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**Ella Cheong (Hong Kong & Beijing) is uniquely poised as a regional intellectual property (IP) boutique for clients doing business in China, Hong Kong and other Asian countries through offices in China and Hong Kong, as well as associated offices in Singapore and Malaysia. The Ella Cheong team combines education and work experience in China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Germany, Canada, the UK and the US – bringing together global perspectives in all aspects of IP.**

President Hu Jintao has emphasised, in the introduction of China's new five-year plan: "We must especially set up a long-term mechanism aimed at boosting domestic consumption."

According to Ella Cheong, Chairman of the firm, although China has not been immune to the global economic downturn, the considerable growth of the domestic market in China has largely compensated for the slowdown. Ms. Cheong noted: "These days, foreign companies are establishing production centres within China, not only for export products, but for domestically-consumed products. Beyond production, foreign corporations have established more than 1,200 research and development centres within China alone – not to mention centres established in India and Singapore."

Today, China is no longer merely a consumer of technology and know-how but an active creator of IP rights. China's central and local governments encourage and support the registration and protection of IP rights. As a result, there has been a significant increase in the number of China filings by both foreign and domestic applicants.

Further, as shown in data from the People's Courts of China, the number of IP disputes increased by more than 30% from 2007 to 2009 and approximately 40% in 2010, evidence of the respect for legal enforcement.

Ms. Cheong explained: "When partnering with a Chinese company, there must be a roadmap outlining the goals of the relationship and strategic IP planning. Rather than focusing on enforcement when a deal goes sour, EC(HK & BJ) takes a proactive approach – when partnerships are properly structured in terms of IP ownership and protection with provisions for stringent monitoring throughout the business relationship, it is less likely that disputes will arise."

"Success in the Chinese domestic market also requires a complete understanding of product 'branding' that appeals to the domestic consumer. Proper branding includes the entire package of IP rights: patents, trademarks, designs, and copyrights. It also requires comprehension of the IP lifecycle of emerging product lines and flexibility in accommodating growth and change as a brand evolves."

EC(HK & BJ) has for many years been the go-to IP boutique for multinational and domestic companies as well as government institutions, including dealing extensively with science park clients, that is, incubator companies for whom IP is their most important asset.

Ms. Cheong concluded that her firm assists clients with the aforementioned 'branding' process – portfolio creation which surrounds a potential product with the intellectual property rights it will require to thrive in today's competitive marketplace. Defensive and offensive IP strategies are developed to help ensure the survival and growth of these incubator companies.