



**Speech by the incoming President of ASEAN
IPA at the for ASEAN IPA Annual Conference,
in Bangkok, March 27-28, 2015**

My grateful thanks to the Thai team led by Darani for a marvelous choice of hotel and all the effort to make this a most successful ASEAN IPA Conference. We waited 2 years for this event and it was worth the wait!

I would like to welcome all other organizations who have sent representative to this conference and to all attendees as well.

What a blend we have in in this conference I see the Gen Y colleagues at the threshold of conquering the IP world and at the same time my more senior colleagues still with the passion to send a cease and desist letter (you know infringers never change, they just get more sophisticated) and to draft that IP Licence and technology agreement while trying to understand what is that technology!

We are all on a journey – tracking my own journey in the field of IP and in particular journeying with ASEAN IPA has been a wonderful experience for me. It was nearly 20 years ago when ASEAN IPA was brought into existence by the efforts of our founding parents such as Dato' Kandan and Ms Murgiana (key persons) both of whom are still very active in the IP fraternity. I was its first secretary then in 1996. 10 years later I was made President and now 10 years on I am President again! But it is not about any particular individual. IP in ASEAN is what we are all about – IP does not exist for IP's sake it is what IP can do for each of our countries and what we can do together as one economic bloc – AEC.

If there is going to be a free flow of goods and services then there must be connectivity and commonality in IP in ASEAN. IF ASEAN is going to be a force to be reckoned with in the world economic community than it must be because we are innovators of technology and creators of the arts – we already are individually but can we have an ASEAN identity? Even for IP? – At some point we must cease to be a net importer of IP but go up the value chain and be an exporter of IP so that others respect our contribution to innovation and technology. Just a dream? Far from it – we are on the way there and the sign of success are beginning to emerge but yes challenges there are and we acknowledge them. These are some of them (I note three in particular).

1. We still lack the harmony in our IP laws. We have to be less nationalistic without giving up our sovereignty – “prosper thy neighbor” is a good code to live by especially if our neighbor feels and practises the same thing! **So there is a need for mutuality and reciprocity.**
2. Better qualified practitioners is going to matter a lot – e.g. being able to draft complicated patents locally – improving the standard of IP agents within the region and perhaps even having standardized qualifications. **So there is a need for capacity building.**
3. We need to form clear thinking on global IP issues and understand that one size does not fit all and “Asian sizes” are not “European” or “American sizes” – but we need to think as one as ASEAN – individually we cannot stand. **So there is a need for strategic thinking.**

This is what this conference is about

- Can we think together?
- Do we have a response to what we see are developments around us?

Be it the demise of trademarks for tobacco and alcohol products in the form of plain packaging (which will be discussed in this conference); be it the protection of traditional knowledge and genetic resource in our part of the world; be it coping with the Madrid Protocol as we come closer to its implementation across ASEAN.

So let us work together and use ASEAN IPA to serve us all towards this quest for a better IP for ASEAN! I wish us all a great conference together.

Chew Phye Keat
President
ASEAN IPA