INAUGURAL SESSION

(27 OCTOBER 2017)

FOURTEENTH SAARCLAW CONFERENCE AND

ELEVENTH CHIEF JUSTICES’ CONFERENCE, COLOMBO, 27 OCTOBER 2017

STATEMENT BY H. E. MR. AMJAD HUSSAIN B. SIAL, SECRETARY GENERAL OF SAARC

The Hon’ble Prime Minister of Sri Lanka,

Hon. Chief Justices of the Member States of SAARC,

Judges of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal and the High Court,

President of SAARCLAW,

President of the Sri Lanka Country Chapter and Office Bearers of SAARCLAW,

Attorney General of India,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed an honour and a privilege for me to address the Inaugural Session of the Fourteenth SAARCLAW Conference and the Eleventh SAARC Chief Justices’ Conference, which are being convened to mark the Silver Jubilee of SAARCLAW. On behalf of the SAARC Secretariat, I wish to extend our felicitations to SAARCLAW on this auspicious occasion.

The august presence of the Hon. Prime Minister of Sri Lanka makes this event abundantly significant.

I wish to thank SAARCLAW for very warm welcome and generous hospitality and the Government of Sri Lanka for the courtesies extended to me.

Hon. Prime Minister,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we are all aware, SAARC was established in December 1985 with the primary objective of promoting the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and improving their quality of life through regional collaboration. Although SAARC commenced its journey with limited areas of cooperation, today it encompasses diverse areas such as, trade, finance, energy, agriculture, education, connectivity, security, social development, poverty alleviation, science and technology, climate change, countering terrorism and transnational crimes, and menace of drugs, among several others. Moreover, migration issues, blue economy and cooperatives have been added to SAARC’s ambit in the recent past. In the last thirty-two years, SAARC has made commendable progress in promoting regional cooperation.

Hon. Prime Minister,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The promotion of people-to-people contacts in the region is one of the important objectives of SAARC. Since SAARC’s inception, our leaders have underscored the importance of people-to-people contacts for fostering mutual understanding, regional harmony and fraternity among the peoples in the region, as well as for the involvement of civil society in regional cooperation.

SAARC Apex and Recognized Bodies play a vital role in connecting peoples in the region. After the grant of recognition as an Apex Body to SAARCLAW in 1994, at the Eighth Summit, the SAARC leaders had expressed the hope that SAARCLAW would play an effective role in fostering closer cooperation among the legal communities in the region. Since then, SAARCLAW has evolved as an important entity and has played laudable role. The positive contribution of SAARCLAW had been recognized by the leaders of SAARC at Ninth and Eleventh Summits.

Hon. Prime Minister,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is well known that law and order contributes to peace, security, welfare of the peoples, and happiness in our societies. Law and order is equally important for the dispensation of justice to protect people’s rights, liberties and freedoms. The legal community has the cardinal role to play in promoting law and order and to address the challenges in this regard. SAARCLAW provides a useful regional platform to collectively reflect on the challenges and opportunities within its domain.

The legal luminaries have the knowledge of emerging legal concepts, trends, instruments and mechanisms as well as administration of justice. The two-day Conference devoted to the theme, “*Emerging Legal Trends in SAARC Countries”*, is, therefore, timely and provides an opportune occasion for the legal community to share their wealth of knowledge and good practices of their respective countries.

I wish the distinguished legal professionals fruitful deliberations during the Conference and a memorable stay in this beautiful city amongst very hospitable people.

I thank you.

**\*\*\***