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A Stronger LES In The Year Of The Horse *And Beyond*

By *Yvonne Chua*,
President, *LES International*



With the arrival of the Year of the Horse which symbolizes passion, perseverance and progress, may this year bring happiness and prosperity to all in the LES family. As the global economy continues with the innovation drive, the coming year will undoubtedly bring more excitement to all in the IP arena.

GTIF 2014

The Global Technology Impact Forum (GTIF) 2014 held in Geneva was another pride for LESI. Under the theme “Collaboration,” which coincides with the spirit of my presidential theme Joining Hands, and partnering with WIPO, we were blessed with participation from governments (including the USPTO, Brazilian National Development Bank, Mexican Ministry of Economy, Industry Canada Ministry and the U.S. Mission), NGO community (ACPAA, AIPPI, and AUTM), entrepreneurs, finance, IP business community as well as the LES family across the Americas, Europe and Asia.

The program was inspiring and enriching as we all worked towards global cooperation on the use of IP for regional economic development and for the betterment of mankind. Our panel speakers included WIPO Director-General Francis Gurry and the WTO’s IP Division Director Antony Taubman. The keynote address by U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit Chief Judge Randall Rader beautifully reminded us that our patent system is in fact a compassionate gift that we pass to our next generation. Leading non-profits such as the Gates Foundation and Medicines Patent Pool shared their work on providing innovation to developing countries. From our corporate participation, one interesting panel from Orange, Qualcomm and Ericsson focused on developments in mobile and telecomm technologies.

With great pleasure, I presented the Best National IP Technology and Transfer Policy Award 2013 to the Abu Dhabi Executive Council, Technology Development Committee for its pioneer program “Takamul”; and to the Mexican Ministry of Economy and National Council for Science and Technology for its program on “the Creation and Capacity Building of Knowledge Transfer Offices”; whilst “Water for Humans” was recognized as the Outstanding Humanitarian Technology Transfer Initiative 2013 for its work in rural Mexico.

I am truly thankful to all participants for joining hands with LESI at this unique forum.

Please join me in congratulating the GTIF Planning Committee including Hector Chagoya, James Malackowski, Martin Schneider, Gary Keller, Kristi Stathis, Raymond Reuteler, Chris Katopis and all for their year-long dedicated work.

For details of the GTIF 2014 program and presentations, please visit www.gtiforum.org/gtif2014.



Congratulations to the GTIF Planning Committee, and to Award Winners (with plaques): Hector Chagoya, Martha Angélica Peña Ceniceros, Yvonne Chua, Rick McKenney, Ahmed Al Calily, Jim Malackowski and Arnaud Michel.

Planning Meeting—Regionalisation

It was heart-warming to see many of our National Presidents and Committee leaders joining the Board in Geneva for the Winter Planning Meeting. Their presentations, very well prepared, immediately drew interesting discussions on various captivating topics of concern for the LESI Family. Under the theme “A Focus on Regionalisation” as announced for the next society year, President Elect Arnaud Michel chaired the meeting. The main goal was to study the strengths and weaknesses of regional societies, improvements that could be done and how we could join hands to overcome challenges, assist societies in their mission and enhance value to members. At the heart of the consideration was the inventive tools and international focus of committees, including national committees, to get a critical mass that would in turn increase LESI synergies and true global discussions on global issues. In this day long and productive meeting where more than 40 of us gathered, committees also shared their work progress to-date and their plans for the upcoming society year.

Addressing IP Trends

With the increased global enthusiasm on the business of IP, I was invited in January to speak at the 2014 Asian Licensing Conference held in Hong Kong, the largest annual event of its kind in Asia, on the topic of ‘Intellectual Property Protection for Brand Owners and Practical Tips on Licensing.’

At GTIF, I was honoured to speak on ‘Global IP Trends 2013 Highlights’ at the first Panel Session. As IP and technology transfer issues are becoming more essential to all aspects of our lives and around the globe, and with IP filings rising to new heights with Asia as an IP powerhouse; in such trends, we see the unique strengths of LES in advancing the business of IP.

