

## Ambassador Mohan Pieris, P.C.

- **Ambassador & Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations in New York** (since January 2021 to date)

- Appointed the **Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2013:**

During the tenure as the Chief Justice the Judiciary achieved an unprecedented disposal of cases. Judicial Reforms were introduced by the Digitization of Record Rooms, the wide application of information technology in Court Procedures, the introduction of electronic filing of cases, the introduction of case management procedures and practice directions, mediation as a method of alternate dispute resolution, capacity building of Judges, upgrading of the Judges' Training Institute and the requirement for Judicial Accountability, upheld independence and high ethical standards both in the Judiciary and the Bar. Substantial resources were applied for infrastructure development, inclusive of electronic software and hardware and other amenities to ensure an efficient and comfortable working environment for all stake holders.

Judicial time on the bench was consumed productively. The quick and practical resolution of disputes was given primacy of place. The Rule of Law was sustained meaningfully by infusing the principle of equity and good conscience. Many **landmark judgments, and opinions** were delivered. Some of which were sought under the consultative jurisdiction of the constitution in respect of inter-alia:

- the President's term of office.
- statutory determinations in applications for judicial review of legislation such as the Appropriation Bill and other Bills inclusive of the constitutional status of the devolved subject of "land" under the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment to the constitution
- the question of "immunity of sovereign states" vis-a-vis the employment of local personnel

### **In matters of fundamental rights and of Public Interest litigation:**

- Criminal Law and Procedure and connected causes.
- Petitions of infringement of rights by the police, and of infringement of rights consequent to executive and administrative action, and in matters of public interest litigation (the clearing and relocation of vulnerable groups and dwellings, addressing environmental issues etc.) and in other civil and criminal appeals.

The reforms undertaken as Chairman of the Council of Legal Education of Sri Lanka were revolutionary. It included curriculum reforms, reforms in examination procedure, reforms in the Administration, the use of information technology to eliminate irregular practices with a view to enhancing and ensuring the high ethical standards required to meet the contemporary challenges faced by the legal system.

**Relinquished office as Chief Justice** on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2015; resumed an active Chamber practice; engaged with academia. Actively engaged in Arbitrations Locally and Internationally. Presently, appointed **Arbitrator** in respect of a dispute regarding an International Construction Contract under the **Rules of the International Chamber of Commerce.**

- **Senior Legal Advisor to the Cabinet of Ministers of Sri Lanka** in 2011:

The jurisdiction of this mandate required that appropriate legal advice be provided to the Cabinet of Ministers regarding the procedures established by Law at the earliest opportunity so as to ensure that the decisions made have been arrived at having due regard, to the Rule of Law, constitutional values and is for the public good. This office has on many occasions ensured that the Cabinet of Ministers has been appropriately advised. One such example was with regard the withdrawal of the Emergency Regulations as pledged in the GSP+ negotiations in Brussels which this office proffered and the Cabinet accepted and the several reforms introduced to the procurement of defense equipment which significantly contributed to the better management of the Government's response to the former conflict by the introduction of the principles and values in Constitutional Economics.

- **Chairman of Seylan Bank PLC** in 2011:

This appointment came at a time when the Bank was in struggle for survival. Notwithstanding such difficult times the Bank was successfully restructured and rehabilitated by the adoption of strict fiscal policies and prudent commercial decisions which resulted in a success story.

- **Attorney-General of Sri Lanka** in 2008:

The tenure as Attorney General introduced substantial reforms in infrastructure, work ethics, work efficiency, and a new ethos to the prosecutorial attitudes.

During this period the Attorney General had to respond appropriately to substantial claims made by International Commercial Banks, by invoking Arbitral Proceedings initiated at Maxwell Chambers Singapore, under the Rules of the London Centre for International Arbitration and the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes. The Claims were filed by the Citi Bank of USA and the Deutsche Bank of Germany respectively against the Republic of Sri Lanka concerning a "Hedging Agreement". A third Claim was filed in the High Court of England by the Standard Chartered Bank, in respect of a similar transaction. These Claims were successfully settled with minimum or no liability to the Republic.

