

Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization



Verbatim Record of Discussions

Sixty-Third Annual Session

8-12 September 2025

Kampala, the Republic of Uganda

**AALCO Secretariat
29-C, Rizal Marg
Diplomatic Enclave, Chanakyapuri
New Delhi – 110021
INDIA**

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PREFACE

At a time when the international legal order is undergoing profound transformation and facing complex and interlinked challenges, AALCO continues to stand as a cornerstone of Afro-Asian solidarity and legal cooperation. Since its establishment in 1956 in the spirit of Bandung, the Organization has served as a collective legal voice of Asia and Africa - providing a principled forum through which Member States articulate their perspectives, consolidate common positions, and contribute constructively to the progressive development and codification of international law. Through its consultative functions, normative engagement, and expanding capacity-building and technical assistance programmes, AALCO today remains a vital bridge between the historical aspirations of the Afro-Asian movement and the contemporary demands of a rapidly evolving international legal landscape.

It is with the deepest sense of honour, humility, and institutional responsibility that I have the privilege to present to the esteemed Member States of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) the Verbatim Record of the Sixty-Third Annual Session, solemnly convened from 8 to 12 September 2025 in the historic city of Kampala, Republic of Uganda. As AALCO's foremost deliberative forum, the Kampala Session once again brought together the collective wisdom, diverse legal traditions, and shared aspirations of the Afro-Asian community, reaffirming the Organization's enduring relevance as a trusted platform for principled dialogue, cooperative law-making, and consensus-building, and underscoring its distinctive role in shaping international law from the perspectives of Asia and Africa. Notably, the 2025 Session marked a particularly meaningful milestone, as it was convened in Uganda for only the second time in AALCO's history, following the first Session hosted in Kampala in 1993, more than three decades ago, thus symbolising both continuity and renewal in AALCO's enduring partnership with the African continent and its Member States.

The 2025 Session witnessed wide and active participation by Member States and Observers alike. Delegations engaged substantively across AALCO's full agenda, contributing thoughtful interventions on contemporary legal challenges and pressing questions of global governance. Significantly, the Session adopted two new topics for inclusion in AALCO's Work Programme, thereby expanding the Organization's standing agenda to twenty-two topics of international law. The newly adopted topics - *Prohibition of Aggression and Use of Force in International Law* and *Violations of International Law by the Rapid Support Forces in Sudan* - reflect the collective resolve of Member States to address emerging challenges to peace, security, and the international legal order. The 2025 Session was further distinguished by the admission of the Republic of Djibouti as a new Member State of AALCO, bringing the Organization's membership to forty-nine States. This milestone not only reflects the growing confidence of States in AALCO's mandate and relevance, but also strengthens the collective voice of the Afro-Asian community within the international legal order. I extend my sincere appreciation to all Member States for their constructive engagement and steadfast support to the Secretariat. I also express my profound gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Uganda for hosting the Session with exceptional warmth, generosity, and exemplary hospitality.

This Verbatim Record has been prepared on the basis of the official written submissions provided for interpretation and has been meticulously cross-verified with the audio-visual recordings of the meetings. As one of the most authoritative contemporary compilations of

Asian-African State practice, it constitutes a valuable contribution to the development, understanding, and documentation of international law from the Global South.

On a personal note, I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to all Member States for the confidence reposed in me through my re-appointment as Secretary-General. Your trust is both an honour and a responsibility that I carry with humility and renewed commitment. It is my privilege to lead AALCO into a new chapter of institutional strengthening under our strategic vision for 2026-2029, entitled “*AALCO@70: Advancing Asia-Africa Legal Cooperation toward a Credible, Inclusive, and Forward-Looking Organization.*” Rooted in the enduring Bandung Spirit, this vision seeks to elevate AALCO’s visibility, safeguard its neutrality, deepen Member State participation, deliver practical legal tools, embrace digital transformation, invest in future generations, and build bridges across our rich and diverse legal traditions.

I take this opportunity to record my sincere appreciation to the Deputy Secretaries-General, Mr. Jun Yamada, Mr. Yong Zhu, and Dr. Ali Hasankhani, for their steadfast support in ensuring the successful organization of the Session and the preparation of this Record. I also extend my deep appreciation to Dr. Shikhar Ranjan, Director; Mr. Abraham Joseph, Mr. Shujoy Mazumdar, Dr. Sumi Pant, Ms. Nuzhat Nasreen Islam, Legal Officers; Mr. Nihal Chand, Administrative Officer; Ms. Geetika Sharma, Head of Policy, Planning and Communication and Senior Private Secretary to the Secretary-General; Dr. Azizur Rahman, Arabic Translator; and all other members of the Secretariat, whose professionalism, teamwork, and tireless dedication were instrumental to the seamless execution of the Session and the careful preparation of this publication.

As you peruse this Record, I warmly invite your reflections and observations, which will guide our future work and strengthen our collective endeavours. I look forward to continuing our close cooperation as we enter AALCO’s landmark seventieth anniversary year - a year that promises renewed ambition, deeper solidarity, and meaningful progress for our Organization and the wider Afro-Asian community.

May the enduring Bandung Spirit continue to illuminate our shared path, as we stand united in advancing the rule of law and in shaping an international legal order that upholds justice, safeguards balance, and truly reflects the voices and aspirations of all our nations.

H.E. Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol
Secretary-General, AALCO

I. AGENDA OF THE SESSION

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I. Organizational Matters

1. Consideration and Adoption of the Agenda and Tentative Schedule of Meetings
2. Election of the President and the Vice-President
3. Admission of New Members
4. Admission of Observers
5. Opening Address of the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO
6. Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of AALCO
7. Release of AALCO Publications
 - Yearbook of AALCO Vol. XXI (Year 2024)
 - AALCO Journal of International Law Volume 13, 2025
 - Report on the AALCO Webinar on Space Law for Emerging Actors
 - Report on the AALCO Webinar on Immunity of State Officials from Foreign Criminal Jurisdiction
 - Report on the AALCO Webinar on Shaping International Investment Law: The International Law Commission's Past Contributions and Future Potential
 - The Gaza Conflict and International Law: Examining Recent Developments and Legal Analysis
 - Understanding the UN Cybercrime Convention: A Legal Study for the Benefit of AALCO Member States
8. AALCO's Draft Budget for the year 2026
9. Re-appointment of the Secretary-General
10. Report on the AALCO's Regional Arbitration Centres
11. Report of the Sub-Committee on the Review of the Scale of Assessed Contributions of the Member States
12. Venue of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Session

II. Substantive Matters

1. Report on Matters relating to the work of the International Law Commission at its Seventy-Sixth Session
2. The Law of the Sea
3. Violations of International Law in Palestine and Other Occupied Territories by Israel and Other International Legal Issues related to the Question of Palestine
4. Environment and Sustainable Development
5. International Trade and Investment Law
6. Asset Recovery Expert Forum
7. Legal Issues in Outer Space
8. Legal Protection of Migrant Workers
9. Prohibition of Aggression and Use of Force in International Law
10. Violations of International Law by the Rapid Support Forces in Sudan*

* The Republic of the Sudan vide its Note Verbale dated 21 September 2025 sought to amend the title of the topic to "Violation of International Law by the Rapid Support Militia in Sudan" and requested that the amended title to be reflected wherever it appears in the Summary Report. The Secretariat respectfully states in this regard

III. Any Other Matter

Seventh Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on International Law in Cyberspace

IV. Side Events

1. “UNIDROIT’s cooperation with AALCO and on Instruments on Access to Credit” jointly hosted by International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT), the Republic of Uganda and the AALCO Secretariat
2. “The Road to Hanoi: Opening for Signature of the UN Convention against Cyber Crimes” jointly hosted by the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the Republic of Uganda, the People’s Republic of China, the Russian Federation and the AALCO Secretariat
3. “HCCH: Global Law in action – Serving AALCO States” jointly hosted by the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH), the Republic of Uganda and the AALCO Secretariat
4. “ISDS Reform at UNCITRAL” jointly hosted by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), the Republic of Uganda and the AALCO Secretariat
5. “Pathways of Inter-State and Investment Disputes” jointly hosted by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), the Republic of Uganda and the AALCO Secretariat

that any modification in the title can only be made by the Heads of Delegations at the subsequent Annual Session.

II. BUREAU OF THE SESSION

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PRESIDENT

Honourable Kiryowa Kiwanuka,
Attorney-General, the Republic of Uganda

VICE-PRESIDENT

Her Excellency Ms. Marie Charlotte G. Tang,
Ambassador Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Philippines to the Republic of Uganda, with residence in the Republic of Kenya

SECRETARY-GENERAL

His Excellency Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol

DEPUTY SECRETARIES-GENERAL

Mr. Yong Zhu
Dr. Ali Hasankhani

CHAIRPERSON OF THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE

Ms. Elizabeth Nakkungu,
Commissioner, Legal Advisory Services,
Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs,
the Republic of Uganda

III. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE INAUGURAL SESSION

III. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE INAUGURAL SESSION OF THE SIXTY-THIRD ANNUAL SESSION, HELD ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 10:00 AM

Master of Ceremonies: By way of introduction, my name is Simon Kasyate. My duty today is simply to tell you what's going to happen every other moment. You may want to refer to me as the master of ceremony.

It is my pleasure to invite on the podium, the Right Honourable Anita Annet Among, the Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, representing His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Uganda, to officiate and open this Sixty-Third Annual Session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization.

May I now request the Resident Priest at the Ministry of Justice, the Republic of Uganda for a prayer.

Ms. Alain Bouchana, Resident Priest at the Ministry of Justice, the Republic of Uganda: We remain upstanding, for this is a God-fearing Nation, and now, the prayer. Let us humble ourselves and get into the prayer. We will allow you some time to humble yourself as the more holier person than myself steps forward to lead us into this prayer.

Thank you. Let us pray.

Gracious and Merciful God, we gather here today as representatives of nations from Asia and Africa, seeking wisdom, understanding, and cooperation. We pray for guidance as we deliberate on matters of international law, justice, and mutual respect. Grant us clarity of thought, openness of heart, and a spirit of collaboration as we work towards strengthening legal frameworks and promoting peace and development among our nations. May our discussions be marked by empathy, respect, and a commitment to the well-being of all peoples.

Inspire us with visionary ideas and practical solutions that foster harmony and progress. We pray for unity in our diversity and for the strength to address challenges with courage and compassion. May our efforts contribute to a more just and respectful world. To almighty God, we pray. Amen.

Master of Ceremonies: Thank you. Alain Bouchana is the resident Priest at the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs. Now we may take our seats. Right Honourable Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, distinguished delegates in all your respective capacities, and from wherever it is that you have come, once again, welcome to the beautiful Republic of Uganda, but even more importantly, welcome to the Sixty-Third Annual Session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization.

Without further ado, Right Honourable Speaker of Parliament, allow me to invite His Excellency Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, Secretary-General of this distinguished Organization, the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, to present his remarks and welcome us to this session.

H.E. Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, Secretary-General of AALCO: Right Honourable Anita Annet Among, Honourable Speaker of Parliament, Republic of Uganda. His Excellency, Kiryowa Kiwanuka, Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda. His Excellency, Mr. Songchai Chaipatiyut, Deputy Director, Treaty and Legal Department, the Kingdom of Thailand, as President of the Sixty-Second of Session. Her Excellency, Mmamoloko Kubayi,

Minister of Justice, Republic of South Africa, as Vice-President of the Sixty-First Annual Session. Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, a very good morning. It is my great honour and pleasure to welcome you to this distinguished gathering the Sixty-Third Annual Session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization held here in Kampala, Republic of Uganda. On behalf of AALCO and all our Members, I wish to convey our deepest appreciation to the Government and people of Uganda for their gracious hospitality and warm welcome to all delegations.

We meet today in the heart of Great Lakes regions, on the shores of Lake Victoria- a land that has witnessed centuries of history and the modern aspirations for peace, justice, and development. The warm welcome extended by the Government and people of Uganda is a testament to the solidarity and friendship upon which AALCO was founded.

Kampala holds a special place in AALCO's memory. At the Thirtieth Annual Session in 1993, our Member States, then under the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, reached consensus on human rights and adopted the *Kampala Declaration on Human Rights*. This Declaration guided common positions at the World Conference in Vienna later that year and contributed to the adoption of the *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action*, including the creation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. More than three decades later, AALCO returns to Kampala at an important crossroads for international cooperation, reminding us of the enduring relevance of the Afro-Asian solidarity and the visionary spirit of that historic Session.

We are especially honoured by the presence of Her Excellency, Honourable Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, who has kindly agreed to deliver the inaugural address. Your Excellency, it is a privilege to welcome you, and we are confident that your inspiring words will guide the success of our deliberations.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, over the next five days, this session will deliberate on a wide range of issues of shared concern. These include: 1) The work of the International Law Commission at its seventy-sixth session; 2) the Law of the Sea; 3) the Question of Palestine and related legal issues; 4) Environment and Sustainable development; 5) International Trade and Investment Law; 6) The Asset Recovery Expert Forum; 7) Legal Issues in Outer Space; and 8) the Legal Protection of Migrant Workers.

In addition, as approved by the Head of Delegations in their meeting yesterday, two new topics have been added to the substantive agenda of this Annual Session, with a revised formulation, namely: "*Prohibition of Aggression and Use of Force in International Law*" proposed by the Islamic Republic of Iran, and "*Violations of International Law by the Rapid Support Forces in Sudan*" proposed by the Republic of the Sudan. In total, therefore, this Session will address ten substantive topics. Alongside the plenary discussion, a series of side-events organised by Uganda and our partners will provide opportunity for deeper exchange and practical capacity-building.

Excellences, distinguished delegates, this year marks the seventieth anniversary of the historic Bandung Conference of 1955, where leaders of Asia and Africa first came together to give a voice to our shared aspirations of independence, solidarity, and a fairer international order. It was from that historic moment that AALCO emerged in 1956, and next year we will celebrate seventy years of AALCO's existence.

From seven Member States, our Organization has grown into a community of forty-nine Member States today, the only permanent intergovernmental forum bringing together Asia and Africa on matters of international law. This milestone invites us not only to honour our past, but also to look forward-to reflect on the role AALCO must continue to play in shaping the legal order of the future.

