Address

by

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Hon’ble Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha

on

“The Role of Parliamentarians in Conflict Resolution and
Peace-building”

at

the 58th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (Workshop 'E'),
Colombo (Sri Lanka), 07-15 September 2012
Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Delegates:

I am thankful to the Chair for giving me this opportunity to share my views on the theme, ‘The Role of Parliamentarians in Conflict Resolution and Peace-building’.

Over the years, peace and stability, which are crucial for healthy development of nations, have been affected by Inter-States disputes, intra-state conflicts, terrorism, rising inequality, mis-governance, executive high-handedness, skewed distribution of resources and suppression of human rights in some parts of the world.

In the era of globalisation, no nation-state can remain unaffected by conflicts or conflict-like situations in any part of the world. Peace, security, development and human-rights, being vital for conflict resolution, all these aspects need to be accorded high priority by nations.

Representative democracy, with adequate space for inclusiveness, is an effective tool to mitigate the various causes of conflicts and facilitate the process of peace-building. The values, ideals and ethos enshrined in democratic principles serve to negate the very logic of conflict. Democracy stands for the Rule of Law and facilitates dialogue at various levels between the contesting stakeholders to work-out amicable solutions without hampering the on-going developmental processes. We, in India, have in place a flourishing parliamentary democracy as a system of governance. We believe in building an inclusive, equitable and just society. Being part of the Commonwealth fraternity, we greatly value the aims and objectives of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in creating an atmosphere of peaceful co-existence free from any kind of conflict - whether intra-state or inter-state.

There is no doubt that the challenges before the parliamentarians, irrespective of the countries they belong to, are huge, yet similar in character and consequences. We, the parliamentarians are, therefore, collectively duty-bound to take multifarious initiatives for creating peace and stability in our societies. Let me proudly say that with more than six decades of democratic experience, the community of parliamentarians in
India has understood the demands of changing times. They understand the needs of our diverse society comprising different castes, creeds, groups and varied interests.

Parliamentarians in India have brought about several progressive socio-economic legislations which contain all major elements of peace-building in society. These legislations, which work in a complementary manner, aim at improving the representative character of our democratic institutions, enabling equitable distribution of our national resources, protecting human rights, improving essential services to the people, building improved socio-economic infrastructure, and above all, creating an accountable, responsible and transparent governance system in the country. This is how our parliamentarians contribute towards creating an environment conducive to establishing peace and stability in our society.

Parliamentarians in India have never failed to extensively debate on the floors of the Houses and elsewhere all issues of public importance with a view to facilitating consensus-building. They often act as a crucial link between the Government and the people in resolving conflicts in society as and when the situation so warrants. In the discharge of their parliamentary duties, they strive to build a society inhabited by empowered and informed citizens.

Based on our past experiences, we can say that timely legislative interventions on the part of parliamentarians in strengthening democratic institutions and protecting the interests of the people, can effectively lead to the consolidation of the peace-building processes. Let us exchange our past experiences in a formal or informal manner so that we can come out with some innovative ideas for shaping and developing appropriate strategies to effectively counter the problems faced by fragile states and the societies engulfed in conflicts. I hope, this platform will help us come out with solutions to establish lasting peace - locally, regionally and globally.

Thank you.