

Concluding Remarks – Jayantha Fernando, Legal Advisor, ICTA

Your Excellencies

Hon Ministers, Hon Judges of the Supreme Court

President Court of Appeal,

Secretary Justice,

Distinguished guests,

We have reached a significant milestone today

This is the biggest International criminal justice gathering on the subject of “Cybercrime” we have hosted in this country, with over 90 participants from 17 countries.

The primary motivation factor to host this event was the decision by the Council of Europe to invite Sri Lanka to accede to the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime.

Sri Lanka being invited to join this important Convention was a long felt dream for many of us, both at the Council of Europe side and on the Sri Lankan side. The process that led to Council of Europe inviting Sri Lanka to join this Convention was no easy task. It had many challenges on all fronts. But the will, commitment and dedication of many people across the globe eventually made it possible.

Therefore, before I appreciate those who organised this Conference, it is my duty to thank those who contributed to Sri Lanka being invited to join the Convention.

The team at the Cyber Crime Division of the Council of Europe is very small. But its effectiveness to cut across geographical boundaries to reach out to far and distant countries is perhaps the singular reason why the Budapest Cybercrime Convention has become such an effective tool in the global fight against Cybercrime.

Our foremost tribute and appreciation goes to the Council of Europe Cybercrime Division headed by Alexander Seger. Alexander has an amazing ability to galvanise and unite people globally in the fight against Cybercrime.

The Bureau of the Budapest Convention committee is the solid rock & the foundation on which the Budapest Convention is built. I am grateful in particular to my long standing friend, Betty Shave of the US Department of Justice, Tsuyoshi Kitagawa and Kowashi Akino of Japan Foreign Ministry and the other members of the Committee, represented today at the Conference by Ambassadors for Japan, Netherlands and my Romanian Colleague, Cristina Schulman (the Vice Chair of

the Committee). They have always supported us and I thank them for their presence.

I also appreciate the presence of the EU Ambassador, the Acting UK High Commissioner as well as Tom Dougherty representing the US Dept of Justice.

On the Sri Lankan side, I have a long list of people who supported our efforts. The list is very long, but in the interest of time I would like to acknowledge some of them who have made the effort to be present here today.

Their Lordships Justice Priyasath Dep, PC and Justice Buwaneka Aluvihare, PC, Judges of the Supreme Court, who realized the potential of the Budapest Convention to facilitate law enforcement & Judicial cooperation at International level, have been our strongest supporters. They were early proponents of Sri Lanka's request to join the Budapest Convention, even before they ascended the Supreme Court bench. I thank Your Lordships for your support.

The Solicitor General, Suhada Gamlath, PC when he was Secretary Justice took great pains to study the provisions of the Budapest Convention and include many of its safeguards into the Computer Crimes Act, when he Chaired the Computer Crimes drafting Committee. He was one of our strongest supporters and advocates and helped convince policy makers in Sri Lanka to join the Budapest Convention. We thank you Sir.

Additional Solicitor General Jayasuriya, PC and other officers of the Attorney General's Dept have always been a great source of strength to me in our quest to join the Budapest Convention. The Secretary Justice, Ms Kamalini De Silva and her legal team gave us the encouragement and policy level support at all times. The Foreign Ministry Legal Division led by its Director General Mr Wijeratne, ably supported by Asst Legal Advisor Tilanie Silva played a pivotal role in the Budapest Convention process. We thank them all.

The Conference

Putting this International Conference in place was no easy task and when I proposed that this event be hosted in Colombo to my friends at the Council of Europe, I didn't realize the magnitude of the task ahead.

However, the tireless efforts of dedicated professionals working at several institutions in multiple jurisdictions made this Conference possible. In this day and age the power of the Internet seems to help us overcome language, cultural and even time barriers, to work towards a common goal. This is an opportunity record our appreciation to those who made this Conference possible.

Alexander's Council of Europe team, based out of their Bucharest Office gave us tremendous level of logistics & operational support. The Bucharest Office team consisting of Steven Brown, Polixenia Calagi, Ramona Lipara and several others, represented here by Victoria Catliff, deserve our special thanks.

On the Sri Lanka side, we had several institutions coming together to form ONE SINGLE ORGNISING COMMITTEE to make this event a success.

The Foreign Ministry played a tremendous support for this event. I thank my friend the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon Ajith Perera, for your presence and for the extensive support provided to us through your Ministry Legal Division. They made all the necessary protocol arrangements and were very professional and effective. My special appreciation to its DG Legal Mr Wijeratne, who provided us with practical friendly advise to overcome many hurdles.

My personal thanks Hon Eran Wickramaratne, for taking time off his very busy schedule to deliver a speech on behalf of the Govt. Some of you know that Hon Eran Wickramaratne was ICTA's founder Chairman and helped establish an organization, which has stood the test of time. I thank you Sir for all the advise, guidance & support over a decade.

The Department of the Attorney General was a pillar of strength to me as always. I wish to thank the AG's Department represented by its Solicitor General, Additional Solicitor Generals and several Deputy Solicitor Generals. I must also mention that they have helped in so many numerous ways when we required support. The compere himself is a State Counsel and I wish to thank all of them for their support.

The Justice Ministry represented by Secretary Justice and her legal team have been a live wire throughout the last several weeks and we appreciate your support and presence today and delivering a special address.

The Police Department Officers represented by its Snr Deputy Inspector General, Mr Gamini Nawaratne, was another great pillar of strength to us. I must mention my special thanks to Asst Superintendent of Police Ajith Hettiarachchi for their tireless support working round the clock to get things done for this Conference

Chairperson of ICTA Ms Mubarak, has continued the traditions of all our previous Chairmen, and risen to the occasion to give us advise and guidance at all times. We thank you for your presence, making the welcome address as well as for giving us to environment to innovate and deliver results.

This event would not have been possible for me if not for the huge efforts and dedication of my team members, Sachindra Samararatne & Thushara Suraweera from ICTA and Rohana, Kanishka and Prasad from Sri Lanka CERT. They match international standards and I hope that the Council of Europe will not take them away from us.

I also wish to pay tribute to my colleagues at ICTA, led by our MD/ CEO Canagey Muhunthan and our Operations Manager Gamini and Executive Secretary as well as Rita Kern who have been a great source of strength to us.

Events are not complete without the hospitality that goes with it. We thank the event organizers Aitken Spence and BMICH management, who did their part to make this Conference happen.

Finally, I thank you all for your attendance.

Jayantha Fernando

26th March 2015