- Appointed **Legal Consultant to the Central Bank of Sri Lanka** in 2006
- Appointed **Legal Advisor to the Ministry of Defense of Sri Lanka** in 2005
- Appointed **President's Counsel** in 2004
- Having retired from the office as Senior State Counsel, **practiced for a period of 15 years in the Original and Appellate Courts in criminal and civil matters** and in matters of **public law** and **fundamental rights** in the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court.
- **Admitted as a Solicitor of the Supreme Court of England and Wales** in 1978.  
During the tenure in England, received training under the Commonwealth **Training Scheme** for Solicitors and served Articles in the prestigious law firm of Rose and Byrne. This training programme enabled the engagement with leading Queens Counsel and Senior Lawyers of the English Courts.
- Returned to Sri Lanka in 1981 and **joined the Attorney-General's Department as a State Counsel**. Retired as Senior State Counsel in 1996. During the early part of this tenure, appeared as Prosecuting Counsel in many parts of the country and conducted several leading criminal trials inclusive of the initial indictments under the Prevention of Terrorism Law.
- **Admitted as an Attorney-at-Law of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka in June 1975.**
- **Held the position of the Deputy President of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka.**
- **Nominated by the Attorney General as State Counsel** to the Cease-fire Monitoring Committee, a Mechanism comprising of former public officials in High Posts and Intellectuals representing a cross section of the community consequent to the Ceasefire Agreement between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Government of India.

- **Junior Counsel to the Attorney-General in the Special Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Corruption and Abuse of Power in Public Bodies.** Latterly was attached to the Civil Division of the Attorney-General's Department which required representing the State in the Appellate Courts in matters concerning Constitutional Law, Judicial Review, Fundamental Rights and Administrative Law.
- Held the position of the **Chairman** of the **Board of Examiners (Intermediate)** at the **Sri Lanka Law College.**
- Examiner **for the External Degree in Law of the** Law Faculty of the University of Colombo.
- Lecturer in the Trial Advocacy **Course in the** Law Faculty of the University of Colombo.
- **Sri Lanka Law College**  
Represented the Sri Lanka Law College in many competitive sports; Coloursman. The Winner of the prestigious Hector Jayawardena Memorial Gold Medal in the Address to the Jury competition in 1973.
- Primary and Secondary education **at St. Joseph's College and** Royal College, Colombo, Sri Lanka; achieved excellence in academic and non-academic activities.

**Following are the Positions held in academia:**

- Honorary Professor of Law - National Law University Delhi, India
- Visiting Lecturer- Master's Degree in Law (LLM) General Sir John Kotelawala Defense University of Sri Lanka
- Visiting Professor - Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law Patiala, Punjab
- Visiting Lecturer -National University of Advanced Legal Studies of Kochi
- Visiting Lecturer - The WB National University of Juridical Sciences Kolkata
- Visiting Lecturer - National Law School of India University, Bangalore
- Visiting Lecturer - The National Law Institute University, Bhopal
- Visiting Lecturer - National University of Study and Research in Law, Ranchi
- Visiting Lecturer - National Law University, Visakhapatnam
- Visiting Lecturer - Himachal Pradesh National Law University, Shimla
- Visiting Lecturer - National Law University and Judicial Academy, Assam
- Visiting Lecturer - National Law University of Cuttack, Odisha;
- Visiting Lecturer - Gujarat National Law University;
- Visiting Lecturer - KIIT University School of Law, Bhubaneswar;
- Visiting Lecturer - The Law Faculty of the University of Patna.
- Visiting Lecturer - Symbiosis Law School Pune;
- Visiting Lecturer - GD Goenka School of Law, Gurugram;
- Visiting Lecturer -KLE Society's Law College in Bangalore;
- Visiting Lecturer - Department of Law, Chettinad Academy of Research and Education, Chennai.
- Visiting Lecturer - Department of Law, Prestige Institute of Management and Research Indore
- Visiting Lecturer - Institute of Law, Nirma University of Ahmedabad
- Visiting Lecturer -Lloyd Law College of Greater Noida
- A Member of the Council of the University of Ruhuna (Southern), Matara, Sri Lanka
- **A Member of the Judicial Council of the International Association of Law Schools (IALS) and the Co-Chair of the Study Group for Human Rights and Constitutional Law.**

Law subjects dealt with in the courses conducted:

**Comparative Constitutional Law, Environmental Law, International Commercial Arbitration, International Trade Law, Human Rights Law, International Humanitarian Law, Law Governing the Prevention of Terrorism and Administrative Law.**

The Lectures conducted in the classrooms are now delivered online to the several Law Universities in India and Bangladesh in a virtual environment in consequence of the present Global Pandemic.

