STATEMENT DELIVERED BY H. E. PROF. DR. KENNEDY GASTORN, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF AALCO AT THE SECOND PART OF THE SEVENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL LAW COMMISSION, UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA, 18 JULY 2019

Mr. Pavel Šturma, the Chair of the International Law Commission (ILC), Distinguished Members of the ILC, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by thanking the Commission for its continued association with AALCO and for the yearly invitation to take part in its session. It is indeed my privilege as the Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) to represent the Organization at this Session of the ILC. This is my third statement at the ILC since I started my term at AALCO in 2016.

Last year, the Commission celebrated its seventieth anniversary. The commemorative events in New York were enriched by many side events, in which the members of the Commission and representatives of States, international organizations and academic institutions participated. AALCO also joined the celebrations by organizing a panel discussion with members of the Commission on immunity of State officials, crimes against humanity and identification of customary international law, as well as an informal discussion on the interplay between immunity and impunity at the international level and on the practical implications of the result of identification of customary international law.

The membership of AALCO fully recognizes the valuable contributions of the ILC over the past 70 years, in pursuance of its mandate, to the progressive development and codification of international law. The Organization deeply cherishes its longstanding and mutually beneficial relationship with the ILC. As you are aware, in addition to its role as a consultative body among its Member States, its statute assigned the Organization to examine subjects/topics

that are under the consideration of the ILC; to forward its views to Member States on these topics; and to make recommendations to the ILC based on the viewpoints and inputs of the Member States.

Fulfilment of this statutory mandate over the years has helped to forge closer relationship between the two organizations. AALCO has been privileged to regularly host ILC Members at its annual sessions. His Excellency Mr. Eduardo Valencia-Ospina, Chair of the International Law Commission at its 70th session, and Members of the Commission, Prof. Shinya Murase, Amb. Marja Lehto, Amb. Hussein A. Hassouna and Amb. Hong Thao Nguyen, participated in the most recent Fifty-Seventh Annual Session of AALCO held in Tokyo last year and apprised the Member States of the deliberations at its seventieth session and the current work programme of the Commission. In that Session, the Member States of AALCO called for enhanced cooperation between the two organizations.

Mr. Chair,

At the Fifty-Seventh Annual Session of AALCO held in October 2018, the agenda item "Selected Items on the Agenda of the International Law Commission" was deliberated during the Fourth General Meeting chaired by His Excellency Mr. Maneesh Gobin, Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Human Rights and Institutional Reforms, Republic of Mauritius and Vice-President of that Session. In this statement, I will reflect on inputs/opinions of AALCO Member States on the topics of in the agenda of the ILC as revealed at the Fifty-Seventh Annual Session. I will begin with the topic-"*Immunity of State Officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction.*"

1. IMMUNITY OF STATE OFFICIALS FROM FOREIGN CRIMINAL JURISDICTION

As regards the topic "*Immunity of State Officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction*", the Commission had before it the Sixth Report of the Special Rapporteur, which dealt with procedural aspects of the subject. The focus of the Report was on three aspects of jurisdiction, namely, *timing, kinds of acts affected* and *determination of immunity* encompassing the questions of "when", "what" and "who" of immunity. These three dimensions, according to the Special Rapporteur, were fundamental to map out jurisdictional

constraints on the procedural aspects of the topic, which happened to be the focus of the Special Rapporteur's efforts.

The debate on the sixth report is to continue and is expected to be completed at the seventy-first session of the Commission.

Comments of the Member States

Japan highlighted that the work on the topic does not make it clear as how the focus on procedural aspects would be beneficial in reducing the risk of abuse of the exceptions. A deeper analysis of State practice is imperative in this regard. It was hoped that all the draft articles would be adopted by consensus.

India preferred the examination of immunity perspective as a concept, without linking the same to the questions of immunity in reference to the International Criminal Court.

Indonesia mentioned that balance between fight against impunity and sovereign equality was essential given the possibility of prosecuting officials in foreign courts. It was highlighted that in their country, limitations and exceptions existed only in civil proceedings.

The ***People's Republic of China*** stated that the forum State should consider the immunity issue as early stage of instituting legal proceedings to not affect the foreign official's exercise of functions. In addition, it was *viewed* that the State organ to domestically determine the question of immunity falls outside the scope of international law and no unified international approach could be adopted in this manner. Immunity is fundamental not only for the effective functioning of officials but is integral to the basic international law principle of *par in parem non habet imperium* or the sovereign equality of States.

