning of the post-2025 IPR Action Plan. With advent of new technology, the digital revolution and machine learning, we certainly look forward to a post-2025 Action Plan that is cognizant of this and one that will future-proof the ASEAN IP landscape. We look forward to working together with WIPO on this post-2025 document as well as the ASEAN Framework Agreement on IP Cooperation which ASEAN will be looking for upgrading in the coming months. Working together with WIPO on these two key documents will ensure that we have a holistic view of where IP fits into our ASEAN Economic Community, thus ensuring that the key stakeholders of ASEAN IP are appropriately protected, engaged and prioritized.
8. Lastly, it is my great pleasure to use this forum to speak of the upcoming Memorandum of Understanding that will be signed between WIPO and ASEAN at the upcoming 55th ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting in August. The MoU will mark a great era of formalized cooperation between WIPO and ASEAN and we look forward to cooperation in the specific areas of SME capacity building and engagement, digital technologies for business development, intangible asset financing and support to the creative industries of ASEAN. We look forward to welcoming Director General Daren Tang to the 55th AEM in Semarang, Indonesia to finalize this exciting cooperation between our two organizations.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Honourable Chair,

9. It is truly an honour to speak here on behalf of the AWGIPC as ASEAN cooperation in IP has long been seen as truly successful endeavour and one that has had tangible results with marked improvement shown throughout each member state since the signing of the ASEAN IP Framework Agreement in December 1995. WIPO was a staunch supporter of IP development then and remains an even stronger proponent here in 2023 and for that ASEAN would like to commend WIPO for its commitment towards the use of IP as a tool for development and we hope to stand here in 2024 with even more achievements to speak of.

Thank you, Madam Chair.