As we gather in this historic moment-seventy years after the Bandung, and as AALCO approaches its seventieth anniversary-it is our collective responsibility not only to reflect on the Organization's proud legacy, but also to envision its future. *AALCO@70* must therefore look ahead with clarity and purpose: adapting to new realities in, for example, cyberspace, artificial intelligence, climate governance, and global trade, while upholding the timeless principle of sovereignty, solidarity, and justice that inspired our founders. In this way, we ensure that AALCO continues to stand as a credible, inclusive, and forward-looking institution for decades to come.

Excellences, distinguished delegates, the challenge of our era-armed conflict, inequality, climate change, pandemic, and rapid technological transformation cannot be addressed by any nation acting alone. They demand dialogue, solidarity, and respect for international law. Guided by the Bandung spirit, AALCO provides a neutral and impartial platform for Asia and Africa to work together, articulate shared positions, and contribute to a fairer and more inclusive global order. By focusing on common interests and mutual respect, AALCO turns diversity into strength. This approach reflects the enduring legacy of the generations who built AALCO as a forum of trust and solidarity, and it is our responsibility to preserve and carry this legacy forward for the future.

In conclusion, I wish to convey my deepest gratitude to the Government and people of Uganda for their gracious hospitality, and to all Ministers, Ambassador, Members of the International Law Commission, Directors of our Regional Administration Centre, Observers, and distinguished delegates who have travelled from across Asia, Africa, and beyond to join us here in Kampala. Your presence reflects the spirit of solidarity, friendship, and cooperation that has always defined our Organization.

With your wisdom and active participation, I am confident that this Session will be remembered not only for its productive outcome, but also for reaffirming AALCO's role as the collective voice of Asia and Africa in the development of international law. Together, we are preparing this Organization to meet the challenge of today, and to embrace the opportunities of the next seventy years. Thank you and in the spirit of Uganda, *Webale Nyo*.

Master of Ceremonies: Thank you. Indeed, Your Excellency, Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, *Webale Nyo, nobobu gambo gurunji, ufanara buyebution*.

If you can repeat that after me, I have staked my neck, and I will be glad to lose it. Our dear guest of honour, I think is only fair that I make one or two recognitions, especially of those with whom you are seated. And in a particular order that I am sure you would be very fond of, allow me introduce to you the Honourable Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development for the Republic of South Africa, that great lady there, by the names of Honourable Mmamoloko Kubayi.

I do not know whether it would be in order for me to introduce to you. That is the Venerable Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda, the Honourable Kiryowa Kiwanuka. And yes, to your immediate right, right Honourable Speaker of Parliament, is the outgoing President of this distinguished session. So it is my honour and pleasure to introduce Mr. Songchai Chaipatiyut. And then of course, Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol who has just spoken. But before you, and how important this session has been regarded by the Republic of Uganda, is the presence of distinguished members of the Cabinet of the Republic of Uganda. And in no particular order, allow me to introduce the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Gen. Odongo Jeje. And he is seated together with his colleague, the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs of the Republic of Uganda, Honourable Norbert Mao. Distinguished delegates, in your respective capacities, we just heard the very heart-warming remarks of Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol. He mentioned something that really caught my ear and I want to draw your attention to it.

I would love to know if there is anyone in this room that was present for the Thirtieth Session of this Organization that sat in Kampala in 1993 and you have returned for today's edition. Anyone who was in the room in 1993 as a delegate or minister that is in the room? Nobody? Okay, those who were alive by then. Maybe then I can see a show of hands. Who was alive in 1993 when the Kampala Declaration on Human Rights was issued? Nobody. What I know for a fact is the distinguished gentleman and statesman that the Right Honourable Speaker of Parliament represents today would have gladly been the only person to put his hand up of having been present at that momentous moment. But even what's most heart-warming is that he was present holding the same position as he holds today and for that, he deserves a hand clap. And this is why, if he hadn't been the same today, this session would probably not have taken place in this beautiful, peaceful, tranquil country, Uganda. Okay, I again make a decision whether you're going to clap or not, then we proceed. Thank you very much.

So it is now my singular honour and pleasure to invite the outgoing President of this great Session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, the Venerable Mr. Songchai Chaipatiyut from the Kingdom of Thailand to come and make his remarks.

Mr. Songchai Chaipatiyut, Deputy Director-General, Department of Treaties and Legal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Kingdom of Thailand on behalf of the President of the Sixty-Second Annual Session of AALCO: The Right Honourable Anita Annet Among, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda. Honourable Kiryowa Kiwanuka, Attorney-General of Uganda. Her Excellency Mmamoloko Kubayi, Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development of the Republic of South Africa. Excellencies Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Justice of Uganda. Excellency Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, Secretary-General of AALCO.

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, it is my honour on behalf of the Kingdom of Thailand as President of the Sixty-Second Annual Session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, or AALCO, to address the Sixty-Third Annual Session here in Munyonyo, Kampala. I personally extend my heartfelt appreciation to the Government and the people of the Republic of Uganda for their generous hospitality and excellent arrangements. It is a privilege to be here among friends.

We commend the Secretariat of AALCO for their tireless effort, not only in preparing for this session, but also in sustaining the Organization's dynamism between sessions through inter-sessional meetings and substantive publications, including the Yearbook of AALCO and the

Journal of International Law. In particular, we convey our sincere thanks to Secretary-General Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol for his capable leadership of AALCO over the duration of his term. Thailand firmly supports and wishes him every success in his re-appointment, and we are confident that he will continue to guide the Organization with vision and dedication in the years ahead, as he has done for the past four years.

Excellencies, nearly seventy years have passed since AALCO was founded, yet its purpose remains ever important. In moments of challenge and transition, it has provided Asia and Africa with a common platform to reaffirm the principles that ensure international relations. Whether confronting the legacies of colonialism, navigating disputes, or fostering reconciliation, AALCO has consistently reminded us that it is the force of law, not the law of force that charts the path forward.

When relations falter, it is international law that steadies. When divisions arise, it is dialogue that restores trust. This is the enduring spirit of Bandung, unity in diversity, solidarity in struggle, and peace as the foundation of progress.

Building on that spirit, AALCO has become a channel through which Asian and African voices shape the international legal order. Indeed, international law benefits most when it is informed by the shared practices and perspectives of our regions. In this regard, our agenda at this Session will allow us to address and advance critical topics of our time, allowing international law to be a living framework guiding States through change and challenge alike.

The codification of international law by the International Law Commission, for example, must take account of the realities faced by the developing States. On the Law of the Sea, we must continue to uphold the balance between freedoms of navigation and protection of marine environment with sustained attention to capacity building. International Trade and Investment Law must evolve to ensure fairness and respect States' right to regulate, as reflected in ongoing reforms of Investor-State Dispute Settlement.

On Environment and Sustainable Development, Asian and African participation in the recent Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice has brought perspectives grounded in cooperation, solidarity, and intergenerational equity to the court. For Thailand's part, we deeply value its longstanding friendship with AALCO. We became its ninth member in 1961, just six years after Bandung Conference, and over the decades, we have had the privilege of hosting AALCO three times, most recently in Bangkok last year.

The Krungthep Declaration adopted at the Session reaffirmed our common commitment to enhance the rule of law, to strengthen Asian-African leadership, and to engage youth and future generations in shaping international law. We are gratified to see this spirit carried forward in Kampala. Thailand's contributions to AALCO reflect the legacy of the distinguished jurists, such as Professor Dr. Sompong Sucharitkul, former President of the International Law Commission.

His leadership as a jurist, diplomat, and advisor to AALCO, helped shape the Organization's legal foundations and enhance its role in Asia and Africa. I also wish to recognise Dr. Vilawan Mangklatanakul, our member of the International Law Commission for her role in advancing the international law. Her close collaboration with AALCO, including through a recent webinar

on investment law, has brought valuable regional perspectives to the global legal discourse and strengthened ties between the ILC and AALCO.

A key milestone in our engagement was the 2021 election of Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol as AALCO's first Thai Secretary-General. His leadership has enhanced AALCO's relevance and effectiveness. Thailand is proud to support his reappointment for a second term from 2026 to 2029.

Today, as we hand over the presidency to our brothers and sisters of Uganda, we do so with confidence. Uganda has been a steadfast partner, even serving as Vice-President at the Bangkok Session, and is well-placed to guide AALCO with wisdom, balance, and resolve. In this handover, we have three hopes for Kampala.

First, continuity with purpose. We hope that our work be guided by the Krungthep Declaration, strengthening AALCO as a platform for dialogue and capacity building, and amplifying our perspectives in global fora.

Second, cooperation and collaboration. We hope that Member States share best practices and experiences, thereby enriching the effective implementation of international legal norms.

Third, practical outcomes. We hope that Kampala advances concrete steps which Member States can use for dissemination and appreciation of international law from Asian-African perspectives. Sharing of best practices on mutual legal assistance, particularly in the context of asset recovery, continued progress on investment law reform, and constructive exchanges feeding directly into our work in the Sixth Committee of the UNGA and beyond.

Excellencies, from Bangkok to Kampala, the torch of AALCO's presidency passes in the Bandung spirit, with friendship and solidarity. I am confident that the next few days will be filled with fruitful dialogue, and that our revelations will strengthen AALCO's voice in shaping a just and inclusive international legal order.

In this session, we reaffirm and renew our commitment to multilateralism and to the international rule of law. The work we do here will carry the flame of the Bandung spirit higher still, not only guide the future of international law, but also serve the well-being of our nations and the generations yet to come. Thailand thanks Uganda once again for her gracious welcome. We wish all delegations a productive Session, and the Kampala presidency every success. Thank you, *Webale*.

Master of Ceremony: Distinguished delegates, especially those from Uganda, we can be a little more generous with our claps. Mr. Outgoing President, thank you very much for those very reassuring words, but also challenging conversation that you put on the table. The only thing I can assure you of is the right ears are in this room, more so the pair of ears right to your left. She is the head of our legislative assembly, and that is the place where the laws in Uganda are made, and that is where the progress of progressive laws, both domestic and international, will certainly see the day of light. I do not intend to pre-empt her speech, but that I can tell you without fear of contradiction that the right ears have heard.

When I said earlier on that Uganda braces itself to offer a better value proposition than where we were, it was not to pour cold water on your efforts in hosting this incredible Sixty-Second edition of AALCO, but it is simply to say there could not have been a better location than

having the Sixty-Third Annual Session at a location right at the centre of the earth, by the shores of the freshest water lake in the world, but also, most importantly, a place where the sun shines every single day of every year, and on many days, you can have all the climates that you have in different months in one day.

With that said, Sir, Mr. Norbert Mao, Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs of the Republic of Uganda, it is my humble pleasure to invite you to step forward.

Honourable Norbert Mao, Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs of the Republic of Uganda: Thank you very much, Simon. Our guest of honour, the Rt. Hon. Speaker of the Republic of Uganda, the learned Attorney-General, the Honourable Kiryowa Kiwanuka, Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda, my colleague, the Foreign Minister of Uganda, General Jeje Odongo, who in 1993 was Chief of Logistics and Engineering in our army. At that time, the Attorney-General was a teenager. I had graduated from university.

The Honourable Mmamoloko Kubayi, Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development of South Africa, the President of the Sixty-Second Session of AALCO, the Secretary-General of AALCO, Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol. I am here to bridge, to take you through the next level, which is the level of the President of Uganda, here represented by none other than the Rt. Hon. Speaker. In the morning, the Head of Delegation from Somalia asked, where is the President? We are expecting him to speak to us. Our President is well known for offering very broad perspectives about the struggles of oppressed people. And that is why all of you, I am sure, will miss seeing him.

But believe me, I had a phone call with our guest of honour, the Speaker, and she told me that she is carrying the President's speech. So even though the President is not here in person, you are going to hear his own words on these situations. Let me say a few things before I invite our guest of honour. And I start with the words of the President of the Sixty-Second Session. He said Uganda has been a steadfast partner. We are in a very tough neighbourhood as Uganda. We are a small country, but we have never been afraid to take a stand and to fight for what we believe in. We also acknowledge that solidarity is at the centre of all our policies. We have benefited from solidarity. For instance, one time we needed Tanzania to help us free ourselves from tyranny. But at the same time, when South Africa was facing oppression due to the apartheid system, we were not afraid to take a stand and host those who were determined to overthrow that oppressive system.

As I talk now, our President leads the non-aligned movement. We have not been afraid to even defend our ideas with the force of arms. We have not been afraid to stand with other countries. If you go to Addis Ababa, and you see at the Julius Nyerere Centre, there is a wall which has the list of names of people who have died in peacekeeping operations. The majority are Ugandans. We do not boast about it because that is who we are.

This morning, I told the Attorney-General that this gathering of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO is probably the largest gathering on legal issues since 2010, when we hosted the Review Conference of the Rome Statute. Again, when the Rome Statute was enacted, we took a stand. But we did not stop there.

We established our own International Crimes Division. And I hope there will be an opportunity for our delegation to share with you what we are doing under that International Crimes

Division, which has tried terrorists, including those of Al-Shabaab, to show that we believe in international law.

I am here as head of the Ugandan delegation, but your chief host is the Attorney-General, who is my neighbour at the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs. The Attorney-General gave a press conference to all Ugandans to tell them what this meeting is about. Normally, people are not excited by meetings of lawyers. They think we speak a language they do not understand. They think we only talk to ourselves. And somehow, everybody thinks that the concepts we talk about really do not matter. But the Attorney-General explained, and I was pleased to see in our national newspaper, *The New Vision*, a very good coverage of what this meeting is about. And the Attorney-General said, this meeting is about shared legal perspectives. That one, everybody understood. He said, this is a platform for us to discuss, but not to stop at discussing, we must influence global legal trends from here. He had to explain what AALCO is about, and in his own words, when he was asked, why was Uganda selected? Let me quote what he said. Uganda's selection as host reflects growing international recognition of our commitment to multilateral diplomacy, international law, and South-South cooperation. But he also told Ugandans the benefits to the country of this meeting.

For instance, our profile will be raised, the delegations that are here will improve their expertise, but there is also what we do not talk about, economic and tourism opportunities. Uganda's lawyers are going to be able to engage with experts so that they can broaden their expertise in international law.

We are here, as the emcee said, at this world-class venue. It means we have capacity to organise high-level international events, and it means that we are not just about defending our rights but we are also about diplomatic engagement. Since our President is the chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, so Uganda is strategically placed to champion these issues that are relevant to developing countries.

