

30 March 2015

To the Ambassadors of Lisbon Union Members:

H.E. Ambassador Boudjemaa Delmi, Permanent Representative of Algeria,
H.E. Ambassador Milos Prica, Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina,
H.E. Ambassador Ivan Piperkov, Permanent Representative of Bulgaria,
H.E. Ambassador Prosper Vokouma, Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso,
H.E. Ambassador Luc-Joseph Okio, Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Congo,
H.E. Ambassador Elayne Whyte Gómez, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica,
H.E. Ambassador Anayansi Rodriguez Camejo, Permanent Representative of Cuba,
H.E. Ambassador Kateřina Sequensová, Permanent Representative of Czech Republic,
H.E. Ambassador So Se Pyong, Permanent Representative of Democratic People's Republic of Korea,
H.E. Ambassador Nicolas Niemtchinow, Permanent Representative of France,
H.E. Ambassador Baudelaire Ndong Ella, Permanent Representative of Gabon,
H.E. Ambassador Shalva Tsiskarashvili, Permanent Representative of Georgia,
H.E. Ambassador Pierre André Dunbar, Permanent Representative of Haiti,
H.E. Ambassador Zsuzanna Horvath, Permanent Representative of Hungary,
H.E. Ambassador Mohsen Naziri Asl, Permanent Representative of Islamic Republic of Iran,
H.E. Ambassador Eviatar Manor, Permanent Representative of Israel,
H.E. Ambassador Maurizio Enrico Luigi Serra, Permanent Representative of Italy,
H.E. Ambassador Jorge Lomónaco, Permanent Representative of Mexico,
H.E. Ambassador Zorica Marić-Djordjević, Permanent Representative of Montenegro,
H.E. Ambassador Carlos Robelo Raffone, Permanent Representative of Nicaragua,
H.E. Ambassador Luis Enrique Chávez Basagoitia, Permanent Representative of Peru,
H.E. Ambassador Pedro Nuno Bártolo, Permanent Representative of Portugal,
H.E. Ambassador Victor Moraru, Permanent Representative of Republic of Moldova,
H.E. Ambassador Vladislav Mladenovic, Permanent Representative of Serbia,
H.E. Ambassador Fedor Rosocha, Permanent Representative of Slovakia,
H.E. Ambassador Dusko Uzunovski, Permanent Representative of The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,
H.E. Ambassador Nakpa Polo, Permanent Representative of Togo,
H.E. Ambassador Walid Doudech, Permanent Representative of Tunisia

Your Excellencies:

We have the honour to draw attention to the fact that World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Member States have enjoyed equal status in all WIPO Diplomatic Conferences for the last 25 years. This is no accident. Members have repeatedly chosen an inclusive and consensus-based approach that respects the interests and perspectives of all Members in the development of new international norms.

However, this well-established practice stands to be disrupted on 11 May 2015 when the 28 Members of the Lisbon Union convene a Diplomatic Conference to expand the scope of their existing treaty and create a new international system for the protection of geographical indications (Diplomatic Conference for the Adoption of a New Act of the Lisbon Agreement on Appellations of Origin and their International Registration). Regrettably, despite repeated requests for equal participation in this matter of interest to all, the broader WIPO membership has only been invited to attend as observers.

We strongly urge you, as a Lisbon Union Member, to reconsider this approach. We are concerned about the institutional implications for WIPO if its historically inclusive and consensus-based approach to international norm setting is overlooked by Lisbon Union Members. The broader WIPO membership has worked constructively with the Lisbon Union to date, and we wish to continue to make a good faith contribution. However, if the broader WIPO membership is to be genuinely and meaningfully involved – as it should be – the Lisbon Union must provide for equal participation in negotiations at the Diplomatic Conference. Your early support will encourage other Lisbon Members to enable a more inclusive process with a more widely accepted outcome.

Our interest in the negotiations is genuine. The protection of geographical indications is a subject matter of interest to all WIPO Members. Furthermore, stakeholders in all WIPO Member States stand to be commercially affected by decisions Lisbon Union Members will make, including intellectual property rights holders, agricultural producers and industrial producers.

The case for equal participation is compelling and should not be set aside lightly by a small group of Member States in a multilateral rule setting institution such as WIPO.

This letter has been copied to all WIPO Members.

We look forward to your early positive response.

Please accept, Excellencies, the assurances of our highest consideration.

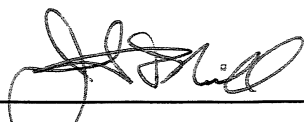
Sincerely,



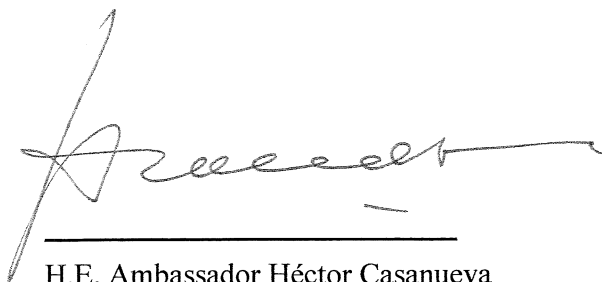
H.E. Ambassador Alberto D'Alotto
Permanent Representative of Argentina



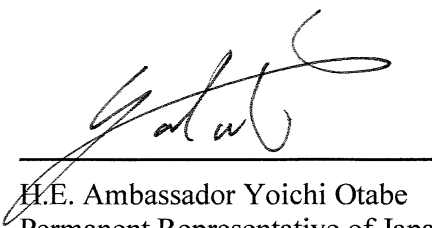
H.E. Ambassador Hamish McCormick
Permanent Representative of Australia



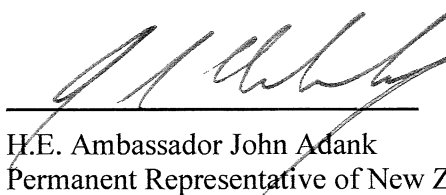
Mr John O'Neill
Chargé d'Affaires, Permanent Mission of
Canada to the WTO



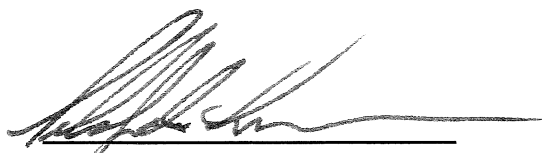
H.E. Ambassador Héctor Casanueva
Permanent Representative of Chile



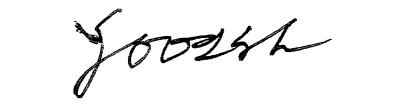
H.E. Ambassador Yoichi Otabe
Permanent Representative of Japan



H.E. Ambassador John Adank
Permanent Representative of New Zealand



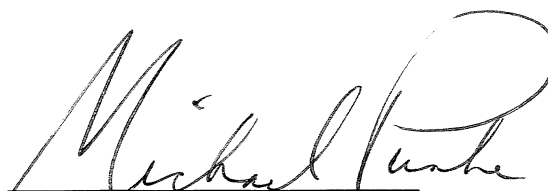
H.E. Ambassador Alfredo Suescum Alfaro
Permanent Representative of Panama



Mr Yoo Yeonchul
Charge d'Affaires, Permanent Mission of the
Republic of Korea



H.E. Ambassador Pamela Hamamoto
Permanent Representative of the United
States of America



H.E. Ambassador Michael Punke
Permanent Representative of the United
States of America



H.E. Ambassador Francisco Pérez
Permanent Representative of Uruguay