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SPEECH BY HON'BLE SHRI JUSTICE F. M. REIS, SENIOR  
JUDGE OF THE HIGH COURT OF BOMBAY AT GOA

My Lord Justice T. S. Thakur, Senior Judge of the Supreme Court and Executive Chairman of the National Legal Services Authority, my esteem colleagues Justice V. M. Kanade, Chairman of Mediation Monitoring Committee of Maharashtra, Justice Bhadang and Justice Wadane, sitting Judges at Goa, learned Advocate General Shri A.N. S. Nadkarni, Vice President of the High Court Bar Association, Shri Sudin Usgaonkar, Respected former Judges of the High Court, learned Judges of District and Subordinate Judiciary, Senior and all learned Advocates of all Bar Association Resource persons and dear delegates.

I am privileged to get this rare opportunity, to welcome His Lordship Justice Thakur who can easily be placed on the pedestal of a role model being an embodiment of success earned through sheer hard work, sincerity and dedication and who is known all over for his amiability. His brilliant legal acumen and human compassion to the legally disabled and the marginalized members of society is demonstrated in his innumerable pronouncements.

Immediately, after His Lordship took over as the Executive Chairman of NLSA, he sensitized both the Bench and the Bar with an endeavour

to reduce the pendency of cases by providing mechanism for hassle-free legal assistance in all types of cases and by his analytical skills he gave a new dimension to Alternate Dispute Redressal System. Under his chairmanship and graciousness, he has imparted free mediation training and education to a whole section of society. He enlightened and highlighted the importance of legal aid clinics being an integral part of the justice dispensation system, to provide free legal aid and justice at the door steps. Based on his vast experience as a Judge, his views had great clarity and demonstrated a great vision.

We also deeply appreciate the presence of our Senior Colleagues Justice Kanade, who accepted our request to be present at a short notice. He inspired us in performing our duties by his vast knowledge and experience. The learned Advocate General being an affable person has always rendered assistance and co-operation in all our functions. So also, Mr. Usgaonkar, the Senior Advocates and all the members of the High Court and other Bar Association have enthusiastically taken part in our activities. Our former Judges are always available to us when we seek their expertise. The resource persons Ms. Vajpayee and Ms. Mendonca, have come all the way from Mumbai to enlighten us on topics which are very dear to all of us.

We at Goa, are very fortunate to have the distinguished presence of Justice Thakur today to inaugurate this programme on Child Rights

which are the minimum entitlements and freedom that should be afforded to every citizen below the age of 18 regardless of race, national origin, colour, religion, wealth or other characteristics.

These rights encompass freedom of the children their civil rights, family environment, healthcare, welfare, education and culture activities. There is a need to intensify efforts for children welfare at all levels to implement the laws and contribute to create a world suitable for children. The father of modern education, John Amos Comenius proposed, "*all persons should be educated so we could have peace in the world,*" The predicament of being a child in an adult world is that they have no voice nor choice though they have endless lessons in compliance. We have to realise that far from being helpless, children can actually be agents of changes by proper guidance. All such aspects shall be discussed in today's programme.

I hope that at the end of this programme, all of us will be enriched and sensitized to perform the duties expected from us with more vigour and efficiency.