

(i) **Statement by Dr. P.S.Rao, President of the 40th Session**

Hon'ble Ministers, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates and Observers,

The AALCC has now been working for more than forty five years. It has established its own traditions and has a lot of promises to fulfil for the future. The best way that this Organisation can continue to function and will continue to flourish is to work by consensus. There had never been a situation where voting was recorded and voting will never take place because every Member has equal right and unless there is agreement we will not move forward in this Committee. Second, we maintain this decorum, decency and dignity of this particular Consultative Committee by not bringing in here bilateral matters of political importance and division, matters on which we as Members have serious disagreements, if any, so far fortunately we do not have and I hope we will not have. Such matters are also avoided here because there are other forums where we resolve these matters. There are enough political forums in the world where we all belong to, and we bear our bones without any agitation, but this is one place we will not bear our bones and should not bear our bones.

This Organization has been created for completely a different purpose and that purpose is to continue to collaborate together as Asian-African States in the common interest, in promotion of common areas, in developing legal co-operation, in ensuring that each one of our countries is given a type of assistance and the encouragement in the development of choosing international law perspectives, international law positions, which is a highly technical and highly difficult area. It is an instrument that still is illusive to most of the developing countries, an instrument which is so well employed by the most developed countries to the best advantage. This is an institution which has been created right from the day one, to fill up a much felt gap and need among the developing countries, among the Asian-African countries. If we ignore this purpose, if we simply bring our habits of replaying our political squabbles elsewhere into this Committee, not only you will not be serving the purpose of this Committee, you will not be serving the purpose of the very subject you will agitate, because there are some of them which require a historical persistence and particular politically felt needs have to be addressed. We are not the masters for that and the legal advisers and the legal people and the legal Committee is not meant for that. I say this not because of any particular agenda item of today. I say this because this is one of my last presence here after forty years of serving my own country and the international community in general. In my last year of presentation as an official, I want to remind you in any case that if you do not carry this tradition forward and I wish you will and I am sure you will, because there is still a lot of distance to be travelled in the field of strengthening legal international law co-operation among the Asian-African States and nurture it, develop it as an effective instrument to reflect our needs and aspirations in the international forums. This is a very very delicate task. I just want to remind you at least from my side as the President of AALCC that this Committee be strengthened in that direction and continue to be strengthened, avoid political issues and take them somewhere else. They are there, if there are no forums, of course we can always discuss them here, no problem, but fortunately we have other forums and we don't need to bring and replay those records here. There is a lot more to do here and let us continue that co-operation.

International law is a very important technical area and let us build it up together as Asian-African States. We have a proud record and I am sure we will have a much prouder record in future and I wish you all the best and I must congratulate you for the excellent co-operation, for the very active participation. I think a very involved and committed and concerned discussions took place on every aspect and each one of you have matured in your own way and we are very proud to see so many young brothers and sisters who are today in a position to ably take up our cause as Asian-African States and in international forums and continue to provide, exchange and experience guidance to each other through this forum.

Let me also say that the Committee has now a permanent headquarters, a Secretary General who is very committed and Deputy Secretaries General and other staff who are sitting here throughout this session, helping us and watching with hundred eyes and hundred ears to ensure the right things happen. For all of us and that did happen at the end of the day and the number of officials who are working in the Secretariat is very few, but nevertheless the responsibility is very high and the excellent rendition of the conference services is all for us to see. They must be congratulated and continue to be given our appreciation and there are many many things to achieve in terms of infrastructure, in terms of training programmes, in terms of fellowships, in terms of lecture series. We have to initiate in terms of special subjects which we are required to do, which are professional in nature and which will guide us in our own policy making at home and for that we need more funds, more commitment, more information gathering and information sharing. I hope all that will come and with these words and other words of hope, I also wish to thank at this time for helping us for successfully concluding this Conference, the interpreters who have taken an enormously difficult task of putting together statements that are being made very rapidly to be translated properly so that everyone of us could follow in one of our languages. I must also thank all the other officers of this Conference including the audio-visual equipment people who handled the services, the sound management and the hotel management who has taken all the care to ensure proper security. I must also thank the Observers, the distinguished Delegates who have travelled from far off distances at short notices to this session and made this such a valuable experience for all of us. I sincerely thank them.

I must also thank particularly the Government of Indonesia for having invited the Session to start with, for having worked very hard to make this a success, for also helping the Secretariat with a lot the ground work for the Session and be with us to ensure that the Conference is a grand success. We owe to them all our gratitude for their understanding and for their help and for their very meritorious encouragement for this process.

I do not know if I am missing anything else by way of rendering thanks but let me tell you that each one of you is a sentinel and each one of you is a guardian of this AALCO spirit. That spirit is, as I told you, remember always, these are my last words, to promote co-operation, strengthen international law as an instrument in our respective countries and in this organization, ensure that technical professional expertise be shared and united for the common benefit of Asian African States. Don't let this forum be a place for a fighting match between any two delegations. Go somewhere else for that and be united here and you will be heard. I thank you and I wish you all the best in the years ahead and at the next session I hope you will have a grander and greater realisation of your goals as Asian-African States in the Legal Consultative Organization and I thank Nigeria for inviting us and I wish them all success. On towards Abuja.

Thank you.