

## **AALCO-ICRC Workshop on International Humanitarian Law ( 7-8 May 2014, at AALCO Headquarters, New Delhi)**

The Asian African Legal Consultative Organisation (AALCO) along with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) conducted a Joint “Workshop on International Humanitarian Law” (IHL) on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> May 2014 at the AALCO Headquarters in New Delhi.

The theme of this workshop was “Contemporary Issues Facing International Humanitarian Law” and the individual sessions focused on topics such as: (i) The use of drones and how the changing frontline aligns with the traditional paradigm of IHL; (ii) Identifying the civilian-combatant and the Notion of Direct Participation in Hostilities; and, (iii) The implementation, enforcement and compliance mechanisms of international humanitarian law. The two-day workshop welcomed nearly 85 participants, including members of several Diplomatic Missions of AALCO Member States and non-Member States, representatives from various international organizations – including UNHCR, ICRC and AALCO – legal experts from various countries, and a number of academicians and students.

At the Inaugural Session, there were four addresses made. While the Secretary-General of AALCO Prof. Dr. Rahmat Mohamad delivered the Welcome Address the Opening Remarks were delivered by Ms. Mary Werntz, the Head of Regional Delegation, ICRC, New Delhi. In this Session two other addresses were also made, one by Dr. S. P. Agarwal, Secretary-General, Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) and the other by Mr. Simon Missiri, Head of the South Asian Regional Delegation for the International Federation of the Red Cross and red Crescent Societies. In the Next Session, Professor Dr. Rahmat Mohammed gave a lecture on the “Role and Mandate of AALCO” while the topic of the “ICRC: Role, Mandate and Operations” was jointly dealt with by Mr. Benjamin Wahren, Deputy Head of ICRC and Mr. Surinder Oberoi, Senior Political Adviser, ICRC.

The first post-lunch Session, which focused on “The Use of Drones and Contemporary Armed Conflict: How the Changing Frontline aligns with the Traditional Paradigm of IHL”, saw three presentations made at the Session. They were by Mr. Lloyd Gillett, Regional Delegate to the Armed and Security Forces, ICRC, Dr. U.C. Jha, retired Wing Commander, Indian Air Force and Prof. Sikander Shah of the Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan who made a presentation through Video Conferencing.

The next session, which was on the theme: “Identifying the civilian-combatant and the Notion of Direct Participation in Hostilities”, saw presentations made by three experts. They were Charles Sabga, Regional Legal Advisor, ICRC, Mr. Palitha Fernando, Attorney General of Sri Lanka, and Prof. Susan Lamb of the Jindal Global law School.

On the second day the first session was on: “Challenges Relating to IHL and Contemporary Armed Conflict”. At this session, presentations were made by Amb. Gudmundur Eiriksson, Ambassador of Iceland to India, Prof. Dr. M. Gandhi, Executive Director, CILS, Jindal Global Law School and Mr. Dominik Bartsch, Chief of Mission, UNHCR, India. The last substantive session which focused on: “From Law to Practice: IHL Implementation, Enforcement and Compliance Mechanisms” saw remarks made by Mr. Charles Sabga, Regional Legal Adviser, ICRC. This was followed by a Vote of Thanks.