



**3rd Congress of the World Conference on Constitutional Justice
'Constitutional Justice and Social Integration'
28 September – 1 October 2014
Seoul, Republic of Korea**

**Welcome Remarks
by
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**on the occasion of the
Opening Ceremony of the 3rd Congress
World Conference on Constitutional Justice**

Honorable Presidents, Chief Justices, Chairpersons,
Distinguished delegates,

On behalf of myself and the Constitutional Court of Korea, I would like to begin by expressing my sincerest appreciation and welcome to all of you for being here in Seoul, the capital city of the Republic of Korea.

The first Congress of the World Conference on Constitutional Justice was held in South Africa in January 2009, and the second Congress was held in Brazil in January 2011. Finally in September the same year, the World Conference was officially established as a permanent body with its Statute entering into force.

And today, we are gathered for this 3rd Congress, joined by 109 courts and international organizations.

Now, the World Conference has become the highest-level forum in the field of constitutional justice, which is the key element of democracy, rule of law, and human rights protection.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep thanks to Mr. Gianni Buquicchio, President of the Venice Commission, and Mr. Schnutz Dürr, Secretary of the World Conference, as well as many others for their hard work and dedication to the establishment and development of the World Conference.

The World Conference has been involved in international dialogue and cooperation associated with constitutional laws and constitutional justice systems, which are the foundation of human rights protection and democracy.

In every corner of the world, it has contributed to upholding the universal values common to all humanity, namely the freedoms, rights, equality, and justice of human beings, and institutionalizing the principle of separation of powers and democracy through constitutional justice.

Distinguished guests,

We, as a global body uniting constitutional courts, supreme courts, and constitutional councils around the world, have to succeed and build on such valuable achievements. Furthermore, constitutional justice in this world has a new contemporary challenge to face.

The second half of the 20th century was full of optimism for long-term economic growth and a promising future, and, therefore, much of the conflicts of society were resolved on their own.

But the good old time is over for the whole world, as we witness international economic crises and regional disputes.

Today, we have a mission ahead of us: to take wise measures to change and develop the systems of our society, and thereby address the numerous issues facing the world.

In this context, it has become one of the important roles of constitutional justice to ensure that legal systems are peacefully established and conflicts are minimized.

In that sense, this Congress is particularly timely and meaningful, as it brings together the world's experience and wisdom about constitutions and constitutional justice under the main topic of "Constitutional Justice and Social Integration."

Looking back in history, seemingly peaceful eras had the tendency to have more hidden problems. When conflicts of society escalate and reach a critical point, the consequences are most likely to be explosive.

In every country, there are conflicts of interests and social divisions between classes in many areas of economy and society, including employment instability, rich and poor gap, disparity in educational opportunities, pension systems, environmental degradation, and trade policies.

But when the politics that should be mediating such conflicts is nowhere to be seen, countries suffer from a crisis of democracy and a collapse of communities.

Globally, national borders are disappearing due to individual, business activities and movements of goods, and an economic or political event in one country affects the whole world.

In extensive regions of the world, narrow-sighted ethnicism or fundamentalism such as social exclusion of immigrants are prevalent. And this may trigger public agitation and outrage, and eventually result in an absence of state control.

Therefore, in order to harmoniously resolve many issues of social integration, the uniqueness of each country has to be taken into account and yet, the constitutional courts around the world should not forget to take a broad, global perspective.

We, the courts of constitutional jurisdiction, have to identify the accurate causes and solutions to social issues as they occur with changes of this globalized era.

We have to consider developing and implementing international standards required to guarantee universal human rights.

It is our imperative not just to strike a balance between controlling and respecting the decisions of the legislature and the executive, but also to examine the implication of our court rulings on international relations.

I hope that this gathering here will be an opportunity to find useful ideas to reach a common understanding on these tricky issues and solve them.

This way, constitutional justice in each country will be able to play a bigger role in resolving issues of social cohesion and integration. We could even look to international organizations such as regional groups of constitutional courts to take the lead in achieving human rights protection and social integration.

Finally, with all these goals in mind, I sincerely hope that all of you, each representing the constitutional court of your own country, will be active in sharing your experience and wisdom during the sessions of this Congress.

Thank you.