2. PEREMPTORY NORMS OF GENERAL INTERNATIONAL LAW (*JUS COGENS*)

At its 70th session, the Commission had before it the third report on the topic "Peremptory Norms of General International law (*jus cogens*)" which addressed the consequences of jus cogens norms on other norms of international law. Upon deliberation, the Commission

decided to refer draft conclusions 10 to 21, contained in the report of the Special Rapporteur, to the Drafting Committee.

Comments of Member States

With respect to the topic- "Peremptory Norms of General International Law", many delegations appreciated the work of the Special Rapporteur, Prof. Dire Tladi and welcomed his third report on the topic. They all acknowledged the importance of the topic and expressed optimism and concern that the ILC deal with this topic on the basis of extensive analytical debate and prudence in the light of its sensitivity.

Commenting on draft conclusion 10 the ***Islamic Republic of Iran*** expressed that it agreed with the some of the concerns voiced by the Member of the Commission that the language "does not create rights and obligations" be clarified or if it be replaced with suitable language that implies the redundancy of the treaty.

Further draft conclusion 11 was supported by the ***Islamic Republic of Iran*** agreed with the principle of severability as applied to those treaties which had subsidiary provisions in conflict with *jus cogens* norms.

A regards, draft conclusion 13 the ***Islamic Republic of Iran*** commented that the very existence of a rule of jus cogens in a treaty does not render reservation to it invalid including the compromissory clause as has been reaffirmed by the ICJ in numerous cases including the Jurisdictional Immunities of States (Germany v. Italy).

In relation to draft conclusion 14 it has been observed by ***India*** that the provision may also be analysed in the light of concerns of some members in negotiating Article 66 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, 1969 wherein it had provided for all means of dispute settlement, not restricting it to the ICJ alone. The ***Islamic Republic of Iran*** supported the provision but observed that in light of the article 66 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, 1969 the provision should be restricted to only those disputes that concern the identification of a norm of *jus cogens* under Article 53 and 64 of the Vienna Convention.

As regards draft conclusion 15, the ***Islamic Republic of Iran*** commented that the rule flowed from a natural reading of article 53 and 54 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, 1969 and acknowledged that a rule of customary international law becomes void once it is in

conflict with an emergent rule of jus cogens. As regards, paragraph 3 of the draft conclusion it was observed that a distinction must be made between an objection to an existing norm of jus cogens and objections raised during the formation of norms of jus cogens.

Further, with respect to draft conclusion 17 the ***Islamic Republic of Iran*** was of the view that while the importance of Security Council resolutions and the necessity of an express reference thereto was undisputed, resolutions and decisions of other international organization should be taken account of by exercising due care. It was suggested that the word "including" in either paragraph be replaced with "in particular" and the word "resolutions" be accompanied by "decisions, directives and other instruments as appropriate." Further it was also emphasized that actions performed by international organizations in conflict with norms of jus cogens must be given particular attention either in draft conclusion 16 or 17, to which the Commission's previous work on the responsibility of international organizations could serve as guidance. The delegation also expressed its firm belief in this regard that international organizations are bound to respect obligations arising out of peremptory rules of general international law and as such must bear all the legal consequences resulting from their breach, in particular the obligation of non-recognition.

The ***Socialist Republic of Viet Nam*** was of the view that in addition to binding resolutions intergovernmental organizations may also produce binding decisions, guidelines or make take other binding actions and that it would helpful if the Special Rapporteur in his future work clarify whether draft conclusion 13 covered all binding acts by international organizations.

With respect to draft conclusion 21, the ***Islamic Republic of Iran*** concurred with the formulation of the draft conclusions in as much as that it maintained a distinction between the duty of non-recognition and the duty to cooperate and expressed agreement that the Commission should engage in progressive development in this areas which is supported both by doctrine, jurisprudence and State practice and the current status of the law in that regard. It was also stated that the delegation agreed that a paragraph should be added to the effect that non-recognition should not disadvantage the affected population and that relevant acts such as registration of births, deaths and marriages ought to be recognized in line with the ICJ's dictum in the Namibia Advisory Opinion.

