**STATEMENT BY H.E. THE PRESIDENT MAITHRIPALA SIRISENA AT THE 2ND SUMMIT OF THE ASIA COOPERATION DIALOGUE**

**10TH OCTOBER 2016**

Good Morning!

Your Excellency General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand

Distinguished Heads of State and Heads of Government

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is indeed a great pleasure to attend the Second Summit of the ‘Asian Cooperation Dialogue’ in Bangkok. At the outset, I wish to convey my sincere appreciation to the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand for the excellent arrangements made for the Summit, and for the warm hospitality extended to me and my Delegation.

Sri Lanka appreciates the active participation of the Kingdom of Thailand from the time of the establishment of ACD in 2002. We welcome Turkey & Nepal as members to the ACD family. Sri Lanka also welcomes the establishment of a Permanent Secretariat in Kuwait which would provide an institutional structure to the Organization. This will elevate the status and outlook of the ACD.

Ladies and gentlemen we have no doubt, that in the coming years, Asia will be the new financial Hub, the focal point for the financial services industry. In this background, we are here to endorse the ‘ACD Vision 2030’ and the roadmap for ACD Regional Cooperation, with the objective of further building up the ACD’s role as an active forum for dialogue. There is a large potential in the ACD Region in the field of tourism. This could play a crucial role in sustainable social, cultural and economic growth in our countries. Sri Lanka has identified tourism as one of the key sectors driving the country’s economy.

We consider that Development of Science and Technology are important features to promote economic development. In this connection, I am pleased to inform that Sri Lanka will take the lead as a Prime Mover on the Pillar of Science, Technology and Innovation. We look forward to working closely with the member countries in order to share knowledge capabilities in this area.

We note with appreciation the forward looking initiative of Thailand in convening the business forum – ACD Connect, which provides greater impetus to our grouping’s economic objectives, through the promotion of private sector business partnerships. As an emerging economy, Sri Lanka’s aim to achieve the High Income Developed Country Status has been put into action by commencing a series of mega projects to promote economic growth.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have no doubt that the Summit outcome will bring about a common policy helping to enhance peace, security and prosperity among the countries in ACD Region.

Thank you.