Honourable Chief Justice

Honourable Judges

Learned Members of the Legal Profession

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased and honoured to be associated with today’s call ceremony. Indeed this is a special and privileged moment in the life of every new barrister as it marks the start of a journey of a noble profession where you are called upon to use your acquired knowledge and skills to uphold justice in the best traditions.
May I congratulate all the callees, who are at the dawn of their professional lives. No doubt their achievement and academic success have been possible through hard work, dedication and sacrifice on their part. May I also extend my congratulations and good wishes to their parents, mentors and pupil masters who have assisted and supported them during their academic, vocational and professional training.

My Lords

The callees will shortly form part of a profession which is the very pillar of a free and democratic society. As from today, it will be their duty to uphold the image of our profession as one that is dedicated to the task of building a society based on social, political and economic justice. I shall urge the callees to embrace
their career with professionalism, civility, ethical conduct and respect.

By choosing a career in law, the callees have also chosen to reference their lives by their service to the public. My message to them is to live up to this commitment with honour and dignity. The callees must recognize that to practise law is not a right but a privilege. It is a privilege which they must know how to preserve. This can only be achieved through adherence to a highly professional and ethical conduct.

As a note of caution, may I remind all callees that any non-adherence to the standards set by the profession may lead to the loss of this much valued privilege.
May I, in this regard, draw the attention of the callees to the very first paragraph titled The Function of the Barrister in Society under the Preamble of the Code of Ethics for Barristers. I quote:

"In a society founded on respect for the rule of law the barrister fulfills a special role. His duties do not begin and end with the faithful performance of what he is instructed to do so far as the law permits. He must serve the interests of justice as well as those whose rights and liberties he is entrusted to assert and defend. It is his duty not only to represent his client but to be his adviser" (I unquote).

My Lords,

The new barristers have a sacrosanct duty to ensure that the justice system is accessible to everyone regardless of one's
social or financial status. They will have to be responsible towards their clients and work hard to uphold justice. They should not hesitate to seek the guidance of their "confreres" in the legal profession. They are indeed fortunate as they will find experienced colleagues at the bar who are more than willing to help them to begin their career. Once they join the bar, as time goes by, they too will become someone else's mentor. This is indeed a well-established tradition within our profession.

May I also urge the new callees to keep by their sides the Code of Ethics which sets out the rules of professional conduct designed to ensure the proper performance by the barrister of his duties. Whatever field the callees embark upon in the legal profession, my wish is that their careers bring them immense satisfaction and at the same time honour to the profession. I strongly believe that
there is no more rewarding profession which exists than the one they are joining today.

In a previous address to new barristers joining this noble profession, I cited a quote from Honourable John D Arnup, a judge of the Court of Appeal of Ontario on the occasion of a similar call ceremony in Canada in 1984. Let me again quote him today for the benefit of the new callees as I feel that his words are highly relevant and appropriate.

Quote

On one subject, my views have never changed. Ours is a noble profession, with ideals and a passionate devotion to justice. All the great wisdom of the ages, all the highest traditions of the Bar,
has come down to us, and now to you. You are the inheritors of
the ages, the trustees of the past, and the hope of the future.

Unquote

My Lords

With these words, let me conclude, on behalf of all law officers of
my Office and in my own personal name, by congratulating all the
callees and wishing them a successful career.

Thank you.