"Rules of Law in Ancient and Modern Rhodes"

Your Excellency, Mr President of the Hellenic Republic, 
Dear Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, 
Most esteemed guests,

It is a special honor for Rhodes, to host so many prominent personalities and scientists of the Law, especially with the presence of the nominal Head of State, the President of the Hellenic Republic, Mr. Prokopios Pavlopoulos, who has faithfully served justice in the past as a Professor at the Law School of the University of Athens.

We welcome you to Rhodes, our city, our island, an island of great cultural heritage and a dynamic presence in all areas of human activity.

The history and traditions of each place are part of its culture. Culture is a proposal to the future having the element of durability, quality and authenticity. The long history of Rhodes, ranging from prehistoric times to the very recent period of our history, is inherent in its great geopolitical and strategic position, which together with its people determined its identity, cultural progress and economic development.

The Rhodians, primarily naval people, developed nautical and commercial law known as the "Naval Code of Rhodes", for which
the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161 AD) said: "I am the Lord of the World, the Rhodian Law is Lord of the Sea".
This phrase suggests the influence of the Maritime Law of Rhodes during the Roman era. This Law was first applied to the whole of Greece, was then received by the Romans, the Byzantines, and after the fall of Byzantium it was applied in other European countries. During the Middle Ages, the Maritime Law of Rhodes was applied in the Eastern Mediterranean. Even the Supreme Court of England in the 19th century, in a decision, made explicit reference to this ancient law. This legislation of the ancient Rhodian seamen, under the protection of the State of Rhodes, was the first international maritime legislation. This law is described in Latin as "LEX RHODI DE JACTU"

Your Excellency Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen

History, as a mediator between the past and the present, has never been a neutral observer. In the course of its long history, Rhodes has received a series of successive cultural influences from all historical periods, these influences being the evidence of a significant exchange of human values and multicultural tradition.

As a confirmation to this finding, Rhodes was chosen during antiquity, by prominent personalities of spirit and politics, as the place to complete their spiritual training and especially learn of the art of rhetoric, which flourished on our island and was founded by the great orator Aishchis.
Many aspiring politicians of Rome were among the famous people who studied in Rhodes. Such was the great Cicero, Julius Caesar, Tiberius Grachos and Skepian the African, Pompeius, Brutos, the great poet Loukreios, and many others.
Rhodes Island today is one of the most important economic and cultural centers of the South Aegean Region and the entire country.
It hosts three million people, dozens of conferences and important international cultural, scientific and sports events. Rhodes is a modern, open and democratic society, lawfully ensuring social solidarity, freedom and equality, the way Pericles had emphasized in the "Thucydides Shepherd":

"By law, equality of citizens is secured for their private interests ...".

Today, the presence of so many prominent lawyers in Rhodes and the organization of this important conference, continues the tradition of Rhodes. We warmly welcome you and wish you great success in the work of this conference.

-The Mayor of Rhodes, Mr Fotis Chatzidiakos

(English translation of original speech)