We believe that this conference is very timely given the kind of world in which we live. I thank you, learned Attorney-General, for doing the job of a step-down transformer because legal issues normally are high voltage. You were able to step down so that Ugandans can realise that this meeting is not a small meeting.

On behalf of the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, I wish to welcome all delegates to Uganda. The bigger welcome is going to come from the representative of the President. I am convinced that at the end of these deliberations, there will be decisions and recommendations that will help to shape a better world. But more importantly, we hope to go back to our own countries and tell people that international law matters.

Many people think international law does not matter until you are taken to a small room at an airport. That is when you realise that international law matters. That is when you have to assert what they call the Vienna Convention. Some of us who carry diplomatic passports, we have to defend our rights at airports. Sometimes you arrive when the country is not aware that you are arriving and they have to interview you.

Right now, certain countries are getting nervous about foreigners. Fortunately, as Uganda, we are hosting close to two million refugees. We used to be refugees, so we understand the need for compassion in international relations. Therefore, let us be tough-minded as lawyers, but

when making decisions, let us have soft hearts. That is the kind of person I believe our President is. He has a very tough mind, but he has a soft heart. It appears to be a contradiction in terms, but life is about thesis and antithesis. It is now my honour to invite the Rt. Hon. Speaker of the Republic of Uganda to deliver the President's address. Madam Speaker.

Rt. Hon. Anita Annet Among, Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda on behalf of Hon. Yoweri Museveni, the President of the Republic of Uganda: The outgoing President of Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, AALCO, the Vice-President of AALCO, which is held by Uganda. The representatives of Governments of the Member States, Honourable Ministers who are present here, the Secretary-General and the entire Secretariat of AALCO, distinguished delegates and guests.

It is my singular honour to welcome you to Uganda for the Sixty-Third Annual Session of Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, AALCO. As you have already been notified, my name is Anita Annette Among, triple A. I am the Speaker of Parliament of Uganda, and I stand before you this morning to represent the Head of State, His Excellency General Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, who is unable to be with us due to hereto unforeseen and equally urgent commitments.

The President's decision to assign me this representative role is a testimony to the effective complimentary of our thoughts and three arms of Government. We have executive, legislature, and judiciary, and we work closely together, but we also respect separation of powers. I want to thank you for choosing Uganda as the venue for this Session, and I am sure by the time you leave Uganda, you will have enjoyed, and I am happy you can even speak some language, some words in our language now. I was very impressed, and I want to thank the Attorney-General that is doing a good job.

I recognise the strategic platform for international cooperation that AALCO provides as a mechanism for inter-regional cooperation, especially at a time when the world is faced with existential questions of international law and morality arising from wars in Gaza, the recent military affront on the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the flashpoints in the Middle East, and the refugee crisis in Africa, among others, and I am happy that the Minister cited that Uganda has a very good policy on refugees, and I want to thank our President for the refugee policy in Uganda.

It is my hope that in your deliberations here, we will, at the end of the day, have very good positive impact that you will have come with after the discussions today, and as legislature, we won't promise you our unwavering support to AALCO. I now want to seek your indulgence to deliver the speech of His Excellency, the President of Republic of Uganda.

I take this opportunity to welcome all of you, the esteemed delegates and observers, taking part in the Sixty-Third Session of Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, AALCO. Uganda last hosted AALCO in 1993. Uganda is proud to host this Annual Session of AALCO, and wish to reaffirm our commitment to the Organization's objectives as a Member State of AALCO. The Annual Session is an opportunity for the Member States to shape its ideas, forge consensus, and chart the course for our collective efforts for the year ahead.

AALCO is a product of a historic Bandung Conference of 1955. It was founded by seven nations, Burma, now Myanmar, Ceylon, which is now Sri Lanka, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan,

and Syria. It has grown to include forty-nine Member States, representing nearly all the Member Nations of our two continents. This growth reflects the trust and the relevance of AALCO that it commands as a platform for legal cooperation.

The Bandung spirit continues to inspire us. It reminds us that our continents, once marginalized in the global legal order, have the power to shape international law to reflect our values, our aspirations, and realities. Indeed, in this regard, the AALCO has made immense contribution from Law of the Sea to human rights, Trade and Investment to Environmental Protection. AALCO has been instrumental in ensuring that Africa and Asia are not just participants, but leaders in the global legal discourse.

Distinguished delegates, AALCO continues to serve as Advisory Body to its Member States, a forum for deliberation on legal matters of common concern, and bridge to communicate our collective positions to the United Nations, the International Law Commission and other global institutions. I commend the Secretary-General for keeping cordial relations with these international organisations and actively participating in their various activities. It is through this that AALCO is able to keep a significant presence at the international scene, and thus, our presence and contributions cannot be ignored.

As we gather here today, we face a world of unprecedented challenges. Climate change threatens our ecosystem and livelihoods. Conflicts and insecurity test our stability. Economic inequalities strain our societies. Rapid technological advancement from artificial intelligence to cyber security raise complex legal questions that demand our attention. In this context, AALCO's role is more crucial than ever before.

AALCO is uniquely positioned to ensure that Asia and Africa do not merely react to global legal developments, but actively shape them to reflect our priorities. Notably, sustainable development, sovereignty, and justice. These priorities are in line with AALCO's mandate as outlined in the statute, that is, one, to serve as an Advisory Body on international law. Two, to facilitate cooperation on legal matters. Three, to deliberate on issues referred by Member States, and to communicate our collective views to the global institutions.

Over the years, AALCO has addressed a wide range of topics from the Law of the Sea and diplomatic relations to human rights, Environmental Law and international law, its contribution to United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, including concepts like Exclusive Economic Zone and its role in shaping the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, demonstrates its impact on global legal framework.

Today, AALCO's agenda remains as relevant as ever, tackling issues such as climate change, the protection of migrant workers, the fight against transnational crime and the legal implications of emerging technologies. By fostering dialogue and coordinating positions, AALCO ensures that our continent's perspectives are not only heard but integrated into the global legal order. As we embark on this session, let us seize the opportunity of strengthening AALCO's impact through the Member States on the continents of Africa and Asia. I wish to urge the AALCO Secretariat to anchor its work onto the following pillars for continuous growth from strength to strength.

One, strengthening member engagement. This will ensure respect for diversity and inclusivity. Two, enhance legal capacity. This will support our nations in building the expertise and

institutional frameworks needed to participate effectively in international law making, ensuring that the legal systems are robust and responsive. Three, promoting inclusivity in global governance. This will facilitate advocacy for stronger representation of Asia and Africa perspective in international legal fora, ensuring that our values, aspirations and perspectives are reflected in the global frameworks. Four, addressing emerging issues. This will foster constructive dialogue to develop legal frameworks. Finally, I wish to emphasise that our shared history of struggle, resilience and trials binds us together.

Our shared future of peace, prosperity and justice depends on our ability to work together. Let us therefore renew the Bandung spirit, reaffirm our solidarity and strengthen our collective voice. I wish you a productive deliberations as a memorable stay in the Pearl of Africa.

May our work here advance AALCO's mission and pave a way for a more just and equitable world. Signed by His Excellency, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda. Thank you.

Master of Ceremony: Thank you, Rt. Hon. Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda. It is only fair that we remain upstanding so that we go through the formalities of the anthems. But before that, housekeeping announcement.

After this, after the anthems, heads of delegation, you will come guided by protocol to the stairway of this magnificent hall for the group picture. The rest of us will now break into the tea break. And when the tea break is done in 30 minutes, since we'll have now the beginning of some closed door sessions, only Member States delegates will be required to return to this room, and the rest will be guided on where your next session is, the anthems.

Oh, excuse me, excuse me, excuse me. I am guided differently. Let us take our seats.

May I request Hon. Norbert Mao, you can see what I talked about earlier on. May you please take the podium again to take us through yet another bit of the conversation. Thank you very much.

Honourable Norbert Mao, Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs of the Republic of Uganda: You know, people love power. The emcee took away my power. He handed over to me, then he took back the power. After the speech by our guest of honour representing the President of Uganda, it is only befitting that the President and our guest of honour receive a vote of thanks on behalf of all of us delegates. This vote of thanks will be delivered by a head of delegation, and it is my honour to introduce her. The Honourable Mmamoloko Kubayi, the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development of South Africa, is amply qualified to deliver the vote of thanks.

Many of you have heard of Soweto. Now, here you have somebody from Soweto itself. We have been talking about struggle.

There is no country that has exemplified the spirit of struggle more than South Africa. And those of you who may not know her profile, her own life, in fact, is similar to the life of our guest of honour, the right Honourable Speaker. Of rising from below and emerging on top. She sits on the top organ of the ruling party of South Africa, the National Executive Committee, just like our guest of honour, who is now the deputy to our President, deputy of the National Resistance Movement. She has been a member of the South African legislature, since 2009,

and she has held various portfolios, some of which are totally unrelated to the law, like tourism, for instance, human settlements. She has been there. And her life and the life of the country she represents here speaks of struggle. Those of you who know the Bible also know the story of David and Goliath. It is a bit like South Africa. It is a bit like the world in which we live today. The South versus North is a bit like David and Goliath. They say that when David went to the front line, the generals were shivering because of the size of Goliath. And they told him off, that if generals are retreating, who do you think you are? A mere shepherd.

And he told them in the form of one question, is there a cause? And that's the question all those who are in struggle must keep asking, is there a cause? If your cause is just, then it does not matter the strength of your arms. It is a matter of time. And no country exemplifies that more than South Africa, and no person exemplifies that journey more than the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development of South Africa.

I wish to invite you to give a vote of thanks to our guest of honour. Welcome.

Honourable Mmamoloko Kubayi, the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development of South Africa on behalf of the Presidency of the Sixty-First Annual Session: Thank you very much, Honourable Norbert Mau, the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs in the Republic of Uganda.

Greetings, Your Excellency, the Speaker of Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, the Right Honourable Anita Among, representing the people and Government of the Republic of Uganda, known as the Pearl of Africa, for its exceptional natural beauty, abundant wildlife, and lush greenery. We are truly honoured to be hosted in this beautiful nation, Madam Speaker. Deputy Director-General, Mr. Songchai Chaipatuyut, representing the President of the Sixty-Second Session of AALCO, the Kingdom of Thailand.

His Excellency, Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, Secretary-General of AALCO, Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda, Honourable Kiwanuka, host countries, ministers who are here, honourable ministers from different countries, both in Africa and Asia, Attorney-Generals, distinguished delegates, observers, ladies and gentlemen. It is indeed a privilege and honour, on behalf of the Republic of South Africa, Vice-President of the Sixty-First Annual Session of AALCO, to deliver this vote of thanks at the inaugural session of the Sixty-Third Annual Session here in Kampala. I extend my profound appreciation to the Rt. Hon. Madam Speaker, Anita Among, for the inspiring and insightful inaugural address on behalf of His Excellency, President of the Republic of Uganda, which has provided valuable guidance and set the tone for the deliberations of this session.

I also wish to express heartfelt gratitude to the Government and the people of the Republic of Uganda, our generous host, for their warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements that have ensured the success of this important gathering.

Excellencies, I wish to acknowledge with deep appreciation the leadership of His Excellency, Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, Secretary-General of AALCO, whose tireless efforts and the dedication of his team have been central in advancing the work of our organization. South Africa commends his commitment to strengthening AALCO's role as the principal legal advisory body for Africa and Asia.

As Vice-President of the Sixty-First Annual Session, South Africa recalls with pride the deliberation under Indonesia's presidency that enriched the Organization's work programme with important new topics, including the Asset Recovery Expert Forum and the Legal Issues of Outer Spaces activities. These additions reflected the evolving priorities of our Member States and reaffirmed the organization's relevance in addressing both longstanding and emerging issues in international law. South Africa itself has had the honour of hosting the Forty-Sixth Annual Session of AALCO in Cape Town in 2007, a milestone that highlights South Africa's vital role within the Organization.

For South Africa, AALCO remains an indispensable platform to address contemporary challenges in international law that directly affects our regions, such as cyber law and the UN Cyber Crime Convention, the challenges of climate change and sea-level rise, the reform of investor state dispute settlements, as well as asset recovery and anti-corruption frameworks. We remain firmly committed to supporting AALCO's unique role in amplifying the collective voice of Asia and Africa and in shaping the progressive development, strengthening multilateralism, collaboration, and codification of international law. I also wish to extend my sincere appreciation to the Kingdom of Thailand, President of the Sixty-Second Annual Session, for its dedicated leadership and valuable contribution to our Organization.

On behalf of South Africa and the African region, let me once again thank the Government and the people of Uganda for their warm welcome and excellent arrangements in hosting this Sixty-Third Annual Session. Madam Speaker, pass our appreciation to His Excellency, the President. Finally, let me convey my heartfelt gratitude to all Honourable ministers, Attorney-Generals, heads of delegation, distinguished delegates, and observers for your active participation and looking forward to valuable contribution. It is your continued engagement and commitment that ensures AALCO remains the collective voice of Asia and Africa in the progressive development of international law. *Asante sana*.

Master of Ceremony: Now, distinguished delegates, I may as well assume the power as should have and request humbly that we all get upstanding for the anthem. Thank you.

All the delegates and guests stand for the national anthem of Republic of Uganda.

Master of Ceremony: Thank you very much, the Uganda Police Band. And as announced earlier, we are now proceeding to have the group photo for the Session and it will be held at the stairway of this magnificent hall. It will comprise of the dignitaries at the foyer and heads of delegation. The rest of us, let us break away for a tea break and only Member States will be required to reconvene here in 30 minutes. I thank you.

The national anthem was followed by a group photo.

The Inaugural Session was concluded thereafter.

**IV. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIRST
MEETING OF THE DELEGATIONS OF THE
AALCO MEMBER STATES**

IV. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE DELEGATIONS OF THE AALCO MEMBER STATES HELD ON MONDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2025 AT 11:30 AM

H.E. Mr. Songchai Chaipatiyut, Deputy Director-General, Department of Treaties and Legal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Kingdom of Thailand on behalf of Her Excellency Mrs. Suphanvasa Chotikajan Tang, Director-General of the Department of Treaties and Legal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, the President of the Sixty-Second Annual Session of AALCO in the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM: CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Chair: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. It is wonderful to welcome all the delegations of the Member States to our Sixty-Third Annual Session. As earlier reminded to you by our distinguished emcee during the inaugural session, this meeting is open to Member States only.