As regards, draft conclusions 22 and 23 the ***Islamic Republic of Iran*** expressed that these draft conclusions address primary rules of international criminal law regarding criminal prosecution under national jurisdiction and effect of specific subsets of rules of jus cogens, namely those prohibiting international crimes and as such deviated from the scope of the topic. Additionally it was also added that state practice did not support draft conclusion 22 and 23. It was also noted in relation to paragraph 2 of the draft conclusion 22 that most states lacked legislation as to jurisdiction over offences prohibited by a norm of jus cogens such as apartheid, crimes against humanity and aggression and this demonstrated lack of *opinio juris* in this regard.

Regarding draft conclusions 23 the ***Islamic Republic of Iran*** noted that the practice cited by the Special Rapporteur in his third report did not support the draft conclusion proposed. It was stated that draft conclusions 23 seemed to cross the limits of its corresponding provision drafted in the other work of the Commission, namely Immunity from Foreign Criminal Jurisdiction and Crimes against Humanity making it difficult to achieve condenses on these two matters at hand. As such the delegation believed that it was advisable to leave these draft conclusions in abeyance until the completion of the aforementioned works of the Commission.

The ***People's Republic of China*** was of the view that the definition of "an offence prohibited by a peremptory norm of general international law (jus cogens)" was still vague and ambiguous, and did not support the incorporation of any offence prohibited by *jus cogens* into the scope of the exception to immunity *rationae materiae* of state official from foreign criminal jurisdiction.

Member States of AALCO also, delivered general comments on the work of the Commission on the topic. The ***People's Republic of China*** was of the view that extreme prudence must be exercised by the Commission in its approach towards the topic and that its work must be based on the relevant provisions of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, 1969 as well as sufficient state practice focussing on the codification of *lex lata* rather than formulate new law. In relation to the current procedure of deliberation of this topic adopted by the Commission to submit the draft conclusions along with commentaries to the UN General Assembly only after the first reading of the complete set of draft conclusions and

commentaries, it was observed that the approach entailed great difficulties for States to closely track the progress of the work of the Commission and comment thereupon.

The ***Republic of Korea*** was of the view that the work of the Special Rapporteur on the topic and would contribute to better understanding of the current state of the law and to the progressive development of law in this area. Given the exceptional characteristics of peremptory norms of international, it was stated that there would be numerous difficult issues to be dealt and that relevant state practice and judicial precedents should analysed more rigorously and thoroughly than for any other categories of agenda.

While taking note of the third report of the Special Rapporteur on the topic and its 13 draft conclusions it was observed by the ***Socialist Republic of Viet Nam*** that the topic had been considered by the Commission on a number of occasions without reaching a final outcome but however the fundamental nature of jus cogens in general international law merited further discussion in the Commission.

3. SUCCESSION OF STATES IN RESPECT OF STATE RESPONSIBILITY

At its 70th session the Commission had before it the second report on the topic Succession of States in respect of State Responsibility which addressed the certain general rules relating to the succession and the rule of non-succession as well as the transfer of responsibility from the predecessor state to the successor state or states. The report raised a number of controversial issues on which the Commission was invited to comment, and also reviewed the deliberations in the Commission at its sixty-eight and sixty ninth sessions as well as in the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly in 2016 and 2017. The referred draft articles 5 to 11, contained in the report of the Special Rapporteur, to the Drafting Committee. The Commission subsequently took note of the interim report of the Chairperson of the Drafting Committee on draft articles 5 and 6 provisionally adopted by the Committee which was submitted to the Commission for information.

Comments of Member States

The ***Socialist Republic of Viet Nam*** recorded its reservations regarding paragraph 154 and 155 in the second report by the Special Rapporteur, in relation to his interpretation of the

1995 US Viet Nam Claims Settlement Agreement. Further, with respect to draft article 6 paragraph 1 it was stated by the delegation that it was their belief that the rule of non-succession of state responsibility still applied and therefore suggested that the wording this paragraph should be revised as follows: "Obligations arising from an internationally wrongful act committed before the date of succession of States shall be attributed to the predecessor of States unless the successor State accepts to be bound by such obligation."

4. SUBSEQUENT AGREEMENTS AND SUBSEQUENT PRACTICE IN RELATION TO THE INTERPRETATION OF TREATIES

At its seventieth session (2018), the Commission considered the fifth report of the Special Rapporteur Mr. Georg Nolte for the topic "Subsequent agreements and subsequent practice in relation to the interpretation of treaties".[1] The Commission thereafter adopted the entire set of 13 draft conclusions on the topic on second reading. The Commission also adopted the commentaries to the aforementioned draft conclusions.

