

Kathmandu Declaration
Adopted by
the 10th Chief Justices' Conference held in Kathmandu, Nepal,
5-6 March 2016

Whereas, independence of judiciary is the foundation of democracy, rule of law, human rights and social justice; and

Whereas, the judiciary, as the custodian of the constitution, has a prominent role to play in promoting and nurturing its values; and

Whereas, there is a need to promote constitutional culture through collective consciousness among the SAARC nations; and

Whereas, judicial reform is a multi-dimensional and continuous process, which requires a holistic approach; and

Whereas, cooperation between the judiciaries in the Region, through the sharing of judgments on human rights, public interest litigation, environmental and commercial cases, also facilitates access to justice for all; and

Whereas, the establishment of a SAARCLAW arbitration center in the Region, would further facilitate economic and social development and justice;

Now, therefore, the 10th Chief Justices' Conference, attended by Hon'ble Chief Justice of Bangladesh Mr. Surendra Kumar Sinha, Hon'ble Chief Justice of Bhutan Mr. Tshering Wangchuk, Hon'ble Chief Justice of India Mr. T. S. Thakur, Hon'ble Chief Justice of Nepal Mr. Kalyan Shrestha, Hon'ble Justice Mr. Ezaj Afzal Khan representing Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan, and Hon'ble Chief Justice of Sri Lanka Mr. K. Sripavan,

Do hereby Resolve and Declare the following through the Kathmandu Declaration to:

1. Take initiatives to disseminate judgments relating to human rights, public interest litigation, environmental and commercial law through the website of the SAARCLAW, along with an alert system while uploading new judgments.

2. Publish periodic SAARC Law Reports containing landmark judgments and decisions of the apex courts of the SAARC countries.
3. Foster regional cooperation for the establishment of a SAARCLAW Arbitration Centre in Kathmandu, Nepal.
4. Make further use of national judicial academies for mutual exchange of knowledge, skills and experiences of judges, judicial officials and law practitioners in the Region, through training and exchange of visits.
5. Share the best practices in court management among the judiciaries in the Region.
6. Further collaborate with the relevant stakeholders including civil society in order to enhance access to justice for all.
7. Urge the respective governments to provide adequate resources to the judiciary for strengthening its institutional capacity.

And, we do hereby further resolve to forward this Declaration to the SAARC Law for such action as may be considered necessary.

(Mr. Surendra Kumar Sinha)
Hon'ble Chief Justice of Bangladesh

(Mr. Tshering Wangchuk)
Hon'ble Chief Justice of Bhutan

(Mr. T. S. Thakur)
Hon'ble Chief Justice of India

(Mr. Kalyan Shrestha)
Hono'ble Chief Justice of Nepal

(Mr. Ezaj Afzal Khan)
Hon'ble Justice representing Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan

(Mr. K. Sripavan)
Hon'ble Chief Justice of Sri Lanka

Given in Kathmandu on Sunday, the 6th of March 2016.