May I request the Observer, Non-Member States and International Organisations to re-join us after lunch for the first meeting at around 2.30 P.M. until further notice? Secretariat, could you check whether every Observer and non-Member have been out? I would like to call the first meeting of delegations of our AALCO Member States to order. We will be going through some organisational, administrative and financial matters. The first item is the adoption of provisional agenda and tentative schedule of meetings and events.

These documents were circulated earlier by the Secretariat and I hope that all of you have received it. The provisional agenda is placed before all the Heads of Delegation for adoption. It needs to be mentioned that the provisional agenda has been finalised in consultation with the Member States.

We also have ten substantive topics, namely:

1. Report on Matters relating to the work of the International Law Commission at its Seventy-Sixth Session
2. The Law of the Sea
3. Violations of International Law in Palestine and Other Occupied Territories by Israel and Other International Legal Issues related to the Question of Palestine
4. Environment and Sustainable Development
5. International Trade and Investment Law
6. Asset Recovery Expert Forum
7. Legal Issues in Outer Space
8. Legal Protection of Migrant Workers
9. Prohibition of Aggression and Use of Force in International Law
10. Violations of International Law by the Rapid Support Forces in Sudan*

I understand that the Secretary-General has discussed and reached consensus on the provisional agenda with the Heads of Delegation of the Member States yesterday at the formal meeting of

* The Republic of the Sudan vide its Note Verbale dated 21 September 2025 sought to amend the title of the topic to “Violation of International Law by the Rapid Support Militia in Sudan” and requested that the amended title to be reflected wherever it appears in the Summary Report. The Secretariat respectfully states in this regard that any modification in the title can only be made by the Heads of Delegations at the subsequent Annual Session.

Heads of Delegation. If there are no further comments, then we shall consider as adopted the agenda and schedule of meetings and events. Thank you. We will move to the next agenda item.

AGENDA ITEM: ADMISSION OF NEW MEMBERS

Chair: The next agenda item is admission of new Member States. I now invite the Secretary-General to brief us about the issue.

Secretary-General: Thank you, Mr. President. We have the Republic of Djibouti join us this year in the first quarter of 2025. Thank you.

Chair: I see that the Head of Delegation of Djibouti is here. Okay, thank you, Mr. Secretary-General. May I now request the distinguished delegate of the delegation of the Republic of Djibouti to say a few words on this momentous occasion if they so wish. Please. Thank you.

The Head of Delegation of the Republic of Djibouti: Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished delegates of AALCO Member States, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted and honoured to attend the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO on behalf of my country, the Republic of Djibouti, as we join this unique and important Organization. I wish to extend my deep appreciation to the Government of Uganda for their warm hospitality. Djibouti's decision to join AALCO is rooted in our strong commitment to multilateralism and to the collective advancement of international law. At a time when the world is grappling with global challenges from climate change, armed conflicts, emerging technologies and threats, it is increasingly critical to strengthen international legal frameworks that impact us.

We sincerely appreciate the support of all Member States in officially welcoming us and recognise AALCO Secretariat's steadfast work, efforts in promoting legal cooperation among Member States. Their support in encouraging research, dialogue and consensus building is invaluable. On behalf of my country, allow me to reiterate our strong commitment to the values and goals of AALCO. Djibouti stands ready to work with all Member States to promote peaceful cooperation, strengthen international law and foster a legal order aligned with the interests of our African and Asian States. I thank you.

Chair: Thank you very much, distinguished Head of Delegation of the Republic of Djibouti. Let us welcome the presence of the Republic of Djibouti with a round of applause again. As of the order, I see no other State is applying for new membership at this session, so this agenda item is passed. Let us move to the next one.

AGENDA ITEM: ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS

Chair: The next agenda item is admission of Observers. I have been informed that some non-Member States and some International Organisations have requested to attend this Annual Session as Observers. Now I request the Secretary-General to read out the list of Observers.

Secretary-General: Thank you, Mr. President. We have one non-Member State, the Russian Federation. For the International Organisations as Observers, we have the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), The International Institute for the Unification of Private Law, (UNIDROIT), The Hague Conference on Private International Law, (HCCH), Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Development Law Organisation (IDLO), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the Asian Academy of International Law (AAIL). Thank you, Mr. President.

Chair: Thank you, Mr. Secretary-General. I think that there should be no objections for their participation. I see none. As of now, let us admit them as Observers to the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO, and they will join us this afternoon.

AGENDA ITEM: ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE VICE-PRESIDENT

Chair: Let us move to the next item. It is a very important one. It is the election of the President and the Vice-President for the Sixty-Third Session. We will take up first the election of the President of the current session. Is there any expression of intervention at this stage? I see Japan wishes to have the floor. The floor is yours, Japan.

The Head of Delegation of Japan: Thank you, Chair. On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to propose Mr. Kiryowa Kiwanuka, Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda, for the President for the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO. Thank you very much.

Chair: Thank you very much for the nomination. Any secondment? Egypt, you have the floor.

The Head of Delegation of the Republic of Egypt: Thank you, Mr. President. Allow me first to congratulate you on your chairmanship and presidency of last year, and we thank you for all the efforts that have been exerted to promote the works of the Organization. Thank you very much on behalf of the Government of Egypt. Second, just very briefly, a quick vote of thanks to Uganda and hopefully the upcoming chair for the hospitality and as well the well-known reception, vibrant reception that we always receive here in Uganda. Egypt seconds the proposal of Japan for the nomination of the Honourable Attorney-General of Uganda, Mr. Kiryowa Kiwanuka. Thank you very much.

Chair: Thank you very much, distinguished Head of the Delegation of Egypt, for the second mention of the nomination of the President. I see no further intervention in the room. Let us congratulate His Excellency, Mr. Kiryowa Kiwanuka, the Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda for his election as the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session. Congratulations.

Chair: We now turn to the election of the Vice-President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO. I see Mauritius. You have the floor sir.

The Head of Delegation of Mauritius: Sir. Mr. Chairman, good morning and thank you for giving me the floor. First of all, I would like to congratulate you in the professional manner that you are holding the session and the proceedings. Second, I would like to congratulate Uganda for being elected as the President of the Sixty-Third Session. Now, I have the honour to propose the Republic of Philippines as the Vice-President for this Sixty-Third Session. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chair: Thank you, Ambassador, for the nomination. Is it India? India, you have the floor.

The Head of Delegation of the Republic of India: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The delegation of India seconds the proposal to nominate Ambassador Marie Charlotte G. Tang, Head of Delegation of the Philippines, Ambassador Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Philippines to the Republic of Uganda, with residence in the Republic of Kenya, as Vice-President of this Session. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you, India. So now, any more interventions from the floor? I see none, so let us congratulate Madam Marie Charlotte G. Tang, elected as the Vice-President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session. Let us give her a big round of applause. Okay, that concludes my mandate as the President of the Sixty-Second Annual Session. Now, I invite the newly elected President

and Vice-President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session to the dais. May I also request our new President to make an opening statement? The floor is yours, sir.

Hon'ble Kiryowa Kiwanuka, the Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda and the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session: Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Uganda, it gives me immense pleasure to welcome you to the Pearl of Africa for the Sixty-Third Annual Session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, AALCO. Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, we are deeply honoured and privileged to be hosting this prestigious annual conference.

Last year, the conference was graciously held in Bangkok, the Kingdom of Thailand. During the Sixty-Second Annual Session of AALCO, Uganda was elected as Vice-President, and in recognition of our growing contribution, chosen to host the Sixty-Third Session. I would like at this point to sincerely thank the Kingdom of Thailand and congratulate you for the excellent leadership in the past year. We thank you for your contribution. As we gather in Kampala, we do so in the same enduring spirit of solidarity, cooperation, mutual respect, and a shared purpose that inspired the founders of AALCO nearly seven decades ago, following the historic Bandung Conference. It is in this spirit that we renew our dedication to advancing dialogue, fostering understanding, and building bridges across nations.

Together, let us make this Annual Session a reaffirmation of our shared commitment to international law, cooperation, and the ideals that unite us. Allow me to also say that it is indeed an absolute pleasure and honour for me to assume the Presidency of the Sixty-Third Session of the AALCO. Distinguished delegates, I am deeply aware that my assumption to the presidency is an indication of the trust and confidence you, the Member States of AALCO, have in me and in my country to guide the affairs of AALCO for the coming year.

I most sincerely thank you for entrusting me with this noble role. This is a big responsibility as well as a huge opportunity. I have a responsibility to ensure that AALCO continues to run efficiently while achieving the milestone set up for the next year. Yet, it is an opportunity for me to contribute to the shaping of the future of AALCO. Uganda and I are certain that you delegates of the Member States and the AALCO Secretariat will accord us the necessary support that we will require to steer the ship. And I am confident that working collaboratively with all of you, we shall register great success.

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished delegates, the story of AALCO is inseparable from the historic Bandung Conference of 1955, where leaders of newly independent Asian and African states gathered in Indonesia to chart a new course for international relations. At Bandung, our nations affirmed ten principles that remain timeless. Respect for human rights, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations, equality, non-interference in internal affairs, the right of self-defence, non-alignment, refraining from acts of threats of aggression, peaceful settlement of disputes, promotion of mutual respect, and adherence to justice and international obligations.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is out of the Bandung Conference that the Asian-African Consultative Committee, the forerunners of today's AALCO, was established in 1956. From those modest beginnings with just seven Member States, AALCO has grown into a unique intergovernmental organisation of 49 Members. This year, 2025, marks the 70th anniversary of the Bandung Conference, a milestone that reminds us of the enduring relevance of the principles that gave birth to AALCO.

For seven decades, AALCO has remained a vital forum through which Asian and African Member States collectively examine, consult, and advance solutions on issues of common concern in the field of international law. True to its cause, over the years, AALCO has made significant contributions to the progressive development and codification of international law. It has consistently examined and influenced discussions on the International Law Commission and the United Nations on a wide range of critical issues, including the law of the sea, treatment of refugees, international law, cyber security, and the protection of human rights.

Ladies and gentlemen, what is particularly remarkable is that the relevance of this work continues to echo today. For example, the Bangkok Principles on the Status and Treatment of Refugees have shaped humanitarian responses across Asia and Africa, while discussions on the law of the sea have influenced the negotiations on maritime boundaries and resource sharing agreements. While some critics question whether international law is truly law, the reality is that sovereign States have agreed to cede part of their sovereignty through treaty ratification to make these rules effective. AALCO stands as a testament to this recognition of the rule of international law and its vital impact, especially when States are willing to cooperate and achieve its purpose.

Ladies and gentlemen, today as we embark on this week-long journey on legal consultation and collaboration, we are again called upon to address some of the most pressing challenges of our time. One, climate change. How can we develop legal frameworks that safeguard our planet while promoting sustainable development for all? Cyber security. What legal safeguards are needed to secure our digital spaces, protect individual rights, and foster trust in emerging technologies? International trade. How can we build fair, transparent, and inclusive trade and investment regimes that support the growth and development of our economies? Peace, security, and dispute resolution. What mechanisms can we strengthen to prevent conflict, uphold international law, and promote peaceful resolution of dispute? These issues remind us that the work of AALCO remains vital today, as it was at its inception in 1956. They compel us to innovate, collaborate, and uphold the principles that brought us together while forging an international legal framework that is inclusive, equitable, and reflective of our collective aspirations.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, Uganda became a Member State of the Asian African Legal Consultative Organization in 1979, guided by conviction that our destiny as a nation is inseparably linked to the struggles, triumphs, and aspirations of Asia and Africa. For those of you who remember, that was only a few months after the takeover, with the support of Tanzania, of the Idi Amin government in 1979. Since then, Uganda has actively contributed to AALCO's agenda in diverse areas, including dispute resolution, international cooperation, and protection of rule of law. Today, I wish to focus on one matter that lies at the heart of both our Organization and the broader international legal order, peace and security.

Peace, Your Excellencies, is more than the absence of conflict. It is the enabling foundation upon which law, justice, and prosperity rest. Our history reminds us of this truth. Today, new forms of similar challenges persist. Protracted conflicts, terrorism, violent extremism, and instability that continue to test the resilience of our nations. It is within this context that the principles of AALCO retain profound relevance. Peace and security are indispensable prerequisites for the realisation of other fundamental principles of international law. Whether it be the right to self-determination, the right to territorial integrity, the enjoyment of human rights, or pursuit of trade, development, and sustainable growth. Without peace, these aspirations cannot be meaningfully attained. Uganda has consistently advanced the principles of AALCO in the field of peace and security at domestic, regional, and international levels.

Ladies and gentlemen, Your Excellencies, in today's rapidly evolving world, new cybersecurity threats are emerging at an unprecedented pace. Advances in artificial intelligence, cyber technologies, and digital infrastructure bring enormous opportunities but also new risks. Cyber crimes, data breaches, and the misuse of emerging technologies can undermine national security, disrupt economies, and threaten the very foundation of peace and stability. This is a growing area of concern that demands our immediate attention. The speed at which technology evolves means that yesterday's safeguards may no longer suffice today. It therefore behoves us, as responsible Member States, to remain vigilant, continuously update our legal frameworks, and enhance our collective capacity to respond effectively to these novel challenges. Just as we have strengthened arbitration, mediation, and human rights protection, so we proactively adopt technological and non-traditional threats that transcend our borders. This is why such dialogues as the one we have this week are of significance, to foster shared understanding, to harmonise legal and regulatory approaches, and to build collaborative exchanges, mechanisms necessary to prevent, detect, and respond to these emerging threats. They provide a platform for exchanging best practises, aligning nations and international efforts, and ensuring no Member State faces challenges in isolation.

Your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen, let me conclude by stressing that the work at AALCO and ongoing efforts of Member States demonstrate that when nations engage constructively, they enhance sovereignty by embedding their interests within cooperative frameworks that promote stability, equity, and inclusivity. By participating in such forums, States become architects of legal order that reflects our diverse realities, aspirations, and responsibilities.

As we confront emerging challenges, we are reminded that no State can act in isolation. It is only through collaboration, dialogue, the shared aspirations of international norms that we can safeguard peace, protect human rights, and foster sustainable development. Therefore, I call upon all Member States to engage fully in the deliberations to and commit to multilateral cooperation that is both principled and pragmatic.

