Vote of Thanks at the
3rd South Asia Judicial Roundtable on Environmental Justice
9 August 2013
Colombo, Sri Lanka

Sri Widowati
Country Director
Sri Lanka Resident Mission
Asian Development Bank

Honorable Chief Justice, Honorable Judges, ladies and gentlemen: good afternoon.

On behalf of the Sri Lanka Resident Mission and ADB, I would like to thank once again the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka, led by the Honorable Chief Justice Mohan Pieris P.C. for hosting and collaborating for this Roundtable. The success of this event after months of preparation would not be possible without the leadership and dedication his Lordship and his team. The support and cooperation which the Supreme Court has shown bodes well for ADB’s work in Sri Lanka.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Honorable Chief Justices and judges here present from South Asia and beyond. Thank you for taking time off your busy schedules to share your ideas and to continue the dialogue for a “greener” South Asia. Your active participation should serve as encouragement for the other branches of government, and other judiciaries of the world, to take the case for the environment.

Much appreciation is also given to our expert resource speakers and panelists. Your presentations and insights have added critical knowledge and information for our better understanding of the complexities, issues, and challenges that we and the environment face. Thank you for being ADB’s and the judiciary’s partner in education and capacity building.

I would also like to recognize the invaluable efforts of the team from ADB’s Office of the General Counsel, led by Ms. Irum Ahsan, and the staff and consultants of SLRM who assisted in this event. This event would also not be possible without the support of ADB’s management, led by Vice President Davis and Deputy General Counsel Nagpal.

In closing, I am reminded of the provisions of the Sri Lankan Constitution which calls on the State to protect, preserve, and improve the environment for the benefit of the community. Equally important is the provision in Constitution reposing on all Sri Lankans the duty to protect nature and preserve its riches. These provisions highlight that environmental justice and the conservation of nature are not just the concerns of government or of the judiciary, but is a responsibility and a call for each and every one of us to become good stewards of nature. Sri Lanka’s and the rest of South Asia’s rich nature and biodiversity deserves every bit of protection if we are to live up to provisions in our laws and constitutions. But even without such legal mandates, I think it is our natural duty to preserve, conserve, and protect the environment to improve the lives of the people of South Asia and the rest of the world.

Congratulations on a successful and fruitful Roundtable.

Bohoma istu: Nandri. Thank you very much.