Speech delivered by
H.E. Ambassador David Daly
at the Global Action against Cybercrime, Colombo, 26 March 2015

Hon. Ministers
Excellencies,
Distinguished guests

I am delighted to have the opportunity to address this conference on the very important issue of cybercrime.

First of all I would like to send a double congratulations:
to the Council of Europe for giving us the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime:
to Sri Lanka, on being invited to join the Budapest Convention.

Technological breakthroughs bring great potential for both good and bad. The benefits of the Information Technology Revolution are obvious to us all: reinforcing economic development, facilitating social connections, making financial payments from our living rooms, even being able to read today's Irish Times over breakfast in Colombo, or read the Sri Lankan news over breakfast in London, Amsterdam or in Sydney....the list is endless.

Having a strong ICT sector is especially important for our economies; greater connectivity strengthens our economic and social development in a self-reinforcing way.

Part of the down side, however, is the acceleration of cybercrime; unlawful activity involving some IT element in its application or execution. The scope is enormous: there are over 10billion Internet-facing devices in operation today.

Cybercrime ignores borders; criminals take advantage of the territoriality of legislation to make their crimes harder to investigate and prosecute.

To take just a few examples, Cybercrime threatens:
    Individuals through identity theft:
    Assets through monetary or data theft:
    Infrastructure through attacking critical software:
    National Security through espionage or terrorism.

No country is immune from these threats.

To combat these threats we need:
    To develop appropriate domestic legal frameworks implemented by appropriately trained people:
    To devise new ways of monitoring and reporting cybercriminal activity:
    To work together across borders and across society:

At the same time there is a balance which must be struck; we should not wish to effectively strangle the new technology; we must maximize the benefits of, say, the Internet, while minimizing the attendant risks. We must fight cyber crime but without sacrificing the rule of

law, including the protection of human rights. We must have confidence in each other's ICT systems so that international trade and communications are encouraged.

The Budapest Convention is the global attempt at striking this very difficult balance.

It is the most important legally binding international agreement on cybercrime; accession to the Convention sends an important signal about a country's readiness to harmonize its internal laws in the serious fight against cybercrime. The Convention sets guidelines for developing national legal frameworks in the combat against cybercrime; we heard that the Sri Lankan Computer Crimes Act was modeled on the Budapest Convention framework.

It is heartening that some 50 countries across the world have signed the Budapest Convention. It is especially heartening that Sri Lanka is invited to join and I congratulate the Information and Communications Technology Agency of Sri Lanka (ICTA) for its work in this regard.

Sri Lanka's joining the Budapest Convention sends a signal of confidence. It is a demonstration to the rest of the region of what can be done. It may entice other regional partners to also join in.

The European Union is honored to support this process, working closely with the Council of Europe through the Global Action on Cybercrime (GLACY). This is part of our effort at fighting organized crime under the EU's Instrument for Stability. It should come as no surprise that our co-funding partner is the Council of Europe, a body which all EU Countries are members of.

The EU understands the need for capacity building among Parties to the Budapest Convention. Legal frameworks must be updated; law enforcement actors must be trained in appropriate technologies. This is a large part of what we support through this GLACY project.

Learning from each other is of great importance; governments, international organizations and the private sector have much to contribute. This is an important part of this conference. Participants have come to Sri Lanka from Morocco to Tonga, from Europe to South Africa.

I wish to thank the Information and Communications Technology Agency of Sri Lanka (ICTA) for hosting us in such splendid surroundings.

I wish success to all participants.

Thank you.