Lastly, allow me to say that in our traditions, hospitality is not just courtesy. It is a value that defines us as a people. We hope that beyond the important deliberations at this conference, you will take time to experience the beauty, warmth, and diversity of our country with the majestic River Nile and the Lake Victoria on the rolling hills, the rich cultures, and of course, our famous mountain gorillas.

Again, on behalf of the President of the Republic of Uganda, His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, and indeed on behalf of all the people of Uganda, I welcome you most dearly to the Pearl of Africa. Thank you for your unwavering attention. *Asante sana. Webale nnyo.* Thank you.

The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

**V. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SECOND
MEETING OF THE DELEGATIONS OF THE
AALCO MEMBER STATES**

V. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE DELEGATIONS OF THE AALCO MEMBER STATES HELD ON MONDAY, 08 SEPTEMBER 2025 AT 12:00 PM

Hon'ble Kiryowa Kiwanuka, the Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda and the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO in the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE WORK OF AALCO

President: Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to call the Second Meeting of the Delegations of the AALCO Member States to order. These are the topics to be considered in this first session before we take our lunch break. We shall receive the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization and the financial matters of AALCO. We shall then receive AALCO's budget for the year 2026, and then we shall address the re-appointment of the Secretary-General. So Excellencies, distinguished delegates, we now move to the second session. And this is a closed session, as you know. And in case there are any Observers present, I would kindly request the Observers to leave the hall and reassemble after the lunch break for the first general meeting. I thank you.

So I now call upon the Secretary-General to make a statement on the Report of the work of the Organization. Secretary-General, thank you.

Secretary-General: Yes, thank you, Mr. President. Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. It is a great honour to present, on behalf of the Secretariat, my Report on the work of AALCO since our Sixty-Second Annual Session held in Bangkok, the Kingdom of Thailand last September. Allow me to begin by expressing my deep gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Uganda for their warm hospitality and excellent arrangements for this Session. This gathering in Kampala is especially significant, as it coincides with the seventieth anniversary of the Bandung Conference of 1955-the historic event that gave birth to the Asian-African spirit of solidarity.

I also wish to thank all Member States for their active participation and support, which has enabled AALCO to strengthen its role and to speak with a united voice on behalf of Asia and Africa in the field of international law.

My report has already been circulated to the Member States, together in hard copy and soft file. So I will highlight some significant parts of my report. The report is structured in two parts: Part One presents an account of AALCO's administrative and organizational matters since Bangkok up to the present Session in Kampala. Part Two reflects on the flagship initiatives and institutional reforms undertaken during the course of my first tenure as Secretary-General (2022-2025).

Together, these two parts offer not only a record of the past year's activities, but also a broader picture of AALCO's trajectory in recent years. So may I invite you to go to *Part One-the Administrative and Organizational Matters*.

Since the Forty-Second Annual Session in Seoul, Republic of Korea in 2003, AALCO has rationalized its Work Programme by distinguishing between deliberated and non-deliberated topics, allowing focused discussion on priority issues. Guided by this approach, the Secretariat has advanced twenty topics since the Bali Session, and for the present Session in Kampala, we

have eight items and also in addition we have two new items proposed by the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of the Sudan. So now we have in the work programme 22 topics of international law.

So let me bring you to some salient issues of my report. In terms of the *Organizational Matters*, we have six Liaison Officer Meetings. As you may know that during the inter-sessional period, we work with the Member States, through the Liaison Officers based in New Delhi, through the Embassy or High Commission, and every year we hold the meeting of these officers every two months. Last year until now, we have six Liaison Officers meetings convened in New Delhi at the Headquarters to facilitate consultation with the Member States, and also we have the Sub-Committee on the Review of the Scale of Assessed Contributions which has met intensively and submitted a report. We had 11 meetings of the Sub-Committee on the Review of the Scale of Assessed Contributions.

Engagement with the United Nations and International Organisations has been a priority. AALCO contributed actively to the UN General Assembly's Sixth Committee and co-hosted a side-event last year together with the President of the Sixty-Second Annual Session of AALCO from Thailand and the Vice-President of the Sixty-Second Annual Session of AALCO from the Republic of Uganda in New York on the topic "Advancing the Development of International Law through Asian and African Leadership." We also participated in many events organized by other UN agencies such as UNCITRAL, UNCTAD and also other organisations such as the OECD, for ensuring that Afro-Asian perspectives are heard in debates on issues of investment such as ISDS reform, trade law, and international mediation.

In terms of *Capacity-building*, this has been a hallmark of this period. Notable events included the "Forum on Digital Trade" in Hangzhou, the People's Republic of China, the "Colloquium on Arbitration" in New Delhi, the Republic of India, the "Global Forum on Mediation" in Hong Kong SAR, and the "8th China-AALCO Exchange and Research Programme on international law" and also the "Tokyo International Law Seminar". Further, many events and webinars have taken place in the Headquarters. For example, we had the webinar together with some ILC Members as the "Immunity of State officials" and on "Investment Law" with the ILC Members.

In relation to the *Regional Arbitration Centres*, as you may know we have six Regional Arbitration Centres. We have three in Africa and three in Asia. Our Regional Arbitration Centres continued to expand their work, every year we have AAAF (the AALCO Annual Arbitration Forum). This year the Asian International Arbitration Centre (AIAC) in Kuala Lumpur kindly hosted the 4th AAAF which reaffirmed the critical role and network of the Arbitration Centres set up under the auspices of the AALCO.

In terms of the *financial issues*, while arrears remain a challenge, I wish to acknowledge the timely contributions of many Member States, which remains critical to our sustainability. The 2026 draft budget, now before you, I will report you later, balances prudence with ambition, focusing on staff resources, digital transformation, and capacity-building.

In summary, Part One reflects the Organization's dynamism: advancing substantive legal work, enhancing cooperation, strengthening arbitration centres, and ensuring prudent administration.

This now brings you to the second part of my report-*Part Two: Flagship Initiatives of My Tenure (2022–2025)*. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, as this Session also brings to a close my four-year term, I wish to take this opportunity to reflect on the flagship initiatives that have shaped AALCO's progress during this period, presented as Part Two of my report. These

initiatives were not merely administrative measures, but deliberate and sustained efforts to restore AALCO's visibility and to reinforce its institutional role on the international legal stage.

For example,

- *Deepening substantive engagement*: AALCO became more active in many fora, for example the ILC, the Sixth Committee, and UNCITRAL, ensuring that Afro-Asian perspectives shaped the development of international law.
- *Raising AALCO's profile*: Through high-level statements and side-events, AALCO gained recognition as a credible advocate for the Global South.
- *Expanding education and outreach*: we organized many webinars and seminars on cutting-edge topics from cyberspace law to investment arbitration and space law, provided Member States with practical tools.
- *Broadening the work programme*: New topics were taken, as I mentioned and we also focused on some sub-topics such as climate change, digital trade. Since the Bali Session, we also have two additional topics, Asset Recovery and Outer Space, demonstrating adaptability and foresight.
- *Building partnerships*: Collaboration with UN agencies, universities, academic institutions and legal institutions enriched our collective resources.
- *Reviving the Drafting Committee for the Annual Session*: This strengthened ownership of outcomes and reaffirmed AALCO's tradition of consensus building.
- *Reinvigorating publications*: Special studies and reports were restored as a central activity, serving as references for Governments and practitioners.
- *Institutional reforms*: Administrative and financial procedures were streamlined to improve transparency and efficiency.
- *Supporting Arbitration Centres*: New initiatives expanded the role of AALCO Regional Arbitration Centres in dispute resolution. And also,
- *Digital transformation*: Since the pandemic, the Secretariat tried to progress by using some activities as online platforms and hybrid meetings. AALCO became more inclusive and accessible, particularly for the Member States. These initiatives collectively represent a period of renewal and reflect not only the Secretariat's efforts but above all the commitment of Member States to uphold multilateralism and Afro-Asian solidarity.

In conclusion, as AALCO approaches its 70th Anniversary next year in 2026, the Organization stands at a historic juncture. For nearly seven decades, it has embodied the Bandung Spirit of solidarity and equality, giving Asia and Africa a collective voice in shaping international law. At the same time, as we honour this proud legacy, we must look resolutely to the future. International law is undergoing profound transformation in areas such as cyberspace, artificial intelligence, climate change, and sustainable development. In each of these domains, AALCO must ensure that the voices of Asia and Africa are heard, respected, and reflected in the evolving global order. With your unity, trust, and support, I am confident that AALCO will continue to rise to these challenges, remaining a unique and indispensable forum for Asia and Africa, rooted in the Bandung Spirit, and committed to advancing a more just, equitable, and inclusive system of international law for generations to come. So thank you very much, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much. Thank you very much Secretary-General for that informative and elaborate report. I have not received any request for intervention on my list. As you know Members, it is our practice that if you would like to have any interventions, you can send them through. However, I will take interventions on both the budget and Secretary-General's Report,

if any, from the floor. But I would like to remind you that interventions on the floor are limited, but if you have any other interventions as we go through, please have them sent to the Secretariat. Are there any interventions on the report of the Secretary-General from the floor at this point? Okay. I take it that there are no interventions from the floor. I cannot see any.

So I take that we, by acclamation, we can adopt the report of the Secretary-General by acclamation.

{Applause}

Thank you very much. So the Secretary-General is now going to present a budget quickly. We are late. We are running short on time. We went through this yesterday, so let us have the budget presented.

AGENDA ITEM: AALCO'S DRAFT BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 2026

Secretary-General: Thank you, Mr. President. Excellencies, distinguished delegates. The proposed budget for 2026 is contained in Document No. AALCO/63/KAMPALA/2025/ORG 2. It was reviewed and approved by the Liaison Officers' Meetings earlier this year in February and is now submitted for your final approval.

The proposed budget for 2026 is USD 721,600, which is USD 5,000 less than the 2025 budget. This small reduction comes from savings in staff allowances. However, I wish to assure you that all salaries, increments, and inflation adjustments will be fully covered, and all other budget lines remain unchanged.

In terms of our overall financial situation, AALCO's position improved slightly in 2024, with receipts exceeding expenditures. Our reserve fund remains above the six-months operational requirement, and all accounts have been audited in line with our Statutory Rules.

On contributions, I am grateful to the 26 Member States who paid their assessments on time, and to those who made special efforts to clear arrears. In 2024, we achieved almost 93 per cent of the budget thanks to these efforts. However, arrears still total nearly USD 2.4 million, and several contributions for 2025 are still pending. I respectfully encourage all Member States to continue fulfilling their financial obligations.

I am also pleased to highlight the recent MoU signed between AALCO and Mongolia, setting out modalities for clearing its arrears-a commendable step that I hope other Member States will follow.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, your support is vital. With your commitment, AALCO will remain financially sound and ready to serve its Member States effectively. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, Secretary-General. Again, I have not received a list of any interventions. Are there interventions from the floor? None. So, we adopt the budget for the coming year. Thank you. Now, we will go to the next item on the agenda, which is the re-appointment of the Secretary-General. As you know, we have a side-event and we are eating into that time, so we are going to try and move as fast as possible.

AGENDA ITEM: RE-APPOINTMENT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

President: Excellencies, distinguished delegates, Under Agenda Item entitled “**Re-appointment of the Secretary-General,**” I wish to recall that Rule 19(1) of AALCO’s Statutory Rules provides that “*The Organization shall appoint a legal expert or a person who has adequate legal expertise and administrative experience, who is a national of a Participating State, to be Secretary-General, for a term of four years. The person so appointed shall be eligible for re-appointment for only one further term of four years.*”

It may be recalled that, as the host country of the Secretary-General, the Kingdom of Thailand has kindly taken the initiative in the matter of the re-appointment. On 5 August 2025, the Cabinet of Thailand formally approved the re-appointment of His Excellency Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol for a second four-year term. Subsequently, on 6 August 2025, a Note Verbale from the Royal Thai Embassy in New Delhi was circulated to all Member States seeking their kind support for the re-appointment of His Excellency Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol. A letter to the same effect was also addressed to all Member States by His Excellency Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol on 7 August 2025.

To date, the Secretariat has received written communications from a number of Member States conveying their support for the re-appointment of His Excellency Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, including, inter alia, Japan, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the Republic of Iraq.

I now invite the distinguished delegate of the Kingdom of Thailand to provide further information to this meeting. Distinguished delegate of Thailand, you have the floor.

The Head of the Delegation of the Kingdom of Thailand: Thank you, Mr. President. Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, the Cabinet of the Royal Thai Government has formally approved the re-appointment of His Excellency Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol as the Secretary-General of AALCO for the second four-year term, 2026-2029. Since assuming office in 2022, Dr. Pinitpuvadol has led with vision, dedication, and determination to revitalise AALCO’s substantive work and reaffirm its place as a unique platform for Asia and Africa in the field of international law. Under his leadership, deliberations have expanded to encompass pressing issues of our time, ranging from the law of the sea, international humanitarian law, and environmental law, to new frontiers such as cyberspace, outer space, and asset recovery.

He has strengthened AALCO’s standing in global fora, ensuring that the perspectives of our members are effectively conveyed at the UN and at ILC, and fostered a renewed spirit of collective purpose that has deepened unity and solidarity across the organisation. To this effort, AALCO’s work programme has reached its broadest scope in history. Its partnerships with leading International Organisations have been consolidated, and its institutional frameworks modernised with greater efficiency, inclusivity, and transparency.

The admission of new Member States during this journey further reflects the growing confidence in AALCO’s role and credibility. Excellencies, the Royal Thai Government is confident that Dr. Pinitpuvadol’s continued leadership will provide both continuity and renewed momentum for AALCO, enabling it to further expand international legal cooperation, promote Afro-Asian solidarity, and advance the perspectives of other regions in shaping the international legal order. Therefore, the Kingdom of Thailand respectfully seeks the valued

support and endorsement of all Member States of the re-appointment of His Excellency Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol as the Secretary-General of AALCO for a second term in accordance with Rule 19(1) of AALCO's Statutory Rules. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Kingdom of Thailand. I have not received any requests for interventions, but I am sure Members would like to extend their support on this issue or make any interventions. I now open the floor for the delegations.