As regards this topic, *several* delegations commended the work of the Special Rapporteur. That the work of the Commission on this topic would certainly be useful for States and others in need of guidance as to the import of Articles 31 and 32 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties 1969 was accentuated by the delegation of ***India*** during the Organization's Fifty-Seventh Annual Session held in Tokyo in 2018. It was noted by the delegation of ***People's Republic of China*** that the subsequent practice as the authentic means of treaty interpretation, stipulated in paragraph 3, Article 31 of the Vienna Convention 1969, must be the one that reflects the parties' true and common understanding in the treaty interpretation. It was further noted by the delegation that other subsequent practice may only play some role as the supplementary means of treaty interpretation in Article 32 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties.

The ***Socialist Republic of Vietnam***, which had previously voiced concern regarding the treatment of "silence" on part of the States with regard to the pronouncement of expert treaty bodies in the earlier draft of conclusion 13, expressed the view that the Special Rapporteur has rightly pointed out, in the final draft, that silence by a party should not be presumed to

[1] A/CN.4/715.

constitute subsequent practice under Article 31, paragraph 3(b), accepting an interpretation of a treaty as expressed in a pronouncement of an expert treaty body.

AALCO joins the Commission in the expressing its deep appreciation and warm congratulations to the Special Rapporteur Mr. Georg Nolte, for his outstanding contribution in this domain.

5. PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN RELATION TO ARMED CONFLICTS

At the seventieth session, the Commission considered the first report of Special Rapporteur Ms. Marja Lehto on the topic "Protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts".[2] During the Fifty-Seventh Annual Session of AALCO held in Tokyo in 2018, the delegation of the ***Socialist Republic of Viet Nam*** expressed full support for the continuation of this topic in the Commission's agenda thereby defining responsibility of states in dealing with war remnants, including damages to the environment. The endeavour to integrate the law on occupation, international humanitarian law and international environmental law in this project was lauded. The delegation registered a preference for the use of "occupying power" instead of "occupying State" in the draft Principles, and sought further elaboration on different forms of occupation as well as ensuing obligation to protect environment from each form of occupation. Additionally, it was suggested that the Commission and the Special Rapporteur explore the obligation to prevent, mitigate and control environmental damages applicable to occupying powers.

6. PROVISIONAL APPLICATION OF TREATIES

With respect to the topic "Provisional Application of Treaties", in their deliberations on this topic at the Fifty-Seventh Session, the Member States of AALCO were requested to focus, among others, on the 2 new draft guidelines—draft guideline 7[5 bis], which talks about the formulation of reservations, by a State or an international organization, purporting to exclude or modify the legal effect produced by the provisional application of certain provisions of a treaty, and draft guideline 9 that in turn addresses the termination and suspension of provisional application — that were adopted.

[2] A/CN.4/720 and Corr.1.

Comments of AALCO Member States

Many delegations commended the work of Special Rapporteur, Mr. Juan Manuel Gómez Robledo, and the Draft Guidelines adopted on the topic. All delegations acknowledged the importance of the topic as representing a compelling issue being faced by the international community as a whole.

With reference to guidelines 7, 10 and 11, ***Islamic Republic of Iran*** noted with appreciation the distinction made between the treatment of States and International Organizations to give effect to the classic distinction made between the two in light of the law of treaties as developed under the Vienna Conventions of 1969 and 1986 - and that the other draft guidelines such as draft guideline 3 that refers to treaty between "States or International Organizations", must have specific formula for States and International Organizations.

Further, with regard to paragraph (3) of the commentary to draft guideline 7 on "reservations", the delegation noted that reference has been made to interpretative declarations in conjunction with agreeing to provisional application. It stated that while the Special Rapporteur distinguishes these from reservations, the explanation given is far from convincing, and therefore, question arises as to the applicability of interpretative declarations having the effect of reservations as approached in the work of the ILC, as elaborated by Prof. Alain Pellet. More clarification in that regard would be helpful, it noted.

With regards to draft guideline 9, which is on "Termination and suspension of provisional application", it noted that no reference was made, however, to suspension of provisional application in the content of the guideline.

