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Speech of the Hon'ble President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh H.E. Md. Abdul Hamid at the "Inaugural Ceremony of the South Asia Judicial Conference on Environment and Climate Change"

Venue: Radisson Blu Dhaka water Garden.

Friday, 11 Agrahayan 1423

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 25 November 2016

Time: 11:00 am

Assalamualaikum

Mr. Chairperson of this Session Mr. Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha, Hon'ble Chief Justice of Bangladesh,  
Hon'ble Chief Justices of Participating countries,  
Mr. Anisul Huq MP, Hon'ble Minister,  
Ministry of Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs,  
Mr. Abdullah Al Islam Jakob, Hon'ble Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment and Forest,  
Hon'ble Justices,  
Mr. Christopher Stephens, General Counsel, ADB,  
Distinguished Guests and Participants from home and abroad,  
Representatives of the Print and Electronic Media;  
Ladies and Gentlemen

A very Good Morning to all.

It is a great pleasure for me to be here with you at the inaugural session of South Asia Judicial Conference on Environment and Climate Change. At the very outset, I express my sincere thanks to the Organizers, the Supreme Court of Bangladesh and Asian Development Bank for holding such an important conference just at the end of the twenty-second Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP-22) in Marrakech. I also express my warmth felicitations and cordial thanks to our distinguished foreign guests who have gathered here with a view to extending their whole-hearted support and cooperation in combating negative impact of climate change. I feel proud to be a part of this important Conference on a very pertinent issue of world concern.

**Distinguished Guests and  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The South Asian region, a home of nearly one- third of the world's population, is particularly vulnerable. There is clear empirical evidence that even a one-meter rise in sea level would submerge one-fifth of Bangladesh. Thus an estimated 25 to 30 million people would be displaced as 'Climate refugees'. The Maldives could disappear entirely. Huge coastal belt of this region could face permanent inundation. And even before such an unimaginable calamity, the shocks of climate change on lives of ordinary citizens would be devastating.

As you all know that the issue of Climate Change is a perilous threat not only for the South Asia but it also for the entire mankind. Research reveals that the rise of average global temperature would be between 1.8° Celsius to 4° Celsius due to climate change by the year 2100. The negative impact of climate change will hamper the lives and livelihood, agriculture productivity and food production, water and forest and ecological balance of environment. Therefore, the issue of climate change appears before us as a matter of great concern which should be addressed with utmost importance by putting combined efforts.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

The environmental management from a strategic perspective requires a move towards sustainable development. The UN and the global development community have enunciated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the post-2015 development agenda.

The Government of Bangladesh has taken substantial initiatives for addressing climate change risks. Bangladesh is one of the first countries that signed and ratified the Paris Agreement and also the first country to set up Climate Change Fund of US\$ 400 million from its own resources. Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) has been formulated for adaptation and low carbon development (LCD) through the engagement of various stakeholders. With support from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) has also been prepared to meet the formidable environmental challenges. Seventh Five years Plan has incorporated a Green Growth strategy to harmonize economic growth for better environmental sustainability.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Climate change is a global phenomenon. A single country or a region could not be able to address this burning issue. Therefore, it needs concerted and united efforts from global community in mitigating and combating the impacts of climate change. In line with Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement the world leaders have made their commitment to protect environment and earth from the adverse impact of climate change. Time has come to materialize the decisions and turn commitments into actions.

Using tools of innovating and creative interpretation of constitutional provisions, the Supreme Court of Bangladesh has consistently endeavored to render meaningful justice to cases involving conservation and protection of environment.

The Bangladesh judiciary is highly sensitized about the importance and necessity of conservation of environment and accordingly playing an important and pro-active role in combating activities detrimental to ecological balance and conservation of environment. The exclusive Environmental Courts and the utilization of constitutional remedy through the initiation of Public Interest Environmental Litigation in the apex court are playing very important role in protecting environment of the country. South Asian Judiciary is also playing vital role in protecting and preserving environment. So, they deserve high appreciation.

It is learnt that in two days conference international experts of high repute will make their deliberations on various important issues on environment and climate change. Particular focus will be on the Paris Agreement, which is widely expected to be ratified and to come into force soon. The impacts and effectivity of the Paris Agreement moving forward will also be examined. I strongly believe that the suggestions and recommendations which will be emanated from this conference will consider a great help in taking pragmatic steps to protect and preserve the environment.

Wishing an environment friendly world and a resounding success of this conference, I hereby declare the "South Asia Judicial Conference on Environment and Climate Change" Open.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.