

## **AALCO Legal Experts Meeting on the Law of the Sea (24-25 February 2014)**

The Secretariat of AALCO had convened a Two-Day Legal Experts Meeting on the agenda item "Law of the Sea", on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February 2014 at AALCO Headquarters, New Delhi. The Secretariat is grateful to the Governments of Indonesia and Japan for deputing their experts to make presentations during this meeting as well as to the Xiamen University, China and University Terengganu Malaysia (UTM) for collaborating with AALCO for this event. High-level officials from various ministries of the Member States of AALCO, academics from many universities from the Asian-African region, a few officials from the United Nations and students from many Indian universities participated in this Meeting. There were five Working Sessions that focused on the following topics: (i) Regional Cooperation on Maritime Issues; (ii) Fragmentation of International Law: Law of the Sea; (iii) Piracy Legislation; (iv) Marine Biodiversity; and (v) Dispute Settlement: Afro-Asian Traditional Wisdom.

At the inaugural session, the welcome speech was given by Prof. Dr. Rahmat Mohamad, Secretary-General of AALCO. It was soon followed by the Inaugural Address by Dr. Neeru Chadha, the President of 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Session of AALCO. The next keynote address was given by Amb. Gudmundur Eiriksson, Ambassador of Iceland to India and Former Judge of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS). Next came the special address from Mr. H.P. Rajan, Former Deputy Director, Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, United Nations, and Former Member of the Legal and Technical Commission, International Seabed Authority. Finally, the inaugural session ended with the vote of thanks from Mr. Feng Qinghu, Deputy Secretary-General of AALCO.

The First Working Session, which was on "Marine Biodiversity", was Chaired by Mr. Narinder SINGH, Secretary-General of the Indian Society on International Law. The first address was on the topic of "Marine Biodiversity: protection, Conservation and Exploration", by Mr. Balakrishnan PISUPATI, Former Chairman of the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) of India. The next address was on "Access and Benefit-Sharing to Marine Biodiversity Resources", by Dr. Malathi Lakshmikumar, Director of Lakshmikumar and Sridharan, New Delhi.

The Second Working Session, which was on "Fragmentation of International Law: Law of the Sea", was chaired by Amb. Gudmundur Eiriksson, Ambassador of Iceland to India and Former Judge of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS). The session began with the address by Prof. Kening Zhang, Professor of Law at the South China Sea Institute and Director of Centre for Oceans Policy and Law at Xiamen University in China, on the topic of "The International Seabed Authority and its Recent Developments." It was followed by an address from Dr. Luther Rangreji, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Legal Studies, South Asian University, on the topic of "Interface between Law of the Sea and Environment Issues: Marine Environment." The next address was by Mr. Takeru Aoyama, the Counsel for International Legal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, which discussed "Forum Shopping and Parallelism of Treaties (Southern Bluefin Tuna Case—Australia and New Zealand v. Japan)."

The third Working Session on day two, which was on "Piracy Legislation", was chaired by Dr. Neeru Chadha. The session ticked off with an address on "Combating Piracy" by Ms. Zhen Lin,

Assistant Professor at the South China Sea Institute, Xiamen University, China. It was followed by an address on “Maritime Security Issues: Piracy” by Prof. M. Gandhi, Professor and Executive Director, Centre for International Legal Studies at the Jindal Global Law School, O.P. Jindal Global University, India.

The fourth Working Session, which was on “Regional Cooperation on Maritime Issues” was chaired by Prof. Kening Zhang, Professor of Law, Professor of Law at the South China Sea Institute and Director of Centre for Oceans Policy and Law at Xiamen University in China. The session started with the address of Dr. Mohd Hazmi Mohd Rusli/Dr. Wan Izatul Asma Wan Talaat, Associate Fellow/Associate Professor, Institute of Oceanography and Environment at Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) in Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia. They based their address on “Oil Pollution from Shipping Activities in the Straits of Malacca and its Legal Implications.” They further addressed the gathering on the topic “Oceanic Health & Sustainability through Scientific Exploration and its Legal Perspective.” The final address of the session was given by Ms. Dyah Harini/Mr. Andhinur Anugriawan, International and Cooperation Office, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of the Republic of Indonesia.

The fifth Working Session, which was on “Dispute Settlement: Afro-Asian Traditional Wisdom”, was chaired by Prof. Y.K. Tyagi, Dean, Faculty of Legal Studies at the South Asian University in New Delhi. The session started with the address of Dr. Mohd Hazmi Mohd Rusli/Prof. Dr. Rahmat Mohamad, Associate Fellow, Institute of Oceanography and Environment at Universiti Malaysia Terengganu/Secretary Genial of AALCO, on the topic “Freedom of the Seas in the Malay Archipelago: An unsung International Custom.”

At the end of these substantive sessions, there was a Concluding Session where concluding remarks were given by Prof. Dr. Rahmat Mohamad, Secretary-General of AALCO. Finally, the vote of thanks was forwarded by Mr. Feng Qinghu, the Deputy Secretary-General of AALCO.