The Head of the Delegation of the People's Republic of China: Thank you, Mr. President. China would like to echo the voice around the table and express our full support for the re-appointment of Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol as the Secretary-General of AALCO.

I wish to recall that in running for the post of AALCO's Secretary-General in the year of 2020, Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol set out his priorities and goals to make AALCO a robust and proactive Organization. Under the guidance of Dr. Pinitpuvadol, AALCO is, as outlined in his vision speech, more visible and proactive and has promoted greater understanding of the culture and legal systems among AALCO Member States. We see topics of great importance to Asian and African states being discussed, including but not limited to the progress made in setting up the Asset Recovery Expert Forum.

In furtherance of Dr. Pinitpuvadol's vision speech, we delight in the addition, inclusion, and the participation of Burkina Faso and Djibouti in the AALCO family. China is also grateful for the support of Dr. Pinitpuvadol and AALCO to the establishment of the International Organisation for Mediation (IOMeD) in the Hong Kong SAR of China, in May this year, bringing into existence the world's first intergovernmental legal body dedicated exclusively to the peaceful settlement of international dispute through mediation. In conclusion, China looks forward to AALCO reaching new heights under the continued guidance of Dr. Pinitpuvadol as the Secretary-General. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you, the distinguished delegate from China. On my list now, I have the distinguished delegate from the Republic of South Africa, followed by Mauritius and then the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Head of the Delegation of the Republic of South Africa: Thank you very much, Mr. President of the Session. South Africa supports the re-election of Dr. Pinitpuvadol as the Secretary-General of AALCO. As stated in the "Vote of Thanks" earlier on this morning, we appreciate the innovation that has come through with the work of AALCO. We do believe that the second term will add in terms of the innovation and dealing with issues that are contemporary and we need to focus on as Member States to strengthen our relationship and the work that we do between Asia and Africa. I would like to congratulate him for the work that has been done and looking forward to working with him in the next coming years. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of South Africa, Mauritius. You have the floor.

The Head of the Delegation of the Republic of Mauritius: Thank you, Mr. President. Mauritius joins other distinguished Member States that spoke before me. We support the re-appointment of Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, who is, we have to note, that is running unopposed. So congratulations, Doctor, and we look forward to your continued guidance and dedication to the Organization. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from Mauritius. We now have the Islamic Republic of Iran. You have the floor. And then finally, the Republic of the Philippines.

The Head of the Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Thank you, Mr. President. First of all, I would like to express sincere gratitude on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Republic of Uganda for successfully hosting this event and for the excellent hospitality. May I also congratulate Your Excellency on your deserved election as the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO and also the distinguished Ambassador of the Philippines as the Vice-President. I would like to take this opportunity to thank His Excellency Dr. Kamalinne, the Secretary-General of AALCO, for four years spent professionally in his office.

During his first term, the Organization has been very active and the initiatives taken by him have been very fruitful. We sincerely hope that he will be able to serve the Organization as Secretary-General for another successful four-year term. We wish him every success in his new tenure, and Iran continues to extend full support to him in his second term as well. I thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran. We have the Republic of the Philippines on the floor, followed by the distinguished delegate from the Arab Republic of Egypt and then India.

The Head of the Delegation of the Republic of the Philippines: Thank you, Mr. President. The Philippines joins other distinguished delegates supporting the re-appointment of Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol as the Secretary-General of AALCO for the term 2026 to 2029. We commend his leadership in strengthening AALCO's collaboration with the UN, ILC and other International Organisations, as well as in expanding AALCO's deliberations on emerging and priority issues in international law. The Philippines is pleased to have AALCO continue to be under the able leadership of a distinguished colleague from a fellow ASEAN Member State. We thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of the Philippines. Arab Republic of Egypt, you have the floor, followed by India.

The Head of the Delegation of the Arab Republic of Egypt: Thank you very much, Mr. President, and allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of the position today. I would like, my delegation would like to join previous delegations in the vote of confidence in the re-appointment of the Secretary-General for a new term. We are looking forward to working and cooperating with him in expanding and ameliorating the works of the Organization during the upcoming four years. Thank you very much.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Arab Republic of Egypt. We now have, finally, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of India.

The Head of the Delegation of the Republic of India: Thank you, Mr. President. We congratulate you and Madam Vice-President on your elections. We join other delegations in supporting the reappointment of His Excellency Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol for a fresh term, a second term, as Secretary-General of this organization. India has and will continue to support the work of this Organization in the coming years. Thank you so much.

President: Thank you very much. Thank you very much, distinguished delegates, for your interventions on this subject. Clearly, the whole Assembly is very clear, so by acclamation can I say that the Secretary-General has been re-appointed for a four-year term. Thank you very

much. Before we take our break, I will ask the Secretary-General to make a brief remark, then we can take our break.

{Applause}

Secretary-General: Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you to all Members States. It is with great pleasure and honour to continue to serve the AALCO for the second term, from 2026 to 2029. I wish to thank the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand for your kind nomination and unwavering support and also to all Member States for the trust you have placed in me. This honour belongs not to me alone, but to AALCO, our Member States, to our Deputy Secretaries-General, to our dedicated staff at the Secretariat in New Delhi, who are now with us at this Session also. With their commitment, I am confident I can continue to serve with impartiality, dedication, and vision.

Excellencies, as we face many new challenges of international law, as I mentioned issues of artificial intelligence, digital sovereignty, climate change, BBNJ (Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction) and peaceful settlement of disputes in a fragmented world. This really requires AALCO to be more than a forum for consultation.

It must be a proactive and credible contributor to the progressive development of international law. In this spirit, I am pleased to present my strategic vision for 2026 to 2029 under the theme, “*AALCO@ 70: Advancing Asia-Africa Legal Cooperation toward a Credible, Inclusive, and Forward-Looking Organization.*” This vision grounded in the Bandung spirit focuses on enhancing visibility, safeguarding neutrality, deepening Member State participation, delivering practical legal tools, embracing digital transformation, investing in future generations, and bridging our diverse legal traditions.

Excellencies, for seventy years, AALCO has carried forward the Bandung spirit of solidarity, friendship, and cooperation between Asia and Africa as we mark the Seventieth anniversary of Bandung this year and approach AALCO’s own seventy years. We are reminded of the legacy and trust to us. It is our duty to preserve that legacy while preparing AALCO for the future. With your trust and support, AALCO will not only honour its proud history, but also rise to meet today’s challenges, shaping a far stronger and more inclusive international legal order for generations to come. Excellencies, allow me to conclude by thanking you all for your presence, your friendships, and our support. I am honoured to continue serving as the Secretary-General of AALCO and I pledge my second mandate to strengthen AALCO as a credible, united, and impactful Organization. So, thank you very much.

President: Thank you very much, Secretary-General. Distinguished delegates, we will now take a break for lunch and reassemble for our First General Meeting at 2.30 P.M. As a gentle reminder, those of you who want to make statements are kindly requested to register with the AALCO Secretariat, which has been entrusted with the responsibility of compiling the list of interventions and speakers. Please limit your statements, because of a packed schedule, to five minutes. Longer statements can still be deposited with AALCO. I would also like to inform you that we have a side-event which is going on. We apologise for the delay, and the topic is “*UNIDROIT’s cooperation with AALCO and on Instruments on Access to Credit.*” We will take this during the break. Members and Observers are also invited to attend that session. So, I will hand over to the master of ceremonies. Let us reconvene at 2.30 P.M. I thank you.

The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

**VI. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIRST
GENERAL MEETING OF THE AALCO MEMBER
STATES**

VI. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIRST GENERAL MEETING OF THE AALCO MEMBER STATES HELD ON MONDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2025, AT 02:30 PM

Hon'ble Kiryowa Kiwanuka, Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda and President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO in the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM: RELEASE OF AALCO PUBLICATIONS

Secretary-General: Thank you, Mr. President. Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, as part of our long-standing practice, it is my great pleasure to present before you all the publications of our research at this Annual Session. As you may know, we have the Yearbook of AALCO and the AALCO Journal of International Law. These are the main publications that are published annually.

And apart from that, during the year, since the last Session in Bangkok until now, we also have some other publications. We have two special studies under the request of some Member States. We have a special study on the topic of “Understanding the United Nations Cybercrime Convention: A Legal Study for the Benefit of the AALCO Member States”, on the request from the Islamic Republic of Iran and another special study entitled the “Gaza Conflict and International Law: Examining Recent Developments and Legal Analysis”, requested by the State of Palestine.

And also during the year, the AALCO Secretariat together with some Member States and the experts, organised events as the webinars or online seminars. And we are very pleased to publish its proceedings as a report of these events. We have the report of the proceedings of the “Webinar on Space Law for Emerging Actors” organised as part of AALCO’s Sixty-Eighth Constitution Day on 20th November 2024; the “Webinar on the Immunity of State Official from Foreign Criminal Jurisdiction” organised on 2nd April 2025 and the “Webinar on Shaping International Investment Law: the ILC’s past contribution and future potential” organised on 21st July 2025. These proceedings intend to serve not only as a record of our deliberation, but also as scholarly resource for diplomats, practitioners, and academics in our Member States and beyond. So now I would like to present all these publications for release at this organization. Thank you, Mr. President.

So this is our Yearbook of the Asian-African Consultative Organization, Volume 21 of 2024, and we also have the AALCO Journal of International Law, Volume 13, 2025. This is a special study on “Understanding the UN Cybercrime Convention: A Legal Study for the benefit of the AALCO Member States”. There is also the proceedings of the “Webinar on Space Law for Emerging Actors”. This is the report on the “Verbatim Record of the Webinar on the Immunity of State Officials from Foreign Criminal Jurisdiction”. And the last one is the report on the verbatim record of the “Webinar on Shaping International Investment Law: the ILC’s past contribution and future potential”.

President: These are the publications from AALCO for this year. Thank you very much, Secretary-General. Again, I would like to thank the AALCO Secretariat for preparing these publications. I sincerely hope that these publications will serve as valuable resources and resources for information and insights for Member States and our Observers. I would like to welcome the Observers to join the plenary as we resume the Session of the First General Meeting. Now, distinguished delegates, with that we now proceed to the substantive part of our work.

AGENDA ITEM: GENERAL STATEMENTS

President: The first and second session of the General Meetings are devoted to the general statements from the Member States of AALCO. Before we begin, may I request the delegates wishing to make statements to please complete your statements within 10 minutes so that we can maintain the timing and accommodate as many speakers as possible. In any case, the entire statement will be reflected in our verbatim record of these proceedings to be prepared by the AALCO Secretariat in accordance with Rule 12, Sub-Rule 16 of the Statutory Rules of AALCO.

Further to facilitate this work, Member States are recommended to submit a written statement to the Secretariat via the email as63@aalco.int. If the statement is made in Arabic, it will be appreciated if an English translation is attached as well. Member States wishing to make their statements should register with the AALCO Secretariat. The order of the speakers throughout the Annual Session will be as follows.

First, we will have the Member States, second, the Observer States, if any, and third, international organizations. Now, I invite the distinguished head of delegation from the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to make their general statement. Thank you.

The Head of the Delegation of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam: Thank you. Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Vietnamese delegation, allow me to express our sincere thanks to the host country, Uganda, for the warm hospitality and for organising the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO and to thank the Secretariat for the efforts in preparing the conference documents. In the current context of great international turbulence, armed conflicts, climate change, energy and food security crisis, along with the emerging challenges in cyberspace, AALCO, as an important inter-regional legal forum, continues to play a vital role in promoting a common voice of developing countries, reaffirming the irreplaceable role of international law and multilateral cooperation, and safeguarding our legitimate interests in the international system.

Ladies and gentlemen, in recent years, Viet Nam has remained steadfast in its path of comprehensive and extensive international integration. We have issued major policies to guide this integration process, including key resolutions of the Politburo, such as Resolution 57 on breakthroughs in science and technology development, innovation and national digital transformation, and Resolution 59 on international integration in the new context. These are important documents that clearly demonstrate Viet Nam's determination to both strengthen internal capacity and harness the achievements of science, technology and innovation, while at the same time actively and proactively engaging in international integration.

Viet Nam considers this a strategic driver for national development and for enhancing its international standing, thereby contributing to peace, security and sustainable development. Viet Nam reaffirms its principled position of supporting multilateralism, with the United Nations Studies Centre and International Law Assistance Foundation, emphasising the importance of full compliance with the UN Charter, in particular the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes. We reiterate the importance of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, UNCLOS, the Constitution for the Oceans, and call upon all States to comply with and effectively implement UNCLOS, while stretching the peaceful settlement of disputes based on the UN Charter and UNCLOS.

On this occasion, Viet Nam is honoured to announce its candidature for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea for the 2026-2035 term, with a view to contributing further to the codification and progressive development of international law, especially the Law of the

Sea. In addition, Viet Nam attaches great importance to the role of multilateral legal mechanisms such as the International Law Commission, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law and AALCO. Viet Nam particularly values AALCO as the only inter-regional legal forum that promotes the common voice of Asia and Africa and contributes to the codification and progressive development of international law.

Viet Nam has been actively participating in important international legal processes, as demonstrated by being among the first countries to sign and ratify the BBNJ Agreement, and actively participating in advisory proceedings before UNCLOS and the ICJ on climate change, also being re-elected as a member of UNCITRAL for the 2024-2031 term. And in particular, we are taking part in the signing ceremony of this convention in Hanoi. This will be a testament to Viet Nam's strong commitment to promoting multilateral cooperation.

Ladies and gentlemen, continue the spirit of solidarity and the commitment to justice and peace from the 1955 Bandung Conference, Viet Nam wishes to work hand in hand with our co-Member States to strengthen the system of international law, promote inter-regional cooperation, and make practical contributions to peace, security, and sustainable development. I wish all delegates good health and success.

President: Thank you. Thank you very much. Now the second speaker on my list is the distinguished head of delegation from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Head of the Delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:¹ Your Excellencies, Your Excellency the Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, distinguished audience,

Peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you.

To begin with, I would like to congratulate Mr. Kiryowa Kiwanuka, Attorney-General in the Republic of Uganda, on his election as President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, wishing him success in his duties. I would also like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Republic of Uganda for hosting this session, and to Ms. Suphanvasa Tang for her efforts during her presidency of the previous Session. I should not forget to commend the role of the Secretary-General and his team in enhancing the work efficiency in the Organization to achieve its goals.