Pursuant to the tremendous interest on the Asian IP marketplace, at the Seminar organized by LES Britain & Ireland in London on 23 Jan 2014, I shared a presentation on ‘Recent IP Trends in the Asia Pacific,’ which was a collaborative effort of all LES Asia Pacific societies and an excellent illustration of the power of joining hands.

Fostering Our Collaboration With WIPO

In the spirit of continued collaboration with WIPO following our MOU, LESI is pleased to accept WIPO’s invitation to join as a partner in WIPO’s new initiative, WIPO Green, to tackle environmental challenges of the day. Launched in November 2013 with wide publicity, WIPO Green is an interactive marketplace that promotes innovation and the diffusion of green technologies among the industry. Markus Ineichen, vice-chair of LESI External Relations Committee, represents LESI in serving on the Advisory Board.

We are pleased to be a founding partner of this meaningful program, which is now connected to over 25 partners across different regions and are committed to contribute to its important work and success.

LESI has also been invited in a project carried out through WIPO Technology and Innovation Support Center (TISC) that supports innovators in developing countries in creating and managing new solutions to technological challenges. Currently, the program’s focus includes connecting participants from WIPO innovation support centers in Africa, Asia, and South America.

Based on our reputation for education and excellence in IP insights, WIPO invited LESI to participate in TISC’s online educational program series. Our External Relations Committee will select the speakers. Other participating organizations include the Gates Foundation, New Hampshire Law School and General Electric.

Joined by President Elect Arnaud Michel, Presidential Nominee James Sobieraj, and Markus Ineichen, we had fruitful meetings in Geneva in January with Dr. Francis Gurry, Director General of WIPO, and various other WIPO officers on fostering a closer collaboration, in accordance with our MOU with them. WIPO has been our strong strategic partner for GTIF since the inaugural forum in January 2012.

Society Visits

In fulfilling my presidential duty and with pleasure, I visited LES Germany in January and attended their Seminar and General Assembly when I presented the Joining Hands chopsticks to newly elected President Peter Hess, a dear LES friend. In meeting with their board, I am impressed by its good mix of members from the industry, university and legal sectors, etc., built up through its detailed ‘succession plan’ and also its increasing female composition.



Peter Hess (left) and Frank Zacharias joining hands with Yvonne Chua.

In my subsequent visit to LES Britain & Ireland, one of the earliest LES societies to be established, I was invited to take part in a special programme which included a seminar, drinks reception and dinner as well as their board meeting prior thereto. I am delighted to see that many senior members are continuing their involvement in the society; at the same time, young members have wonderful ideas to contribute. My sincere thanks to both societies for making my visits very special. The warmth of this LES friendship will always be remembered.



Jennifer Pierce, President of LES Britain & Ireland, receives a gift from Yvonne Chua.

Joining Hands

The Joining Hands theme has successfully inspired many collaborations amongst societies, committees and between LES and other organizations. The first Pan European YMC Event which took place in Vienna in November 2013 under the joint support of LESI, LES Austria and others was a primary success of Joining Hands. Other collaborations such as by the IUGT, Life Sciences and European Committees are in progress. At the same time, the

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AP Regional Meeting to take place in Seoul in November as well as the Pan-Latin American meeting with LES Chile, LES Brazil and LES Andean Community joining hands are also on their way.



Importantly, with the World IP Day fast approaching on 26 April 2014, I would strongly encourage all national societies to take part in “*Joining Hands Around the World with LES*” by hosting a local event and/or education program in celebration of the value and benefits of IP and licensing in your community. Once again, John Paul and Gary Keller are heading this project and will be reporting the wonderful results at our Moscow Delegates Meeting and in *LES Global News*. I sincerely hope that every one of our 32 societies will work together to create a great series of simultaneous LES events around the globe. For details, please see <http://www.lesi.org/events/around-the-world-with-les>.

