



**International Chamber of Commerce**

*The world business organization*

**Department of Policy and Business Practices**

## Intellectual property related activities in chambers of commerce

Organisation	: Ceylon Chamber of Commerce
Country	: Sri Lanka
Contact Person	: Saumi de Almeida
Contact Details	: <a href="mailto:saumi@chamber.lk">saumi@chamber.lk</a> Tel: +49-2380-154
Website	: <a href="http://www.chamber.lk">http://www.chamber.lk</a>

### 1. General comments

The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce works on the recently launched 'National Steering Committee on IPR' and works in close collaboration with the European Chamber of Commerce in Sri Lanka (ECCSL) and AMCHAM, Sri Lanka. The Steering Committee's activities include training of Magistrates, updating contact information at the SL Customs, training officials from SL Customs etc.

The Ceylon Chamber intends facilitating awareness programs in selected regions in the Country in collaboration with the National Intellectual Property Office.

### 2. Communication Tools

*What kind of communication tools do you offer? Please elaborate*

**a) On-line**

No

**b) Hard copy publications (e.g. guides, newsletters)**

No

**c) Others**

No

### 3. Training

*Do you offer any training programs? Please elaborate.*

Yes.

**International Chamber of Commerce**

38, Cours Albert 1er, 75008 Paris, France  
Telephone +33 1 49 53 28 28 Fax +33 1 49 53 28 59  
Website [www.iccwbo.org](http://www.iccwbo.org) E-mail [icc@iccwbo.org](mailto:icc@iccwbo.org)

29 May 2007DYH/nd  
450-19

We initiate discussions on various IPR related topics for a focused target audience usually through the 'Trade Cell' of our Chamber, which serves as a facilitator of a public-private sector dialogue. We had a discussion on '*Geographical Indications and its impact on the national economy*', a presentation of the conclusions of a study conducted by the Institute of Policy Studies, Sri Lanka on behalf of WIPO. We also had another discussion on '*Countering counterfeiting under the IP Laws*'.

**a) Seminars/ workshops**

The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce assisted the WIPO and NIPO Sri Lanka in organizing the "WIPO National Seminar on Enhancing Awareness and Building Capacity of SMEs to benefit from the IP System" in November, 2004 and another WIPO Symposium in early 2007.

We are also in the process of organising a 'IPR Conference' scheduled to take place early next year which will contain presentations on registration of trademarks, Licensing, safeguarding internal trade secrets/NDAs, formulating an effective IP strategy etc along with 5 case study presentations on industry initiatives covering tea, apparel, software/IT, tobacco and pharmaceuticals.

**b) On-line tutorials**

No

**c) Others**

No

#### 4. Consultancy/ Advisory Services

*Do you offer any IP-consultancy services? This could include a helpline, legal/ financial/ commercial/consulting services etc... Are Intellectual property aspects included in general commercial/business advice provided by your chamber?*

No

#### 5. Information gathering/ awareness raising

*Do you conduct surveys or gather information in any other way? Do you carry out any awareness raising activities? Please elaborate.*

In 2004, the Ceylon Chamber carried out a WIPO sponsored, national study titled 'Intellectual Property for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in Sri Lanka'

*Survey outcomes:*

- awareness of IP related issues among the business community is very low in Sri Lanka, compared to other countries.

- more than 90 percent of SMEs did not have a sound understanding of IP issues relating to their businesses and the important implications of maintaining IP as a competitive tool.
- a majority of them did not have a proper understanding of the differences between different intellectual property rights and were not aware whether they can protect certain types of intellectual property rights at all.
- a considerable number of SME entrepreneurs were of the view that counterfeiting and piracy of IP rights is a common phenomenon in business and that business people should not take such incidents too seriously.
- They were also not sure whether the national IPR system could offer effective solutions to address such issues.
- They were also under the impression that protection of IPR is a costly, time consuming and cumbersome exercise.
- As a result, close to 50% of the interviewees did not place much importance on IPR protection as a strategic tool to improve business performance.
- SMEs had a fair knowledge of the patents system but they were not aware that the patent system is part of the national IPR system
- They were not aware of the distinction between the patent office and the National Intellectual Property Office.
- low level of awareness of IPR amongst SMEs, particularly the strategic importance of IP for successful performance of their business.
- only 18 percent had obtained IP protection for their products,
- another 18 percent have registered their trademarks and company names with National Intellectual Property Office, Sri Lanka.
- Even the companies which have obtained patents for their products, have done so only for one or two products.
- SMEs in Sri Lanka have been greatly affected due to technological under development resulting from low access to appropriate technology.
- a majority of the SMEs largely depend on traditional, time honoured techniques instead of adopting new technologies and advanced techniques.
- individual SMEs hardly invest in in-house R&D efforts or joint research activities with domestic R&D institutions. Similarly domestic R&D institutions and research units at Universities maintain little or no interaction with SMEs. All these factors have largely contributed to low output of innovations/inventions by SMEs. Thus, the low level of IP usage among SMEs in Sri Lanka can be attributed to both low output of inventions and low level of awareness on the strategic importance of IP.

SMEs are getting increasingly involved in international trade and significantly contribute to Sri Lanka's foreign earnings through exports and imports.

Major trading partners: USA, EU, Japan, Australia.

The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce has also been raising awareness in relation to software piracy. Recently the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce partnered with BSA, the National Intellectual Property Office of Sri Lanka, the ICT Agency and the European Chamber of Commerce in organising a conference to give publicity to the Global Software Piracy Study conducted by IDC, the IT industry's leading global market research and forecasting firm, which, for the first time, covered Sri Lanka. The software piracy rate in Sri Lanka was revealed to be as high as 90 per cent, meaning

nine out of ten software programs installed on new personal computers in Sri Lanka in 2006 were unlicensed or obtained illegally through software theft. This is significantly higher than the 53 per cent piracy rate for the remainder of the Asia Pacific Region. It translates to a revenue loss of US\$86 million to the local software industry.

**6. SME case studies**

*Do you publish case studies of SMEs who have actively used IP in their businesses? Can you provide us with any such case studies?*

No

**7. Facilitation of IP business opportunities**

*Do you provide any services to help businesses trade in IP eg IP business matchmaking, marketplaces etc?*

No

**8. Policy advocacy**

*Do you engage in policy advocacy in the IP field? Please provide details.*

No

**9. Encouragement of innovation and IP asset development**

*Do you have any initiatives to encourage innovation or the development of IP assets e.g. awards, competitions, technology showcases etc?*

No

**10. Others**

No

\* \* \* \* \*

**We consent to the above information being posted on the ICC (International Chamber of Commerce) website.**

**Name: Saumi De Almeida**

**Position: Manager-Legal**

**Organization: The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce**

**Date: September 24, 2007**