Appointed the Presiding Judge by the International Association of Law Schools and the Philip Jessup Programme in the Global Moot Competition in a virtual environment.

The teaching efforts were appreciated by the academia in India, who conferred the South Asia Jurist of the Year award for 2017 at a public ceremony in Delhi. The Jury consisted of the Society of Indian Law Firms and the Madava Menon Institute for Legal and Advocacy Training in India for the outstanding contribution to Legal Education in India. **This was the first time the Award was made to a Non-Indian National.**

Environmental Law: The **National Green Tribunal of India, SAARC** Law, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) provided the platform to present many papers and keynote addresses concerning matters of the environment in different parts of the world. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of June 2019, on Invitation delivered the keynote address at the Sustainable Environment and Energy Summit an initiative of Social Responsibility Council in Technical Association with the Environmental Law and Development Foundation in Delhi.

The **engagement with the GIAN Programme (the Global Initiative of Academic Networks of the Ministry of Human Resources Development of the Government of India)**

This teaching programme included the dissemination of knowledge of comparative constitution law and constitutionalism, federalism and federal principles, emerging areas of constitutionalism, the rule of law and separation of powers, free and fair elections, the freedom of the press, judicial review, public interest, human rights and constitutional remedies, environmental law, alternate dispute resolution (arbitration and mediation), international humanitarian law and prevention of terrorism).

- Key-note Speaker **at the Ambassadors Forum on the topics** Modern Foreign Policy for Small States **and the** development of new trends in Foreign Policy in the context of COVID-19;

### **Training**

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- Received training in Trial Advocacy at the National Institute for Trial Advocacy at its Teacher Training Trial Advocacy Workshop at Harvard Law School
- In Economic Crime at the Centre for Police and Criminal Justice Studies University of Exeter/Jesus College, University of Cambridge
- In Project Management for Development, Foreign Investment Analysis and Negotiation, International Business at George Washington University with the Department of the Agency for International Development of the United States of America. The participation in the above courses was as a Nominee of the Government of Sri Lanka.

### **International Participation**

## International Participation

- **Member of the Sri Lanka Delegations** to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva and to two consecutive sessions of the Universal Periodic Reviews.
- **Head of Sri Lanka Delegation** to the **United Nations Human Rights Council's Committee Against Torture** in its review sessions of Sri Lanka.
- **Member of the Delegation** to the United Nations General Assembly and represented Sri Lanka in its deliberations with the Hon. Ban-ki Moon, the Secretary General and the Special Panel (the Darusman Committee) regarding accountability and Post Conflict Reconciliation which provided the foundation for the mandate in the Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission which enabled the Government of Sri Lanka to successfully pursue a policy of Restorative Justice.
- **Member of the Drafting Team of the Mandate** and connected procedures of the Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC).
- **Head of the Drafting Committee of the Mandate structured upon Restorative Justice.**
- Chairman of the **Inter Agency Committee for the implementation of interim recommendations of the LLRC.**
- Deputy Chairman of the **Drafting Committee of the National Action Plan for Human Rights.**
- Member **of the Drafting Team** of the Rio Plus Twenty Resolution which was adopted in Brazil. Participated as a Delegate in several Meetings of the United Nations Environmental Programme in many parts of the world.
- Lead Counsel in the **South Asian Agency for Regional Co-operation in Law and Tariff Negotiations** with the European Commission in Brussels for the **Restoration of the General Systems Preference (GSP+)** Concessions to Sri Lanka.
- **Senior Counsel** of the Sri Lanka team at the **International Commercial Arbitration** in the capacity of the Attorney General.