

Mr Attorney, Mr.Kalinga Indatissa, President of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka,

I sincerely thank you for the kind sentiments expressed. I accept these sentiments of encouragement with a deep sense of humility.

It is said that achievement also depends on encounters with individuals who provide inspiration and support, and I have been very fortunate in such encounters and there are some people I want to thank in particular today.

My Dear Parents provided me with an environment that inculcated in me values that I cherish with me and which have helped me throughout my career over the years. The dedication, devotion, love and affection they bestowed on me, leave me with no words that can express the gratitude I owe them.

At the commencement of my journey in the legal Profession, I remember with gratitude, **YOU Mr. INDATISSA** Presidents Counsel, with whom I had the privilege to work prior to joining that hallowed institution the Attorney General's Department. I thank you for the

advice and guidance given. I must also add that I enjoyed the humor and laughter which prevailed in the chamber.

After having joined the Department during the tenure of Attorney General Late Mr. Shibly Azees, President's Counsel, I had the fortune and privilege to serve ten Attorneys-General, including the first lady Attorney General of the Republic.

It is with a great sense of humility that I undertake this office, being well aware that that this Court has been adorned by many distinguished Judges, some of whom had their grounding and training in the legal profession at the Attorney-General's Department, and I had the privilege and honour to be supervised by and to work with them during my tenure at the Attorney General's Department.

I value and appreciate and remember with gratitude all of them and all senior and junior officers of the Attorney Generals Department with whom I spent the last 25 years of my career. I am eternally indebted to the Department and it is with nostalgic feelings that I bid goodbye to it.

I also wish to pay tribute to the qualities of the counsels to whom I have been opposed to in the last three decades.

I would like to highlight on a few quotes which I came across about What qualities are necessary in a judge. Here, I speak of course of the model judge. Barak, *The Judge in a Democracy*, (2006) at 110 states and I quote:

“Integrity comes highest on the list. In the words of the former President of the Supreme Court of Israel¹, “judging is not merely a job but a way of life ... that includes an objective and impartial search for truth. It is ... not an attempt to please everyone but a firm insistence on values and principles; not surrender to or compromise with interest groups but an insistence on upholding the law; not making decisions according to temporary whims but progressing consistently on the basis of deeply held beliefs and fundamental values.”

The First Chief Justice of Singapore Wee Chong Jin was quoted speaking about the qualities of a Judge in “Giant of Singapore legal history”. The straits times stated, ***“The Qualities that one should look for in a Judge are a burning desire to be fair and impartial; the courage to uphold the law and strike down injustice; compassion, coupled with an understanding of human frailties; and lastly the love for Law.”***

I shall endeavor to maintain these qualities to the best of my ability during my judicial career which I have now chosen to embark upon.

I will also be guided by the advice given in Mathew 7;1,2 which I Quote ***“Judge not, that you be not judged, for what Judgement you Judge, You will be Judged;”***

As is customary, I would like to address a few issues which I consider important.

A litigant comes before a Court of Law with a grievance as he/she considers it to be a last resort or a place of refuge. As such, a Court of Law is duty bound to accord a hearing to a litigant and consider the possibility of addressing and remedying their grievances, having heard all necessary parties, and based on a firm legal basis. In this regard, the assistance of both the Private Bar and the Official Bar is vital for the dispensation of justice by a Court of Law.

I quote from ***Justice Y.K.Sabharwal, former Chief Justice of India;***

“Lawyers must view themselves as public servants no matter what their chosen field of practice, no matter what side they take on a case. By learning the law you are given power. Your voice becomes louder and clearer. Through your arguments you can shape and even change the law. You can ensure the law’s implementation. It is a power, though, that comes with a duty. The law that you invoke is not yours, it is the peoples. Part of the duty in being a lawyer is working to make sure there is justice not just for some, but all people”.

In particular, the Official Bar plays a pivotal role in this regard as their role include the duty to assist court by using their good office in remedying and resolving the grievances brought before the Court.

A nations course and its citizens lives are molded by the constitution and the laws of the country.

Each and every citizen must try to understand the concept that gives life to the Constitution and the laws, and they should also be aware of their rights and the corresponding obligations.

In 1787 the architect of the American declaration of Independence Thomas Jefferson was instrumental in identifying and embodying the rights of the people in the American Constitution. The rights of the people are enshrined in our Constitution as well.

However, it should be understood that every right has a corresponding, compelling obligation.

It is stated in the Manual of political ethics by Francis Lieber I quote ***“the very reasonableness of obligations consists in rights”***.

Our Constitution has evolved since its introduction in 1978, with the 20th Amendment being introduced in 2020.

The **Directive Principles of State Policy** and **Fundamental Duties** contained under Chapter VI of the Constitution emphasize the fundamental obligations of the State to its Citizens and the duties and the rights of the citizens to the State.

The Directive Principles of State Policy stipulated in Article 27 of the Constitution contain the obligations and responsibilities imposed on the State, which guides Parliament, the President and the Cabinet of Ministers in the enactment of laws and the governance of Sri Lanka for the establishment of a just and free society.

The Fundamental Duties stipulated in Article 28 of the Constitution contain duties and obligations of every person in Sri Lanka, which could be considered as moral obligations. Therefore, both the state and citizens have duties and obligation.

This invocation of the corresponding obligation that accompanies the rights are co-related and have to co-exist for an ideal and law abiding society to prevail. In the absence of this balance, evil will prevail.

I am very much looking forward to working across the diverse jurisdiction of this court, to uphold the independence of the judiciary

and to strive to ensure that each person before this Court leaves its premises satisfied of having been accorded a patient hearing and having received a considered decision.

Permit me in my conclusion, to once again remember with gratitude the persons who guided and assisted me in life. I remember with a deep sense of affection my late parents Mr. M.S.S.E. Corea and Mrs. Rita Corea, my brother, sister Sharmila and family.

I wish to specially appreciate the assistance and support given by my wife Surangi and daughter Sayuni and son Teshan.

I also wish to thank my wife's Parents, Mr. & Mrs. Patrick Perera, my in-laws Niranjan and Ramesh and their families who have been with me at all times.

Even though I am not in a position to mention all the names, it is with humility I wish to state how grateful I am to all my seniors who have taught me and guided me in my legal career.

I pay my heartfelt gratitude to my Alma Mater St Anne's College and to all my teachers who have shown me the path to success. I will be ever grateful to them.

I thank you all for honouring me, and this court, by your presence today. May God bless you all.