

Welcome Speech
By
H.E. Mr. Pravich Rattanapian, Minister of Science and Technology
On the Occasion of the Official Opening of “Asian Science and Technology
Seminar 2006”
On 19th March 2006
At Pathumwan Princess Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand

Mr. Hiroshi NAGANO, Executive Director of Japan Science and Technology Agency

Mr. Hisamitsu ARAI, Secretary-General of Intellectual Property Strategy Headquarters,
Cabinet Secretariat

Mr. Shinichi KUROKI, Director of Japan Science and Technology Agency

Dr. Motoya KANDA, Director of Department of Intellectual Property,
Japan Science and Technology Agency

Mr. Kanissorn Navanugrahu, Director-General of Department of Intellectual Property,
Thailand

Dr. Sakarindr BhumiratanaYour, President of National Science and Technology
Development Agency, Thailand

Distinguished Asian fellows

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my great pleasure and honor to welcome you all at the opening ceremony of the Asian Science and Technology Seminar 2006 on the topic of “Appropriate Intellectual Property Right (IPR) Regime & Practical System for Utilization of IPR for Asia”

The current wave of globalization is taking place precisely because it is part of the beginning of the era of the Knowledge-Based Economy and Society, in which knowledge is the only meaningful factor of production and other factors are secondary and can be obtained easily, provided there is knowledge. Information and Communication Technology or ICT, biotechnology and nanotechnology are core technologies having impacts on several sectors of an economy and enabling countries to enter the Knowledge-Based Economy.

The entering of Knowledge Based Economy and Society will not be successful if we cannot create a platform of building absorptive capacity which is a learning society

enthusiastic and ready to assimilate and apply new knowledge. To achieve the goal, suitable intellectual property right regime is a necessary enabling environment for entering knowledge-based economy and society.

Conceptually, intellectual property right or IPR is meant to provide incentives for inventors and innovation. The IPR system pursues two seemingly contradictory objectives, first, to protect inventors from imitations and stimulate inventive activity, second, to disseminate existing information and knowledge as a means to facilitate invention activities and innovation for the benefit of society. Even avoiding the ethical controversy regarding the boundaries of protection of intellectual property assets, it is legitimate to raise questions regarding possible welfare and economic impacts of trade-related aspects of intellectual property on developing countries today.

It is obviously seen that there is a clear trade-off between the level of protection provided to individuals and social interest and important to balance the demand for Western-style intellectual property protection with continuing development of indigenous capacities. Striking the right balance is a central policy issue, and certainly not an easy task. The need for cooperation and close interaction among different entities of bureaucracy, government and private sector is crucially important for framing and implementing the task. Therefore, this seminar is held for the purpose of sharing our experiences in designing and implementing suitable IPR regime among our Asian community and brainstorming on how to collaborate at Asia-wide level on this very important issue. Although suitable IPR regime for each individual country can and should vary according to level of economic development, areas of competitive strengths, historical development and institutional settings, there is still an ample room for cooperation at regional level.

I wish the seminar be successful and reach its goals as mentioned and I wish all of the Asians and guests enjoy Thai food and hospitality during these three days.

Thank you very much indeed.