

**SPEECH BY HON. CELINA OMPESHI KOMBANI (MP), MINISTER FOR
CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL AFFAIRS OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE 49TH ANNUAL SESSION OF THE ASIAN-AFRICAN
LEGAL CONSULTATIVE ORGANISATION (AALCO) AT THE 309TH LIAISON OFFICERS
MEETING, 30TH MARCH,
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Your Excellency Prof. Dr. Rahmat Mohamad, Secretary General, AALCO,

**Your Excellency John Kijazi, High Commissioner of the United Republic of Tanzania
to India,**

Liaison Officers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning to you all !

First of all may I take this opportunity to express our heartfelt appreciation to you Prof. Dr. Rahmat Mohamad and the Secretariat for the warm welcome extended to me and my delegation since our arrival here in New Delhi. In the same vein, allow me to convey to you greetings from His Excellency Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, the President of the United Republic of Tanzania. a good friend and supporter of AALCO.

Yesterday I had a very constructive meeting with the Secretary General and his two Deputy Secretaries General' and we had the opportunity to discuss a number of issues regarding the current and future work programme of AALCO and how to further enhance its noble activities.

May I also take this opportunity to express my deep solidarity with the Government and people of Japan who have been ravaged by an earthquake and tsunami added with nuclear radiation. We hope and pray that they will recover from this catastrophe with all their courage as they have done in the past.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Kindly allow me to, once again, thank you for accepting our invitation to host the 49th Annual Session of the AALCO in Dar es Salaam. It is my sincere hope that the Session was a success. The Government and people of the United Republic of Tanzania reckon that opportunity of hosting the august Session of the AALCO a singular honour and privilege.

Tanzania and her people will be ready to, once again, host another Annual Session in the future depending on the availability of resources.

Ladies and gentlemen,

You will agree with me that in the five decades of its existence, the AALCO has done a commendable job in developing international law. The Organisation has identified itself as a vital machinery in nurturing inter-regional cooperation in international law and since its inception in 1956, the AALCO has continued to be a symbol of unity, brotherhood and cooperation as advocated by the Bandung Conference.

The objectives of the Bandung Conference of fighting all kinds of colonialism have been partly achieved. We all agree that the political independence in our regions has been fully attained. However, Africa and Asia are still victims of neo colonialism. In other words, the total independence as far as the economies of our regions is concerned is still far away to achieve. You may recall that during the recent global economic crisis many countries from our regions were much affected by what happened in western countries especially when the latter cut down aids and grants to the former.

You will agree with me that our regions are still the victim of poverty and conflicts. These maladies are, to large extent, the impact of economic dependence on the developed countries. Recognising this state of affair, we need to address these challenges with renewed dedication and commitment.

In this endeavour, the AALCO should lead the fight against neo colonialism by ensuring that Africa and Asia are on equal footing with other continents when it comes to matters of

economic dimension. This can only be achieved if we member states will continue to support the Organisation by involving it in all matters pertaining to the economic interests of our countries. The Organization should carry on tirelessly its role of providing advice to member states in all international matters of legal nature.

The true economic liberation of Asia and Africa will not be achieved unless we continue to unify our prowess. The Organization should be used as a forum of forming a common understanding of matters of international law affecting us. By so doing, we will continue to have a common voice in all international fora and our opinion will be much respected. Contrary to that, the international community and developed countries will put in place Conventions and Agreements which in one way or another undermine economic interests of our two regions.

Ladies and gentlemen,

One of the critical challenges facing our two continents is the scourge of conflicts. You may wish to note that out of forty seven member states of the AALCO, ten are either in conflicts or were recently in conflicts. These countries constitute almost 21 percent of the member states. That being the case, it is imperative for the Organization to take measures of finding the reasons behind these conflicts and propose methods for ending these conflicts. Without so doing, the economic development of our regions and to be specifically, our Organisation will be retarded by these unnecessary conflicts.

Ladies and gentlemen,

One of the deliberations of the 49th Annual Session was to have a Meeting of Legal Experts to discuss matters relating to the International Criminal Court. I am informed by the Secretary General that the meeting is scheduled to take place in Putrajaya, Malaysia from 9th to 10th of May, 2011. I appeal to all member states to participate in that august meeting taking into consideration the fact that it is important for member states to understand the implications of the Rome Statutes and in particular domesticating it at the national level.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Apart from having a forum for cooperation in all legal matters of common concern, AALCO should be a starting point towards establishment of effective partnership between our governments, civil societies and business societies. What is important in this era of globalisation is to have strong ties among ourselves.

In this fast changing world of competition, we must vigorously engage ourselves in exploring diversified ways of cooperation, stand together and speak in one voice so as to improve our status in the international fora. It is through cooperation, we can safeguard our economic and political interest in this complex world of globalisation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Establishment of the AALCO Eminent Persons Group is an important initiative of the Secretary General that was approved during the last Session in Dar es Salaam. I am aware that the Preliminary Meeting of this group was scheduled to take place from 7th to 8th of April, 2011 but due to the tragedy in Japan the meeting has been postponed. Prior to the postponement, about five member states had confirmed to participate in the meeting.

It is my sincere hope that the Group will be able to meet in the near future and come up with suggestions that would help the Secretary General to further strengthen the AALCO organizationally, administratively and financially.

As you might be aware, the United Republic of Tanzania has received request from the Secretariat to host the workshop on matters relating to Treaties around September this year. Kindly, be informed that we are working on that request and our position will be communicated to the Secretariat before the end of next month.

Ladies and gentlemen,

During the last Session in Dar es Salaam, it was pointed out that our good Organization is facing acute financial problems. That being the position, may I take this opportunity to urge member states to fulfil their financial obligations in time so that the running of the Organization should be smooth for the benefit of member states. The AALCO has throughout done a commendable and outstanding job in shaping international law and our

inter-regional cooperation, now it is our turn as member states to make it continue to serve our common interest by fulfilling our financial obligations.

In concluding, I would like to urge the Secretariat to continue strengthening research activities by establishing more research centres. By so doing, the AALCO will continue to play a crucial role in developing various topics of international law hence to make this world a better place for us and our children to live.

With these remarks, may I wish you fruitful deliberations.

Thank you.