

Key Note Address by Amb. Ajit Kumar, India

On the occasion of Inauguration of the First-ever Exhibition on Geographical Indications of India under 'Make in India' at WIPO, Geneva



Permanent Mission of India

Geneva

Key Note Address by Mr. Ajit Kumar, Ambassador/PR at the Inaugural Event entitled 'Make in India - Exhibition on Geographical Indications of India' on October 6, 2015

**Director General Mr. Francis Gurry,
Distinguished Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives,
Distinguished Delegates to the Assemblies of the WIPO,
Mr. Naresh Prasad, Assistant DG and Chief of Staff,
Ladies & Gentlemen**

At the outset, I would like to convey warm greetings to you all, on my behalf and on behalf of Mr. Amitabh Kant Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion. Mr. Kant was really looking forward to be amidst us on this momentous occasion organized jointly by the Government of India and WIPO. However, he is unable to join us tonight as his presence in India became necessary due to unavoidable circumstances.

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Ladies & Gentlemen

Mark Twain once wrote, and I quote, “India is the cradle of the human race, the birthplace of human speech, the mother of history, the grandmother of legend and the great-grandmother of tradition”.

India, with deep rooted traditions, rich ancient culture and prodigious bio-diversity, is one of the world's oldest civilizations. Right from times immemorial, her history is replete with examples symbolising the amalgamation of people from all over the world with the inhabitants of India.

Today in this august gathering, we have among ourselves so many legal and technical experts on intellectual property. I am no IP expert, but I would like you to imagine this scenario - what

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would have happened if India had an opportunity to file a patent for zero. After all zero was novel, it was non-obvious, and everyone here will agree that zero was, and remains very much so, central to our numerical system and thus has tremendous industrial applicability. So on a lighter note, zero does fulfil all three criteria of patentability. The real and digital world would not have been possible without this “*Shunya Shakti*” – the power of Zero.

Distinguished guests,

A geographical indication protects products which have ingenuity, are borne of skills and are a legacy onto themselves. The processes involved have passed down from generation to generation. India has opted for protection of the geographical indications via a *sui generis* system to minimise misappropriation and optimise returns to the artisans and farmers. India, as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act that came into force with effect from 15th September 2003.

The ‘Make in India’ initiative, launched globally in September, 2014 by the Hon. Prime Minister of India, Sh. Narendra Modi, is a flagship programme aiming to facilitate investment, foster innovation, enhance skill development, protect intellectual property and build state-of-the-art manufacturing infrastructure. An integral part of this initiative is the protection and promotion of Geographical Indications - the jewels of India - made in India - but, made for the world.

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Most Geographical Indications registered in India are products 'Made in India' and owned by Indian communities. At present, 236 products ranging from widely acclaimed agricultural products like the aromatic Darjeeling tea, to handlooms and textiles like Kancheepuram sarees, to handicrafts like Madhubani paintings, to natural products like the Macrana marble, to delicacies like Bikaneri Bhujia and manufactured goods like the Kannauj ittar or perfume, have been registered in India.

I would also like to emphasise that we respect GIs from across the world, and have registered 9 foreign GIs, ranging from Champagne from France to Napa Valley from the US. For us, the entire World is a family, or as they say in Sanskrit, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.

The 'Make in India' event on geographical indications was born from the ardent belief that a larger canvas is needed than what exists today, for all the beautiful and unparalleled creativity that the unassuming artisans and farmers of India have been quietly perfecting for centuries.

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The Exhibition on Geographical Indications registered in India highlights the various ethnic treasures that are locally produced in the remotest towns and villages of various states of India. We are also showcasing select artists, who will demonstrate their mastery in various craft areas such as pottery, embroidery etc. so that you all could see these arts that have remained beautifully conventional, even as they are the cynosure of all eyes in the most modern trappings.

I invite you to enter the world of beauty, skill and ingenuity and experience the blend of some of the best arts, crafts, cultures and culinary delicacies that have survived since ancient times. It would be an honour if you were to accept a small token of remembrance from us before you depart.

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Dear Friends,

Before I conclude, on behalf of the Government of India, I would like to thank WIPO for providing this important platform to showcase India's geographical indications as one of the events during this year's General Assemblies. Its indeed the whole-hearted support provided by the dedicated team at WIPO that has made this unique exhibition possible. I would also like to thank WIPO for joining us in hosting the reception today.

Thank you and welcome.