The ***Socialist Republic of Viet Nam*** firstly congratulated the Special Rapporteur and the Commission on the completion of the full draft Guidelines for the first reading of the General Assembly. However, with regard to Guidelines 9 (c) which provides that the Guidelines would not prejudice Part V of the Vienna Convention 1969 on the Law of Treaties, it noted that in fact, Part V of the Vienna Convention only deals with treaties already in force while the Guidelines govern treaties, which are provisionally applied. This leads to an uncharted

problem with legal consequences for serious violations of provisionally applied treaties. Therefore, they were of the view that the Special Rapporteur and the Commission should have a careful evaluation of such violation in order to ascertain the mutatis mutandis application of the Vienna Convention 1969.

6. PROTECTION OF ATMOSPHERE

With respect to the topic "Protection of Atmosphere", in their deliberations on this topic at the Fifty-Seventh Session, the Member States of AALCO were requested to focus, among others, on draft guideline 2 (to which certain changes were made); and draft guidelines 10, 11 and 12 (newly adopted), relating to implementation, compliance and dispute settlement, respectively. The Special Rapporteur considered that these issues are the intrinsic and logical consequences of the obligations and recommendations that have been provisionally adopted so far by the Commission.

Comments of AALCO Member States

Many delegations commended the Special Rapporteur Dr. Shinya Murase, for his work in the topic, as well as the Commission on the successful completion of the first reading of the topic and the adoption of the Preamble and 12 Draft Guidelines.

Japan while upholding and respecting the 2013 Understanding that was established as a condition and guiding principle for its consideration of the topic, nevertheless notes whether or not it may be necessary to repeat the content of the 2013 Understanding in the Guideline. Therefore, Japan considers it appropriate for the ILC to discuss in the second reading all possible formulas including the deletion of the 13th Preambular Paragraph as well as in Paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Draft Guideline 2 on "Scope of the guidelines". Stating that protection of the atmospheric environment is a serious issue, particularly - for Asia and Africa, it expressed hopes that AALCO Member States will contribute to the discussion at the Sixth Committee.

India, while appreciating the suggestion of cooperative mechanisms, however, noted that the guidelines, when finally adopted, would be available as a material to be followed and used to

the suitability of conditions and willingness of States, and not to be implemented, as such, as the treaty provisions.

India further expressed the understanding that that the obligations under international law referred to in the guidelines would mean for a State those agreed in an international instrument and to which that State is a party. Meaning thereby, the guidelines are not creating the binding international law themselves. Further, similarly, the disputes should also refer to those that may arise under the international instrument to which the States concerned are a party. In fact, such international instrument itself would have provisions on procedure for the settlement of disputes, they stated. Therefore, summarizing their views on the guidelines, they stated that the guidelines should work as a reminder to States about their obligations towards the protection of the atmosphere and to carry them out in accordance with the procedure envisaged in the relevant international instrument.

About the Preamble and the 12 draft guidelines adopted by the Commission, together with the commentaries thereto, the ***People's Republic of China*** was of the view that in the field of protecting the atmosphere, clear and specific rules in international law have not yet been formed. In particular, no definite legal obligation for a state to protect atmosphere has emerged yet. Relevant State Practice and rules are still developing. Simply copying some of the rules in specific areas of international environmental law, especially those rules which have specific application scope, to the field of protection of the atmosphere, such as the Draft Guideline 4 on environmental impact assessment and Paragraph 3 of Draft Guideline 9 on some special classifications of countries, it stated, is improper in that these rules remain short of the national practice supports.

Republic of Korea stated that the topic "Protection of Atmosphere" is especially important and meaningful in light of increasing concerns about transboundary air pollution including fine dust problems. They expressed the understanding that as stipulated in the preambular part, the draft guidelines are not to interfere with relevant political negotiations on other environmental issues and not to seek to fill gaps in existing treaty regimes. Therefore, it stated, in discussing this issue, it believes it is important to focus on how to facilitate and promote future-oriented cooperation among interested States, and that the ILC is taking appropriate approaches in this respect.

The ***Socialist Republic of Viet Nam*** stated that with respect to the latest report of the Special Rapporteur, it supported his approach on the significant role of scientific evidence in adjudicating environmental disputes in order to safeguard a fair proceedings and interests of disputing parties. It further recognized that in protection of the atmosphere, the use of scientific evidence is indispensable. Thus, instead of passively reacting to evidence submitted by disputing parties, international tribunals and courts should actively seek assistance from scientists and experts when dealing with highly technical disputes, such as environmental disputes, it finally noted.

