

18 November 2021

## **LAWASIA PRESIDENT 2021 INAUGURATION SPEECH**

LAWASIA 2021 Virtual Annual Conference

Thank you Chunghwan for your leadership of LAWASIA over the past two years. I acknowledge your strong and able leadership in what has been the organisation's most challenging period, thank you for applying both your intellect and creativity to advance LAWASIA into our new world.

I begin by acknowledging the immense privilege it is to lead an organisation such as LAWASIA. I am grateful to all the past leaders who have contributed to the long history of the organisation in our region, and I am aware of the task before me, to not only maintain but actively pursue the aims of LAWASIA and as an important advocate for the protection of established legal principles in the region, which as the outgoing President has acknowledged, have never been more at risk.

As the new President, I will concentrate my work on the following areas: -

1. Core value – in time of turbulence and challenges, one must ask why we are here for LAWASIA. We are here to uphold and defend the rule of law, protect human rights, access of justice, and encourage international legal cooperation. This is the mission of LAWASIA. It is a common mission that brings us together. We must speak out in one voice loud and clear to defend our core value.
2. Collaboration – LAWASIA is a platform to connect, exchange and work out solutions to issues of common interest. I urge all of us to contribute in whatever way we can through participation in committees, sections, webinars, workshops. It is only through collaboration wonderful things can be achieved.
3. Empowerment – the world has become more polarized in terms of resources, wealth, capability. LAWASIA will continue its role to empower lawyers in the region through

education, knowledge and capacity building. Technology has made it possible. We will embrace technology to achieve this.

4. I want to emphasise respect, diversity and inclusiveness. We need to enhance mutual understanding and active participation of all our member bar associations and members. We want to listen from you. More dialogues and closer communication are much needed. This will make LAWASIA stronger, more diverse and more relevant to all of us.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge that none of this could be achieved without the support of the Secretary General, the Advisory Board, the Vice Presidents, and the Executive Committee. I would also like to acknowledge the very small Secretariat staff of LAWASIA, who have worked tirelessly to organise this conference today.

I would like to thank you all for your support of my term as president and for attending our first virtual annual conference this week. I pledge to use my time as the President in pursuit of the aims of LAWASIA, by recognising its history and working towards a future of greater collaboration across the region to advance the rule of law and the protection of human rights.

In closing, I would like to thank the speakers and moderators who have contributed to our conference this week, it has been a real privilege to be able to hear from such a variety of eminent speakers. I look forward to seeing you all, hopefully in person, at LAWASIA events in 2022. With this, I close LAWASIA's first virtual Annual Conference.

**Melissa Pang**

President