**WELCOMING SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE MR JUSTICE MYRON MICHAEL NICOLATOS, PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME COURT OF CYPRUS,**

**AT THE 3rd JOINT CYPRUS BAR-ENGLISH BAR COUNCILS CONFERENCE**

**NICOSIA - 6th JULY, 2018.**

**Your Excellency High Commissioner**

**Distinguished Presidents of the Bar Councils of Cyprus and England & Wales,**

**Distinguished Guests,**

**Dear Colleagues,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great pleasure and indeed an honour for me to address this 3rd Joint Conference of the Cyprus and English Bar Councils, after the first two successful Conferences, in 2016 and 2017.

England and Cyprus are among the very few European Legal Jurisdictions applying the Common Law and Equity.

The Common Law and Equity were built upon the European Legal Culture which emanates from the Greek and Roman Civilisations and from Christianity. The Christian principle “love your neighbour as yourself” has become the duty of care towards your neighbour, in the Common Law, whereas Plato and Aristotle, 2500 years ago, recognised the great values of the Separation of Powers and of the Rule of Law.

The English Common Law and the Principles of Equity are, in my opinion, excellent examples of what the Human Mind may achieve, at its best.

Based on Fairness and Logic, respect of Human Rights and Natural Justice, the Common Law and Equity have served billions of people in the world, in all the five Continents, in the solution of their Legal Problems and the arrangement of their Legal Affairs, with flexibility and foreseeability.

The Republic of Cyprus was fortunate enough to be left, in 1960, with an excellent Legal and Judicial System, with established respect for the Administration of Justice and its officers, an efficient Civil Service and a widespread knowledge and use of the English Language.

It has also benefited from the vast experience and rich case law of Common Law Countries all over the world. But the main source of guidance, for Cypriot Judges and Advocates, comes from the case law of England and Wales and of the Privy Council.

Building on the above Solid Foundations, the Judiciary of Cyprus has managed to remain, until today, independent, honest and impartial and to maintain a high standard of Justice.

Despite the above merits of our Justice System we face, today, serious problems of Delays in the Administrative of Justice. In order to solve these problems, we have applied to the appropriate Organs of the European Union for assistance, and with their assistance we are now seriously working on two major projects: (a) the Reform of the Structure and the Functions of our Courts and (b) the modernisation of our Civil Procedure Rules that date back to the 1950΄s, with only minor changes. For the second Project we are closely cooperating with a team of experts mainly from the United Kingdom, under the leadership of distinguished Justice, Lord Dyson, to whom we are very greatful.

Apart from the Common Law, the United Kingdom and Cyprus are still both Members of the European Union, the Council of Europe and the British Commonwealth, sharing the same Basic values of Democracy, Respect for Human Rights and the Rule of Law. The two European countries have also developed a close strategic partnership that serves the interests of peace and stability in the troubled area of the Near East and promotes European and Western security, in general.

I am convinced that close contacts and cooperation between the Bar Council of England and Wales and the Bar Association of Cyprus will have very fruitful results for both sides. England is the birthplace of the Common Law, whereas Cyprus has a unique mixed Legal System of both English Common Law in the field of Private Law and Continental Civil Law in the field of Public Law.

Esteemed Colleagues,

I wish you all fruitful deliberations and discussions and a pleasant stay in Cyprus for our English participants.