LESI President's Awards

Following the announcement in Philadelphia of the new Award on “Outstanding Activity/Event of the Year” to LES (USA & Canada) and LES Japan jointly, I am excited to announce that the LESI Board has approved the granting of “The President's International Service Recognition Award” to Dr. Hayley French, a remarkable member, also President-elect of LES Britain & Ireland who has for over 20 years dedicated untiring service to LES, specifically on education, with great accomplishments. The President's Award on “Most Progressive Society of the Year” goes to LES Korea for its revolutionary reformation in the last 2 years when it has witnessed a sharp increase in membership, notably from industry sectors, and the establishment of four active committees namely, Network Committee, Education Committee, Business Committee and Publishing Committee, with each committee being led by a vice president and at least two managing directors. Its innovative programs, “The Licensing Clinic” and “The Global Licensing Support Initiative,” as well as its education courses and networking activities to strengthen ties with other NGOs, not to mention its active engagement in LESI activities, have all contributed to its well-deserved recognition. I am thankful for the support by many national societies in submitting nominations for these Awards and please do join me in giving a big applause to these awardees at our forthcoming Moscow Delegates Meeting to be held from 16 to 18 May.

Improvements in LESI Website

LESI continues to improve the website to enhance the user experience, thanks to the committed work of Mark Horsburgh, Shawn Jacka, Ned Barlas and Chris Katopis. The long term goal is to make the website a portal for any professional engaged in commercialisation of intellectual property and the aim is to provide an access point for news and events relevant to your specific region, sector and interests. As a first step we have enhanced the delivery of event information by providing a click-through map to local events. The next improvement will be better use of web page real estate to deliver more information on the home page. Significant improvements to access the membership directory are in the pipeline.

BioPharmaceutical Royalty Rate and Deal Terms Survey

A significant LES membership value is the exclusive access to the BioPharmaceutical Royalty Rate and Deal Terms Survey. On behalf of the LESI Board, I am pleased that we again support conducting the survey this year as funded jointly by LESI and LES (USA & Canada) biannually.

As industry experts know, valuable data and information surrounding deals of the biopharma industry are often publicly unavailable due to regulations and strict confidentiality requirements promulgated by the governmental and other regulatory bodies, or are being held by proprietary databases. The LES Survey has emerged as a valuable tool for members, dealmakers, practitioners, and those interested in the biopharma business sector.

I will ask all members to support the Royalty Rate Survey when contacted by their national society. The process strives for confidentiality and privacy. Your identity (and any employer's identity) will be strictly protected. The forthcoming results are most valuable and provide insights for many across the LESI community who work in the biopharma industry.

2014 LESI Annual Conference

Our highlight of the year is fast approaching. The LESI Annual Conference will be held from 18 to 21 May, being the first international IP conference on this scale to be held in Russia. Under the theme ‘Make the World Better through Licensing,’ there will be a particular focus on globalisation and emerging markets such as Russia, the CIS countries, Brazil and China. The Organising Committee from LES Russia has created a wonderful program of plenary sessions and workshops covering diverse issues all closely related to the business of licensing. Plenary speakers include senior representatives of the Russian Government and industry. Highly regarded IP leaders, such as Dr. Francis Gurry, US Chief Judge Randall Rader together with senior industry representatives from Siemens, TATA Technologies, J&J and other multinational companies, will also be addressing us.

Excitingly, the Conference and the LESI Delegates Meeting will be held at the prestigious World Trade Centre and the special dinner cruise on the River Moscow will surely be one of the highlights. I warmly invite all to join us in May for this unique experience where LES members and the IP community from all over the world will take part in an excellent program of education and social events. For further details please visit <http://les2014.org>.

Conclusion

The 2013-2014 Society year is progressing quickly with many outstanding activities having been achieved through the persistent collaborative efforts of many LES members. As we continue to expand *Joining Hands* across the LES family and beyond, I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to all for your participation and support to the Joining Hands theme and in giving sparkle to the first part of our society year. As always, I am eager to learn your thoughts on how to deliver even more value to our members and I also look forward to seeing you at our Moscow Meeting in May. ■