

## **First stake holders' meeting held successfully in Delhi**

The first stake holders meeting to discuss the issues in respect of the draft Manual of Practices & Procedures of Patent Office, India was held in New Delhi on 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2008 under the chairmanship of Shri N.N. Prasad, Joint Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion, Ministry of Commerce & Industry. This meeting was attended by 58 persons representing IP Attorneys, Industry Associations, Public Health Groups, Pharmaceutical Industries, Software Industries and IP Firms and officials from the Patent Offices and the Ministry. In his opening remarks, the Joint Secretary made it clear to the stake holders that the draft Manual in no way attempts to interpret the Patent Law; it only explains the practices and procedures of the Patent Offices. The stake holders, while welcoming the initiative of the Patent Office in bringing out a draft Manual and making it public, raised various issues including on procedures and practices in the specific areas of applications for patents in biodiversity, soft ware, pharmaceutical products as well as on electronic filing. So far as issues relating to software are concerned, in view of the complexities, it was decided to hold a separate meeting with software industry to discuss the issues in detail. Some of the NGOs also demanded their participation in all the stake holders' meetings to be held in Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai. This was agreed to. The next meeting is scheduled to be held at Mumbai on 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2008 followed by Kolkata on 21<sup>st</sup> and Chennai on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2008.