

Speech of Right Hon'ble Gopal Parajuli, Chief Justice of Nepal at the **Valedictory Session** of *14th SAARCLAW Conference and 11th SAARC Chief Justices' Conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka*
27-29 October 2017

Your Lordship Honorable Priyasath Dep, Chief Justice of Sri Lanka

Chief Justices of the SAARC Countries

Justices of the Supreme Court and various Courts of the SAARC Countries

President and Secretary General of SAARCLAW

President of SAARCLAW Sri Lanka Chapter

Learned Lawyers, Academicians, Practitioners and Members of SAARCLAW

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. This is my distinct honor and privilege to be a part of this historic event, *14th SAARCLAW Conference and 11th SAARC Chief Justices' Conference*, in this beautiful capital city of Sri Lanka. Thank you for providing me this opportunity to address this distinguished and august Valedictory Session. My sincere appreciations go to the organizers for the warm welcome and wonderful hospitality accorded to me and my delegation in Sri Lanka.
2. At the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Your Lordship Hon'ble Priyasath Dep, Chief Justice of Sri Lanka for successfully hosting this very important conference. In the meantime, I would also like to extend my warm greetings to all the participating Chief Justices, Justices and distinguished personalities from the SAARC nations and gratitude for your affable companionship all throughout this event.
3. Here, I am delighted to recall the *13th SAARCLAW Conference and 10th SAARC Chief Justices' Conference* held last year in Nepal where I was

privileged with an opportunity to coordinate the Preparatory Committee in the capacity of Justice of the Supreme Court of Nepal. The gracious presence and participation of the Chief Justices and Justices of the SAARC countries in the event were a great inspiration and a matter of pride for us. Moreover, the visit of Your Lordship Dep to Nepal in August 2017 further strengthened the mutual bond between the judiciaries of Nepal and Sri Lanka. This conference has provided yet another great occasion for the judiciary of Nepal to meet with justices and member of legal fraternity of SAARC Region and share ideas, understanding and thoughts on issues of our common interest. This event has a special significance as well because it was in this city, Colombo, back in 1991 where SAARCLAW was established and now we are celebrating silver jubilee of its establishment. Since then, judiciaries of the Member States have been working together to achieve the objectives set out in the SAARCLAW charter.

4. SAARC has traveled fairly a remarkable distance over these three decades even in judiciary and SAARCLAW may grow as a vibrant forum of this region. It has been further extended institutionally since the establishment of SAARCLAW setting a tradition of the member states of SAARC countries to develop institutional ties to come up with uniform approach in the matters concerning common interests and promoting the exchange of ideas. On this occasion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the noble initiatives taken by our predecessors of law and justice because of whose efforts SAARCLAW is thriving today in the present form. Bringing together Judges and stakeholders of law and justice from SAARC region, SAARCLAW has not only been a platform for exchanging issues and recent themes of law and justice between and among its members, but has also been a kind of movement to promote the culture of rule of law and protect and promote human rights in the region.

Your Lordships,

5. This conference has been impressive for its comprehensive coverage of common concerns of the region. Issues and concerns pertaining new legal trends; counter-trafficking laws; artificial intelligence and their compatibility as well as adaptability with human aptitude; climate change, justice in environmental issues and sustainable development; contribution of IT in justice system; judicial activism for social cause; and law and foreign direct investment, all are of the interesting topics.
6. Further, this conference has also opened new horizon in the discourse of judicial system of this region. I believe, all proposed topics are well discussed in SAARCLAW technical sessions. This overarching coverage indicates and vindicates the contextuality and relevance of judicial mosaic for the welfare and development of contemporary society. Similarly, we discussed on various issues of common concerns of judicial reforms. Ways of legal transformation, capacity development through judicial trainings and ensuring judicial accountability are some of those issues which were discussed in closed circle of the Chief Justices of this region. The discussion ultimately focused on enhancement of rule of law, independence of judiciary, protection of human rights, addressing the social interest, cooperation for economic development and ensuring access to justice for all. In fact, it has always been an eminent need of the countries of this region.
7. I have seen that Justices and Judges of different tiers of Courts, Learned Lawyers, Judicial Officials, Professors and Legal Practitioners from various countries have been actively participating in the SAARCLAW Conference exchanging their innovative ideas, experiences and knowledge on various thematic issues. The papers presented by the experts on various contextual

and important topics during the conference have obviously contributed for generating practical ideas and avenues in the region.

8. I am of the opinion that we need to work together through mutual interaction and collaboration to address the common issues in the region effectively. On this occasion, I would like to express my commitment on behalf of the judiciary of Nepal to join hands with judiciaries of other member countries in matters of common concern and interest of the region. Nonetheless, in-order to meet its objective of bringing together the legal communities for development in the area of law and justice within SAARC region, the SAARCLAW should not only confine itself in organizing the programs and publishing papers. Rather it should move forward as a vibrant regional institution and act as a catalyst that plays a pivotal role in harmonizing the laws within SAARC region.
9. Against this background, allow me to share few recent developments in legal development in Nepal. I am pleased to share with all the dignitaries that Nepal has made a great lap in legal transformation process. Parliament replaced more than 100 years old National code by promulgating new set of civil code and penal code. It is believed that these codes would be instrumental for the modernization of Nepalese society.
10. Furthermore, Nepal's Judiciary has also taken special initiative in judicial reforms. It has been working in setting up to make the 'Smart Justice System' by integrating and maximizing the use of information technology in case flow management. Similarly, initiatives in improving Human Resource Management in court through 'Continuous Judicial Education' has also been noteworthy. We have revitalized the drive, and a Commission has been formed for improving 'Access to Justice' so that justice can prevail at the

lowest stratum of Nepalese society. At this juncture, I am delighted to express my commitment on behalf of the judiciary of Nepal to work together with judiciaries of other member countries in the matters pertaining to the common concern and interest of this region. I believe that the spirit and motion of SAARCLAW and SAARC Chief Justice Conference will be further accelerated with our common efforts in the days to come.

11. Finally, once again, I express my gratitude to the Chief Justices, Justices, judges and all distinguished participants of this conference for your great contribution. This august gathering is a symbol of commitment for making greater solidarity through cooperation and exchange of ideas among the judicial fraternity in the region.

I thank you all.

29 October, 2017 Colombo, Sri Lanka