7. IDENTIFICATION OF CUSTOMARY INTERNATIONAL LAW

Lastly, as regards the topic "identification of customary international law", the Commission had before it the fifth report of the Special Rapporteur, which addressed the comments and observations made by States on the draft conclusions and commentaries adopted on first reading, as well as ways and means for making the evidence of customary international law more readily available. The Commission adopted, on second reading, a set of 16 draft conclusions, together with commentaries thereto, on identification of customary international law.

Comments of Member States

People's Republic of China stated that a rigorous and systematic approach shall be applied and the widespread State Practice must be examined comprehensively and thoroughly in the identification of customary international law (CIL) as CIL is an important source of international law. It emphasized that selective identification and lowering the threshold of identification in the particular interest of any country in this regard is unacceptable.

The ***Socialist Republic of Viet Nam*** supported revisions and commends efforts of the Special Rapporteur and the Commission to work on this important and difficult as well as high-theoretical topic of general international law. In order to improve the ILC report on the topic, the delegation of Viet Nam provided some comments as follows:

With regard to draft Conclusion 4 on Requirement of Practice, in its commentary, the Commission mentioned that actions to be taken as state practice in formulating customary

international law must be actions that such state has endorsed or reacted to. This is, indeed, a correct approach as states should have acknowledged and reacted to actions that may be directly or indirectly legally binding on them. Therefore Viet Nam believes the Special Rapporteur should reflect this approach by adding "subject to the extent that States have endorsed or reacted to them" at the end of paragraph 3 of draft Conclusion 4.

With regard to draft Conclusion 8 "The Practice must be general" and Conclusion 15 "Persistent Objector", Viet Nam pointed out that while draft Conclusion 8 mentioned that no particular duration is required, even a short duration may suffice, such formulation may cause difficulty with persistent objector when the specific timing for a customary international rule to arise is disputable. Therefore, Viet Nam requested further elaboration by the Special Rapporteur on this matter.

India congratulated the Commission and Mr. Michael Wood, the Special Rapporteur for the topic and expressed its hope that, in the absence of authentic guidance or methods by which the evidence of the existence or the process of formation of a customary international law principle could be appreciated and identified, the Conclusions adopted by the Commission would be of relevance to help fill this gap.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As I conclude my presentation, allow me to make a personal view on the geographical representations of the Rapporteurs of the ILC topics in the light of the composition of the commission. Since 1949 to date (2019), there has been a few number of rapporteurs from Asia and Africa. This trend has to be revisited. So far only 7 rapporteurs came from Africa; 5 from Asia Pacific; 9 Eastern Europe; 10 from Latin America & Caribbean and 32 from Western Europe and others.

Let me take this opportunity to once again thank the Commission and the United Nations for their continued cooperation with AALCO. AALCO, as always, has been an important advocate of the work of the Commission and would continue to follow its work aimed at the progressive development of international law. It would be earnest endeavour to further strengthen our relationship in the years to come. I also extend my profound gratitude to all

the Members of the Commission, past and present, particularly from the Asian and African regions, for giving me an opportunity to share the views of our Member States with you and for supporting and encouraging the work of AALCO.

Further, AALCO Secretariat would like to acknowledge and appreciate the work of Mr. Marcelo Vázquez-Bermúdez in his first report on the topic **"*general principles of law*"**, which was included in ILC's programme of work in 2018. Similarly, the Organization looks forward to deliberating on the work of the Commission on the latest inclusion— ***"Sea level rise in relation to international law"***, in its upcoming sessions. I shall be presenting the views and comments of AALCO Member States on these topics, if any, to the Commission during my next visit.

Let me convey to you that the Fifty Seventh Annual Session of AALCO held in Tokyo in 2018 has mandated the Organization to recommend new topics for the consideration of the Commission for their inclusion in its long-term programme of work.

Allow me to also extend my invitation to all members of the Commission to the upcoming Annual Session of the Organization. The venue and the dates of the session are yet to be finalized. The Organization shall promptly communicate this information when they are decided.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to assure you that the Organization will continue to cooperate with the Commission bearing in mind the mandate entrusted on it by its Member States.

Thank you very much.