

International Conference – Assessing the Threat of Cyber Crimes
26th & 27th March 2015 – Colombo Sri Lanka

Speech by the Secretary Justice

- Good Morning. A very warm welcome to SL to all our foreign guests.
 - Hon. Ajith Perera – Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs
 - Hon. Eran Wickramaratna – Dy. Minister of Highways & Investment Promotion
 - Hon. Justice Priyasath Dep – President’s Counsel
 - Justice Vijith Malalgoda – President, Court of Appeal
 - H.E. Ambassador of European Union in Sri Lanka
 - H.E. the Ambassador for Japan in Sri Lanka
 - HE the Ambassador for the Netherlands
 - Mr. Alexander Seger – Head of the Cyber Crime Division of the Council of Europe
 - Mr. Suhada Gamlath - Solicitor General & Officials of the Attorney General’s Dept.
 - Mrs. Chitranganie Mubarak – Chairperson of ICTA
 - Mr. Upul Jayasuriya - President of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka
 - Mr. Gamini Navaratna - Senior DIG

Distinguished Guests, friends

At the outset I wish to express our sincere appreciation to the European Union and the Council of Europe for having selected Sri Lanka to host this international conference on an important issue on the subject of Cyber Crime

This event is both historic and significant

It is historic because this conference is being held just a few weeks after Sri Lanka was invited to join the Council of Europe Cyber Crime Convention. The Computer Crimes Act No.24 of 2007 is modeled on this important Convention. Therefore Sri Lanka’s accession to this Convention can be achieved relatively quickly because we have the required domestic legislation in place.

Our accession to this important Convention will significantly enhance the ability to successfully investigate Cyber Crime offences. Cyber Crime offences are transnational and multi jurisdictional in nature. The effective fight against Cyber Crimes requires us to obtain electronic evidence stored on computer systems and networks in other countries. The Budapest Convention facilitates co-operation to this effect and greatly enhances our ability to gather electronic evidence in order to investigate cyber laundering and other serious crimes.

Further, the Budapest Convention will also help in law enforcement and judicial co-operation at an international level, whilst ensuring adherence to human rights safeguards in the investigation process. The Computer Crimes Act of 2007 includes most of the safeguards under the Budapest Convention.

Therefore, I hope that ICTA with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will take appropriate steps to join the Budapest Cyber Crime Convention as soon as possible. The Ministry of Justice is fully committed towards this cause because this is very important for my Ministry from an administration of justice perspective.

I understand that during this Conference the delegates would make proposals on how to strengthen Cyber Crime policies and strategies in your respective countries, based on the best practices shared by experts gathered here. Sri Lanka has made some progress in this area and delegates would get an opportunity to hear our perspectives.

In addition to recommending legislation in the field of Information Technology, the Ministry of Justice recognizes the work of ICTA in safeguarding and protecting our critical information infrastructure with the establishment of Sri Lanka CERT. I am aware, that Sri Lanka CERT has gained international recognition. ICTA has also taken the lead initiative to train judges and law enforcement officials in Cyber Crime enforcement. The Digital Forensic Lab at the CID and its working procedures were also established by the ICTA.

Therefore on behalf of the Ministry of Justice, I wish to place on record our appreciation for the good work done by ICTA to improve the ICT sector in our Country and appreciate the contribution of its Legal Advisor Jayantha Fernando towards the ICT law and policy reform in the country.

Hopefully, ICTA can further enhance and strengthen its ongoing work in Cyber Crime law enforcement capacity building with the support of the Council of Europe.

The Police Department has also made significant progress. They are now well equipped to deal with Cyber Crime investigations and we are aware of the hard work done in this connection. Improvements are required in the area of capacity building in Cyber Crime investigations and electronic evidence gathering. This is another area where the Council of Europe and the European Union can support us.

This Conference is also a significant milestone for our country because it brings together over 90 criminal justice officials and other experts from 17 countries as such this event becomes the largest ever international gathering of Cyber Crime enforcement professionals to be held in Sri Lanka.

During the Conference the delegates will formulate specific proposal on how to improve Cyber Crime reporting systems and also improve methods for the collection of statistics on Cyber Crime and electronic evidence. My Ministry would like to know the specific recommendations you make in this regard because without such information we will not know the areas to improve.

Ensuring the safety of children from the negative aspects of the internet is an important priority for my Ministry and we are keen to enhance the safeguards to protect children online. We have drafted proposals for legislation in this connection. This is another area where the expertise of the Council of Europe is important for us so that we would be able to fulfill the commitment under the Budapest Cyber Crime Convention.

The Ministry of Justice wishes to thank ICTA for taking the lead initiative to host this significant event and to commend the efforts of ICTA Legal Advisor & Director General Legal Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as the organizing Committee for their hard work.

I thank you very much and wish the conference a great success.

Kamalini De Silva
Secretary Justice