In this context, I am pleased to reiterate the support and appreciation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for all efforts made to improve the work of the Organization in general, for the benefit of Member States and the world as a whole.

Your Excellencies,

The Palestinian issue has been an essential agenda item of this Organization, reflecting the importance of this issue. Yet, the suffering of the Palestinian people continues and even worsens under the Israeli aggression. In this regard, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia condemns in the strongest terms the approval of the Israeli occupation authorities of the construction of settlements around the occupied city of Jerusalem, and denounces the statements of the Israeli Foreign Minister regarding prevention of the establishment of a Palestinian state. It stresses the need for an immediate and comprehensive cessation of the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip, and an end to the ongoing violations committed by the occupation forces against civilians and

¹ The statement was delivered in Arabic. The Secretariat acknowledges with gratitude the official translation provided by the Delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

infrastructure in the Gaza Strip, West Bank, and East Jerusalem. It holds the Israeli occupation fully responsible for the crimes of genocide and the unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe witnessed in the Gaza Strip. It calls on the international community, especially the permanent members of the Security Council, to bear their legal and humanitarian responsibilities and take urgent action to halt Israel's aggressive policies, which aim to undermine the chances of achieving a just and lasting peace and the prospects for implementing a two-state solution. The Kingdom also calls for ensuring immediate accountability for all Israeli violations of international law and international humanitarian law, including those amounting to crimes of genocide, in line with relevant UN resolutions and the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice issued on 19th July 2024.

The Kingdom demands that Israel, as the occupying power, allows urgently and unconditionally the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza Strip, including adequate food, medicine, and fuel supplies, and ensures the freedom of work of relief agencies and international humanitarian organizations in accordance with the international humanitarian law and the applicable standards of international humanitarian work.

The Kingdom affirms that a just and lasting peace can only be achieved through the implementation of the Two-State Solution, ensuring the establishment of an independent Palestinian State on the borders of the 4th of June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the principles of international law, relevant UN resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, and the Arab Peace Initiative. We also emphasize the need to work towards implementing the outcomes of the high-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, held in New York and jointly chaired by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the French Republic, and the urgent implementation measures included in the concluding document within a specific timetable to end the war in Gaza, and to commit to a political process for a comprehensive peaceful settlement of the Palestinian issue and the implementation of the two-state solution.

Honourable attendees, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's "Vision 2030" has laid strong foundations for success, and has begun implementing comprehensive development operations that cover all economic and social sectors under the leadership and supervision of His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, may Allah protect him. The Kingdom is witnessing a comprehensive and sustainable development activity. Today, we are witnessing a series of successive achievements accomplished in a short period of time. Saudi Vision 2030 has contributed to consolidating institutional work across government entities, enhancing the efficiency of strategic and financial planning, and establishing a solid and integrated governance system. This has resulted in qualitative gains over the past years, including diversifying the economic base by creating new sectors, achieving exceptional growth rates, empowering citizens, and improving the quality of life in the Kingdom.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 has contributed to achieving several strategic objectives, such as ensuring prompt justice, providing judicial guarantees, enhancing digital transformation, and promoting the values of justice and transparency. The digital transformation has encompassed all sectors, including the justice sector, where digital technologies are being used across all judicial areas, improving the quality of services and facilitating access thereto. The Ministry of Justice has sought to transition to institutional judiciary through several initiatives and projects, including automating court hearings in all courts and holding them remotely, while maintaining judicial guarantees. The Ministry has also established and developed support centres that support case file preparation by receiving and

reviewing submitted case documents and verifying their compliance with preliminary requirements, as well as conducting technical studies by specialized researchers according to judicial processes, ensuring facilitation of justice and improving the quality of judicial rulings. The Ministry has also established the General Department for Judicial Quality.

In accordance with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's commitment to enhancing international cooperation and exchanging of expertise in the judicial and legal field, the Saudi Ministry of Justice will organize the Second International Conference on Justice in Riyadh on 23rd November to 24th November of this year. Government and international officials, experts, and specialists from around the world will participate, sharing knowledge and expertise and discussing ways to enhance judicial quality.

Your Excellencies, recognizing the transnational nature of crimes of corruption and of funds stolen abroad by corrupt individuals, the Kingdom has launched a number of initiatives to enhance international and regional cooperation. Among the most prominent of these initiatives is the establishment of a Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GlobE), under the umbrella of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The goal is to establish direct communication among anti-corruption law enforcement authorities and enable a wider range of countries to participate in informal international cooperation.

The Kingdom's Government continues its efforts to enhance regional and international cooperation by working on establishing the Regional Asset Recovery Network in the Middle East and North Africa and hosting its permanent secretariat. We hope that these initiatives will encourage a new approach, contribute to strengthening cooperation, and advance ongoing global efforts to combat corruption and crime, and trace and recover assets.

Honourable attendees, the Kingdom reiterates its full support for respecting the principles and provisions of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, as the comprehensive legal framework regulating the equitable and sustainable use of the seas and oceans. The Kingdom has paid particular attention to developing national maritime legislation in line with international principles and standards, and has made pioneering efforts to protect the marine environment by launching national, regional, and international initiatives aimed at combating pollution, preserving biodiversity, and promoting the rational use of marine resources.

The Kingdom emphasizes the importance of international cooperation to ensure freedom of navigation, protect the marine environment, and enhance maritime security, while fully respecting the sovereignty and rights of States in their maritime zones.

The Kingdom calls for strengthening international and regional partnerships among Member States to support efforts to protect the marine environment, build legal capabilities, and exchange expertise for promoting the sustainable use of marine resources and achieving sustainable development within the framework of international law.

In this context, the Kingdom affirms that sustainable development represents a strategic priority consistent with its national and international commitments and with its ambitious "Vision 2030," which aims to achieve a balance between the requirements of economic growth and environmental conservation, thereby improving the quality of life for current generations and safeguarding the rights of future generations to a safe and sustainable environment.

Your Excellencies, the Kingdom has implemented comprehensive reforms to improve the business environment and facilitate economic activity. These reforms include procedural and legislative reforms consistent with the best international practices and standards. These reforms

have resulted in the issuance of new laws for companies, bankruptcy, franchises, e-commerce, and so forth, in addition to initiatives to promote cross-border trade, including the Kingdom's accession to the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods. The Kingdom continues its efforts of supporting trade and sustainable development to achieve the goals of Saudi Vision 2030.

Meeting the requirements of the current era requires a rapid and effective response, through enhancing cooperation between Member States of the Organization, considering the means to meet these requirements, and adopting a comprehensive vision of the current situation that helps to achieve the goals that enhance transparency in all sectors and develop human capabilities.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Your Excellencies, Mr. Kiryowa Kiwanuka, Attorney-General in the Republic of Uganda, President of the Sixty-Third Session, Your Excellency the Secretary-General, and the Secretariat of the Organization for their efforts, hoping to achieve fruitful results for the benefit of all.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Next on my list, you have the Republic of India, followed by Uganda, followed by the Islamic Republic of Iran. The distinguished delegate from the Republic of India, you have the floor.

The Head of the Delegation of the Republic of India: Thank you, Mr. President, Secretary-General of AALCO, Vice-President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates and observers. At the outset, India would like to convey its sincere appreciation to the government and the people of the Republic of Uganda for their warm, welcome, and generous hospitality in arranging this Annual Session. Further, we take this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Kiryowa Kiwanuka, the Honourable Attorney-General of Uganda, and Her Excellency Marie-Charlotte G. Tang, Ambassador of the Republic of the Philippines to Kenya, as President and Vice-President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session, respectively. We also congratulate His Excellency Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol on his re-appointment as the Secretary-General.

My delegation conveys its best wishes and hopes that, with the joint efforts and cooperation of all Member States, this Session will be a great success. I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to Her Excellency Mrs. Suphanvasa Chotikajan Tang, Director General of the Department of Treaties and Legal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, the President of the Sixty-Second Session of AALCO, for her guidance and support, and it was because of this that AALCO was able to continue its work in the past year.

Mr. President, I am pleased to reiterate the appreciation of India for the efforts and contributions made by AALCO in the sphere of international law. India holds in high regard this platform for Asian-African legal fraternity for discussions on issues of common concern in the field of international law. India, being one of the founding Member countries and the host country of the AALCO Secretariat, acknowledges the need for further strengthening this very important intergovernmental organization to remain dedicated to its ideals and the mandate of AALCO. We believe that AALCO should continue to focus on legal aspects, setting aside political positions in its deliberations, and its agenda should reflect the topics of common concern.

In this regard, the agenda of the present Session looks very relevant, and we thank the AALCO Secretariat for its efforts in preparing the background briefs for the Session. We are pleased to see the progress of AALCO in terms of increasing its visibility at the global platform and also growth in its membership. India joins other AALCO Member States and its Secretariat in

welcoming Burkina Faso as the forty-eighth Member and the Republic of Djibouti as the forty-ninth Member of this Organization.

We appreciate the efforts of the Secretariat in increasing the membership of AALCO. We believe the increased membership of the Organization would not only enhance its scope and reach, but also contribute to the financial health of the organization. India also notes with appreciation the Report of the Secretary-General on the work of AALCO on the release of AALCO publications.

We appreciate these reports and the webinars hosted by AALCO and encourage more of such activities for dissemination of international law amongst the Asian-African region. Mr. President, as is mandated by AALCO's statutes, it examines topics under consideration by the International Law Commission. India accords very high regard for the work of this body, which is mandated to undertake progressive development and the codification of international law.

We deeply appreciate the achievements of the Commission over these years and re-emphasise the need to pay special focus to legal issues of concern to the Asian-African region. On the topic of immunities, India supports the Commission's efforts at balancing rules of State responsibility, sovereign equality and procedural safeguards. We appreciate the joint efforts of the Government of India, the Rashtriya Raksha University of India, in collaboration with AALCO and the support of the Ministry of External Affairs, in organising a commemorative event titled 75 Years of the International Law Commission in the Service of Peace, Security and Humanity in March 2024.

We encourage AALCO to undertake more of such engagements with academia in India and other Member States. We encourage AALCO to also allocate more time for the exchange of views, experiences, practices and facilitate intensive discussions on deliberated and non-deliberated topics of international law concerning AALCO Member States apart from the discussions on organizational matters. We also take note that this year, in addition to the regular topics for discussion, some new topics have gained renewed interest.

My delegation welcomes the initiative and encourages focused deliberations for exploring areas of common interest within the mandate of AALCO. We acknowledge the consistent efforts of AALCO in bringing the discussion on the important topic of the Law of the Sea at this platform. Many of the Asian and African States who are coastal, archipelagic or landlocked nations are dependent on marine resources for their economic and environmental stability.

While the topic was formally introduced on the agenda of AALCO in the initiative of the Republic of Indonesia, AALCO's engagement with this critical area began in 1957 during its very first Annual Session. AALCO addressed issues concerning the regime of the high seas and the territorial sea, at the initiative of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and the Republic of India. It is worth reiterating that AALCO facilitated substantial participation from Asian and African countries in the international negotiations that have been on the agenda of UNCLOS, advocating for a global legal instrument governing ocean affairs.

This agenda item consistently remains on AALCO's Annual Sessions and is relevant even today. In this regard, it is significant to note that 47 AALCO Member States have ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. We appreciate AALCO's continuous reporting on the work of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the International Seabed Authority and the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf and also the Annual meeting of State parties to UNCLOS.

Mr. President, with satisfaction we state that the Republic of India is actively engaged in the adoption as also the ongoing PREPCOM meetings on the BBNJ Agreement. India participated in the ITLOS Advisory Opinion by submitting written and also participate in the oral proceedings and have also taken note of the Advisory Opinions of ITLOS on the Obligations of State Parties to protect and preserve the marine environment from the impacts of climate change. The Republic of India had also occasion to participate in the ICJ Advisory Opinion and not only the written but also the oral proceedings in the topic in the case of obligations of States in respect of climate change which was held in 2023-24.

We understand that at the present Sixty-Third Annual Session in Kampala AALCO seeks to focus on three interrelated sub-themes namely Marine Environmental Protection, Maritime Security and Safety and the capacity building for developing countries with responsibility to global ocean governments in the Asian African region. Mr. President, we wish to extend our support and cooperation in fulfilling these goals and also extend our willingness to further explore joint initiatives for the sub-theme relating to capacity building for developing countries with a view to contribute meaningfully to global ocean governance.

Mr. President, we acknowledge with satisfaction the topic Legal Issues in Outer Space introduced by the Republic of India in 2023 and has been well received by Member States with overwhelming response. We propose that this important topic can be provided momentum by exploring studies and cooperation in this area. India is a major responsible space-faring nation which has vital interest in space and is willing to extend our support and cooperation to AALCO Member States for peaceful uses of outer space and promoting outer space for the benefit of mankind. India requests more active participation from AALCO Member States at the deliberations of UN COPUOS that is a committee on the peaceful uses of outer space especially its legal sub-committee and also the scientific and technical committee.

With India's Atma Nirbhar Bharat initiative, our Honourable Prime Minister has provided vision to India's space sector and encouraged innovation. India is making efforts in space science and preparing for India's own space station building after the success of the moon-related Gaganyaan mission. Over 300 startups are now innovating in satellite technology, space exploration and cutting-edge research demonstrating that India is not only participating in the global space arena but leading with indigenous solutions.

India congratulates the inauguration of the African Space Agency, AFSA, at its headquarters in the Egyptian space city Cairo and welcomes Africa as a key and emerging player in the space sector and is willing to explore cooperation and support.

Mr. President, we are concerned with the increasing humanitarian crisis and instability in the Asian and African continents, especially the situation in Gaza. The violence against civilians, especially women and children, are not only condemnable but pose a major question on the future of human race. We note that there are ongoing discussions around the ceasefire and also release of hostages. India remains deeply concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza and it is imperative that humanitarian assistance reaches affected populations in a safe, sustained and unhindered manner in accordance with rules of international humanitarian law. At the same time, India also unequivocally condemns all forms of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations that includes hostage-taking. We believe that it is only through dialogue and diplomacy that all parties should engage constructively upholding international law towards attaining peace.

Mr. President, the misuse of cyberspace is a potential threat to international peace and security. India has actively participated in the negotiations of the UN Convention against Cybercrime

and is in the process of becoming a party to this Convention. There is an urgent need to have international cooperation and collaboration to prevent and combat cybercrime by strengthening international cooperation and sharing of electronic evidence for serious crimes.

