

**ADDRESS OF THE CHIEF GUEST H.E. MR. APIRAT SUGONDHABHIROM, MINISTER  
AND DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION OF THE ROYAL THAI EMBASSY DELIVERED ON  
BEHALF OF THE HON. VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH ANNUAL SESSION OF  
AALCO AT THE SIXTY-FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF AALCO**

Prof. Dr. Kennedy Gastorn, Secretary-General, Asian-Africa Legal Consultative Organization,

Excellency Shri Dr. V.D. Sharma, Joint Secretary and Legal Adviser, Ministry of External Affairs of India,

Excellencies, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of Thailand, may I convey to you all the warmest greetings and congratulations from Madame Vilawan Mangklatanakul of the Department of Treaties and Legal Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand in Bangkok, in her capacity as the Vice-President of the Fifty-Sixth Annual Session of AALCO, on this auspicious occasion of the sixty first anniversary of the AALCO constitution day tonight.

Over sixty years have passed since the historic Bandung Conference was held in Indonesia in 1955, from which AALCO was subsequently originated as a tangible fruit thereof. The core principles of Bandung Conference, namely solidarity, friendship, and cooperation, have been the guiding principles that foster relations among us, the Asian and African countries. I recall those leaders of yesteryears, the giants who left us great and significant legacies in the world's diplomatic history and in international relations - including Thailand's own Prince Wan Waithayakorn, the Bandung Conference's Special Rapporteur. These

principles - the legacies from their wisdom and leadership, are also the principles upon which AALCO is built and developed throughout the years.

Today, AALCO stands proud as an outstanding symbol of Asian-African solidarity in cooperation on legal matters. AALCO has played a vital role in assisting its member states in the practice of law, especially in promoting codification and progressive development of international law together with the global community. As we celebrate our 61<sup>st</sup> Constitution Day together this year, this is an important milestone for the Organization, the respective individual member, and the three quarters of humanity living in Asia and Africa. I wish to take this opportunity, therefore, to extend my profound congratulations and heartfelt gratefulness to all those who have made AALCO a successful organization it is today.

Excellencies,

An Anniversary offers as much a time for celebration as it does for reflection. Looking back, it is without doubt that AALCO has achieved such a great deal in enhancing the capacity and cooperation among Member States, and in contributing and representing the Asian and African perspectives in the development of international legal discipline. Looking ahead, it is clear that AALCO can achieve more and can contribute much further. The world today is undergoing complex and profound changes. Transboundary issues such as terrorism, cyber security, environmental protection, sustainable development, maritime issues, as well as international trade have increasingly posed challenges to the international legal architecture. Nonetheless, these challenges also bring about opportunities for AALCO to enhance cooperation with other international organizations, in particular the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies, to

strengthen its institutional basis in order to ensure that AALCO would play an ever more active and influential role in finding common interests and promoting global cooperation.

Excellencies, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Having been a member State of AALCO since 1961, Thailand has attached great importance to the work of this Organization and has participated actively and continuously at its meetings. Today, we stand ready to facilitate the work of AALCO in the development of international law and in advancing the interests and perspectives of Asian and African countries in international arena. Thailand has always had a strong and abiding faith in multilateralism as the constructive means for nations to build upon existing cooperation and long-standing frameworks. This is why the streamlining of the works within the legal sphere at every level is paramount. National efforts should be complemented by regional frameworks, and in this, the role of regional organizations and forums such as ASEAN and the African Union is very important. Likewise, inter-regional arrangements should play a supportive role to multilateral frameworks. Duplication of efforts should be avoided for us to move together forward and make further headways, building on what has been made by those who come before us.

Excellencies, Dear Colleagues,

For our part, the Kingdom of Thailand looks forward to working closely with AALCO, and to contributing to the issues of contemporary concerns under its framework, in order to promote closer cooperation for the development of international law. In particular, issues of Thailand's interests include those

concerning the promotion of multilateralism and rule of law, the law of the sea, the work of the International Law Commission, issues of international trade law, as well as the legal aspects of combating violent extremism that is still sadly rampant in today's world.

It is evident that AALCO has over the years made significant impacts on variety of topics related to international law. With its unique focus on Asia and Africa, this forum enables all member states to scale up their experiences and expertise drawn from the two most populated Continents in the world, with a view to sharing this unique perspective with other members of the international community, contributing to a better world for us all on the basis of the rule of law. We in Thailand shall continue to participate in fruitful exchanges of legal ideas that will ultimately contribute to the furtherance of international legal principles norms, through an outlook that is Asian-African.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Secretary-General Gastorn and his team in the Secretariat for the success so far of AALCO. I also thank the Government of India for kindly hosting the AALCO Secretariat in New Delhi and for all its supports to our organizations. We also appreciate the chance to work together with all fellow member states of AALCO and look forward to close and continued collaborations with them under the framework of our organization.

Thank you.