**Your excellency, Mr. President of the Republic,**

**Honorable Deputy President of High Court,**

**Your excellencies, the Ambassadors of USA and EU**

**Honorable justices of the High Court,**

**Honorable representatives of justice institutions,**

**Distinguished guests and participants,**

Please allow me to express at first my sincere and heartfelt congratulations, also on behalf of all judges of the Constitutional Court, on this remarkable anniversary of the High Court, as well as my special pleasure to be part of this important conference.

The history of High Court naturally begins with that of Albanian state, as a living proof of the principle that ***“There is no State without courts”.*** The establishment of High Court is indeed the historical indicator of functionalization of Albanian state. 110 years is probably not a long time, but also not a short one to understand the contribution of this Court to the creation of our national institutional identity by developing it towards the universal values of law. Undoubtedly, the period after the ‘90s marks the long effort to build the rule of law and guarantee the fundamental human rights and freedoms, as the main state obligations towards the Albanian citizens, as clearly stated in the Preamble of our Constitution.

Not long before, Constitutional Court celebrated its 30th Anniversary, representing a solemn reflection moment on its achievements and challenges.

Activities organized on the occasion of these two anniversaries find our courts fully and effectively functional, offering us the opportunity to witness the materialization of constitutional solutions provided by the Justice Reform, whose implementation is the responsibility of each and every one of us.

Throughout their activity, the common goal of our courts has been **the solid and determined affirmation of the rule of law.** The Constitutional Court’s jurisprudence emphasized the principle of separation of powers, defining the role, position, competencies and functions of each of the powers in the Albanian constitutional order.

In this framework, Constitutional Court has elaborated also **the principle of independence of judiciary,** as one of the crucial pillars of the rule of law. This independence is neither a favor nor a privilege, it is indeed a responsibility and obligation for judges, grounded and imposed upon by the human rights themselves, serving as a prerequisite that guarantees the impartiality of adjudicator as stated in the Constitution. However, **the absolute dependence of judges is only on law, and this is actually the paradigm for the legitimacy of such independence.**

I take advantage of this opportunity to strongly emphasize that we should be ambitious and courageous when speaking on the rule of law as the cornerstone of a just and democratic society. It ensures that individuals and institutions are accountable for their actions, that the disputes are fairly and transparently resolved respecting thus the human rights. Without the rule of law, we face the risk of having a society in which the government abuses or is able to escape the law, and the most powerful people are immune from punishment. This not only undermines the principles of law, but also erodes the public trust in institutions that are meant to protect them.

Honorable colleagues,

Honorable participants,

 **Independence, impartiality and integrity of the justice system** are essential prerequisites for the existence of any healthy and democratic society, and **every attempt to endanger judicial independence shall represent an important matter of a great concern. No one can and should be above the law, even the judges themselves.** No government, no lawmaker, no politician, no official can be immune from legal accountability and obligations deriving from the law. The law must be the same for everyone and everyone shall be equal before the law. A just judicial system is a hallmark of any developed civilization.

 Honorable Deputy President of High Court,

Honorable justices of the High Court,

We are gathered here today in a solidarity of goals, with a high sense of duty and with the sole ambition to fulfil the expectations of the citizens of our country.

I invite you to share the very same purpose of restoring the public trust in the legal order and justice system as a historical duty that should actually be our common and ultimate mission.

At the end of my speech, I would like to wish you all successes in your work to accomplish the important and peculiar role entrusted to you by the Constitution, that is the unification, development and furtherance of the judicial practice, as an indispensable premise and guarantee for the equal treatment of citizens.

I wish you from the bottom of my heart a very fruitful and successful conference.

Thank you very much for your attention!