The proposal to consider the topic of the development of international law relating to human environment was placed on AALCO's agenda by the government of India at AALCO's Fifteenth Session in 1974 in Tokyo, Japan. Since then, AALCO has deliberated a number of environmental issues such as environmental law, transboundary movement of hazardous waste, Convention on Biological Diversity, and also the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. We appreciate AALCO's consistent efforts in prioritising the topic of Environment and Sustainable Development through dedicated meetings, conferences, and facilitating this topic as an agenda item for consideration of Member States.

We appreciate AALCO's effort in bringing the topic of Trade and Investment on the agenda. We acknowledge that this is an area having profound impact on developing countries and look forward for an engaging discussion on this area.

Mr. President, lastly, on behalf of my delegation, I look forward for constructive engagement and hope this Annual Session will provide a unique opportunity to deliberate on these agenda items. My delegation assures you of our fullest cooperation and support. I thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of India. Next, we have the Republic of Uganda, followed by the Islamic Republic of Iran, Syrian Arab Republic. Please take note, we are using 10 minutes so that everyone can be able to have their intervention. The Republic of Uganda, you have the floor.

The Head of the Delegation of the Republic of Uganda: Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the delegation of Uganda, allow me to add my voice to the previous speakers. I welcome you delegates from outside Uganda to the Pearl of Africa for the Sixty-Third Annual Session of the Asian African Legal Consultative Organization.

We are deeply honoured to host this historic gathering here at the Speke Resort Munyonyo Kampala. Mr. President, though you are our citizen, permit us to congratulate you upon your election as the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO. This year's Session carries special significance for Uganda.

Over three decades have passed since we last hosted the Thirty-Second Annual Session in 1993. It is therefore a profound privilege for us to once again provide a platform for a new dialogue between Asia and Africa on pressing matters of international law and global governance. Mr. President, distinguished delegates, the Republic of Uganda highly values the work of AALCO as the only inter-governmental legal consultative forum bridging Asia and Africa.

This Organization plays a unique role in articulating the collective concerns of our regions, advancing the progressive development of international law, and strengthening multilateralism through the principles of equality, solidarity, and cooperation. This Session convenes at a time of immense global challenges, climate change, environmental degradation, cyber security threats, outer space activities, shifting trade regimes, public health emergencies, and new questions on peace and security, which have underscored the urgent need for international cooperation and a rules-based global order. In this context, AALCO's agenda ranging from the law of the sea, climate change, and cyber governance to dispute resolution mechanisms and international trade remains as relevant and necessary as ever.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, allow me to highlight the achievements of AALCO to drive home the relevance of AALCO and the need for our renewed and consistent commitment to AALCO. One, AALCO has played a central role in shaping international law and safeguarding the interests of African and Asian nations. It was instrumental in the development of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982, securing recognition of the exclusive economic zone and the rights of archipelagic States, thereby protecting the marine resources of coastal and island nations.

Through coordination of Member States' positions, AALCO also influenced the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties in 1969, ensuring that newly independent nations could negotiate on equal footing in global diplomacy. The adoption of the Bangkok Principles on the Status and Treatment of Refugees in 1966 provided a landmark regional framework that remains relevant today, particularly for Uganda, Africa's largest refugee-hosting country. AALCO has further advanced protections for migrant workers, victims of trafficking, and civilians in conflict through collaboration with institutions such as ICRC and by supporting the Geneva Conventions.

Equally important are AALCO's contributions to dispute resolution and economic development. Since 1978, it has established Regional Arbitration Centres in Kuala Lumpur, Lagos, Cairo, Tehran, Nairobi and Hong Kong SAR, providing fair and accessible mechanisms for resolving commercial disputes, strengthening investor confidence and facilitating cross-border trade. By supporting the debates on the new international economic order in the 1970s, AALCO championed equitable trade, technology transfer and development financing, laying the groundwork for fairer rules in international trade and investment.

These achievements have reinforced the sovereignty of our nations, protected economic interests and advanced regional commerce, including Uganda's growing role in international trade and investment. Moreover, AALCO has ensured that the voices of Africa and Asia remain central in emerging areas of international law. It has contributed to frameworks on climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development, addressing the urgent needs of vulnerable States.

It has also engaged in global debates on cyberspace, artificial intelligence and unilateral sanctions, ensuring that the future of international law is shaped by our priorities. In the post-independence era, AALCO provided legal advice on the legitimacy of liberation movements, self-determination struggles and the inadmissibility of colonialism and apartheid, thereby supporting the United Nations in dismantling oppressive regimes in southern Africa and Asia. Through legal capacity building, model legislation and scholarship, AALCO has enabled Member States to claim ownership of international law, embedding our priorities from UNCLOS to refugee protection, arbitration and climate governance into global frameworks.

We commend the AALCO Secretariat, the International Law Commission, the distinguished experts who have prepared substantive reports and research to guide our discussions. These deliberations are not merely technical but are vital to ensuring that the voices of the Global South resonate more strongly in shaping global governance frameworks. As a country, we remain committed to a rules-based international order, where disputes are resolved peacefully, human rights are respected and international trade is regulated fairly to benefit all nations.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, as the current chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, Uganda's priorities remain rooted in peace, sustainable development and international cooperation. Hosting this Session of AALCO aligns seamlessly with this vision and

underscores our commitment to promoting the rule of law at both national and international levels.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, even as we immerse ourselves in serious legal deliberations, I warmly invite you to discover Uganda's unmatched beauty and hospitality. From the thundering waters of the Murchison Falls, to gorilla trekking in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, from the source of the Nile at Jinja to the vibrant cultural traditions of our 56 tribes, Uganda offers an experience that enriches both mind and spirit. Kampala, our capital, stands as a thriving hub of culture, hospitality and dialogue, befitting this esteemed Assembly.

In conclusion, Mr. President, let us use this week not only to advance international law, but also to strengthen the bonds of solidarity between Asia and Africa. Together, let us build stronger bridges of cooperation, promote sustainable development and safeguard a fair, just and rules-based global order for generations to come. I thank you and I wish you fruitful deliberations and once again, welcome to Uganda. For God and my country.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from Uganda. Now, Islamic Republic of Iran, you have the floor, followed by the Syrian Arabic Republic.

The Head of the Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran: I would like to reiterate our sincere gratitude to the people and Republic of Uganda for successfully hosting this event and for their very warm hospitality. Also, I present my congratulations once again to you, Mr. President and to the Vice-President on your deserved election. We are confident that under your able leadership, this Session will be a success.

Mr. President, today, more than ever, the rule of law is seriously jeopardized by unilateralism, and well-established principles of international law under the UN Charter are being disregarded in broad daylight.

During the past year, unilateral coercive measures have seen a surge in practice by few States contributing to the gravity of the situation at the international scene. This has been on the agenda of AALCO as "Extraterritorial Application of National Legislations" for decades. Terrorism has seen another peak against well-established principles of international law; the same has been on our Agenda for almost a decade now. As another sad example, the ongoing humanitarian disaster in Gaza has seen an unprecedented exacerbation due to an imposed famine by the Israeli regime in a blatant exercise of genocide in the face of inaction of the international community. Again, this has been on the Agenda of the AALCO for decades.

We should not be dismayed at the continuation of such breaches despite our deliberations at the AALCO; on the contrary, this demonstrates the pertinence of the agenda of the AALCO and its relevance to pressing challenges and crises Asia and Africa continue to grapple with. And on the other hand, it is evidence of the importance of keeping steadfast with the Bandung principles upon which our organization was founded.

AALCO, as the only legal consultative body spanning two continents is needed more than ever as a forum for dissemination of knowledge of principles of international law, promoting respect for the same, and bolstering cooperation and sharing of views on international legal issues of common concern.

Mr. President, on the early morning of 13th June 2025, the Israeli regime led by a war criminal under arrest warrant of the ICC, launched, in an egregious act of aggression, unprovoked armed attacks against the Islamic Republic of Iran in blatant defiance of the Charter of the United Nations and basic principles of international law. As a result of deliberate targeting of civilians in densely populated areas, hundreds of civilians including women, children, scientists, elites,

and university lecturers as well as senior military officers of State outside hostilities were killed, and thousands of civilians were injured. The US, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, in full complicity with the aggressor Israeli regime carried out a series of attacks against the IAEA-safeguarded peaceful nuclear facilities of Iran in a manifest act of aggression and in blatant violation of Article 2 (4) of the UN Charter as well as the principles of International Humanitarian Law, including 1949 Geneva Conventions, International Human Rights Law and in particular the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as well as numerous IAEA General Conference Resolutions, among others.

This is how the most foundational principles of international law for which the UN Charter was adopted were brazenly assaulted overnight and more alarmingly baseless justifications were fabricated by the aggressors. This will have severe cascading effects on international relations around the globe if not confronted by every single law-abiding member of the community of nations. We thank international organizations such as the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRIC that condemned, in the strongest possible terms, these attacks as violations of the UN Charter; Also, independent UN experts unequivocally described the attacks as [quote] “a flagrant violation of fundamental principles of international law, a blatant act of aggression and a violation of *jus cogens* norms – peremptory rules of international law from which no derogation is permitted” [unquote].

Furthermore, only a few days after these blatant acts of aggression, the UN Secretary-General, stated that [I quote]: “The Charter of the United Nations is not optional. It is not an *à la carte* menu. It is the bedrock of international relations. We cannot and must not normalize violations of its most basic principles. Now more than ever, we must respect and recommit to international law — in words and deeds” [end quote].

In the light of the above, we requested the inclusion of the agenda item “Prohibition of aggression and use of force in international law” which was adopted by AALCO. It is expected that fabricated justifications for aggression under baseless self-serving pretexts would not tarnish the façade of Charter-based order any longer. Substantive deliberations on the legal aspects of aggression and use of force guided by United Nations General Assembly Resolutions and the dicta of the International Court of Justice could help prevent deviation from the Charter-based principles of international law concerning international peace and security.

Mr. President, the situation in Gaza is unspeakable. Thousands of innocent civilians, including medical and media personnel as well as UN staff have been killed ruthlessly. Famine is penetrating every corner of the Strip and the Israeli regime’s international humanitarian law and human rights violations continue on a daily basis. There is ample evidence as regards the commission of genocide by the Israeli regime in the Gaza strip. Apart from the horrendous evidence concerning the physical and mental elements of the crime, the special intent of the perpetrators is manifest. While we await the judgement of the International Court of Justice in the case concerning *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)*; yet, the actions of the Israeli regime in clear defiance of international law, including the provisions of the Genocide Convention continue. We commend the efforts made by South Africa and other intervening States in safeguarding the values for which the Convention was adopted.

In this context, during the past year, many Member States of AALCO including the Islamic Republic of Iran participated in the proceedings of the ICJ’s Advisory Opinion concerning *Obligations of the Israeli regime in relation to the Presence and Activities of the United*

Nations, Other International Organizations and Third States in and in relation to the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Mr. President, we take note of the work of the AALCO Secretariat during the past year in organizing “Webinar on Immunity of State Officials from Foreign Criminal Jurisdiction”, “Webinar on Space Law for Emerging Actors”, and “Webinar on Shaping International Investment Law: The International Law Commission’s Past Contributions and Future Potential”. While these events were held at the initiative of the Secretariat, they were both valuable in terms of knowledge on international law with participation of distinguished scholars as well as due to their relevance to AALCO’s mandate and functions. We also thank the AALCO Secretariat for continuing its publications and special issues including the recent volume on “Understanding the UN Cybercrime Convention: A Legal Study for the Benefit of AALCO Member States” which will be useful to both Member States and legal scholars.

We hope that other requests for research and studies will be published with the same professionalism in due course.

To wrap up my Statement, Mr. President, allow me to reiterate our full support for the AALCO. We invite all Member States to extend their cooperation to contribute to deliberations on all the agenda items during this Annual Session and I hope we will have very fruitful deliberations in the coming days. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran. Now we will have the Syrian Arab Republic, followed by the Republic of Turkey, and then the Republic of the Sudan.

The Head of the Delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic:² Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General of the Organization, Your Excellencies, Heads of Delegations, distinguished guests, Peace be upon you, and the mercy and blessings of God.

The Syrian Arab Republic acknowledges the Republic of Uganda, its Government, and its people for hosting and organizing the Sixty-Third Annual Session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO). I also extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Secretariat of the Organization for its tireless efforts in fostering legal cooperation among our Member States.

First: *Syria, Past and Present*. Over the past years, Syria endured an era of profound hardship. For more than fourteen years, our people suffered systematic and widespread violations perpetrated by the former regime, including:

- War crimes and crimes against humanity, documented by most international human rights organizations.
- Forced displacement of millions of Syrians, both within and beyond our borders.
- Repeated use of chemical weapons against civilians.
- Explosive barrel bombs that obliterated entire cities and villages.
- Arbitrary detentions and enforced disappearances of hundreds of thousands of citizens.
- Systematic torture and extrajudicial executions that claimed tens of thousands of lives.

² The statement was delivered in Arabic. This is as unofficial translation done by the Secretariat.

This humanitarian tragedy has rendered the Syrian dossier one of the most complex of our time, underscoring that the absence of justice breeds crises that transcend national borders.

Yet, despite these adversities, the Syrian people persevered in their legitimate struggle, achieving a historic turning point on 8th December, 2024. This milestone ended the previous era and opened a new chapter for a safe and free Syria, built on the foundations of law, justice, and citizenship. During this period, there was more interaction with other countries, a progressive lifting of sanctions, the repatriation of displaced individuals, and efforts directed toward creating a secure and stable setting for reconstruction and development.

Second: Transitional Justice and Building the Rule of Law. We firmly believe that overcoming the scars of the past requires a genuine process of transitional justice. To this end:

- An independent national commission for transitional justice has been established to ensure redress for victims and uncover the truth.

- The Ministry of Justice is reviewing and repealing exceptional laws to uphold the rule of law.

- A comprehensive reform of the judicial system has begun to ensure the independence and integrity of the judiciary.

- Clear plans have been set to combat corruption and recover stolen public assets.

The new Syria recognizes that building trust between the state and its citizens begins with transparent justice and genuine accountability. We call upon all friendly nations to support this process and cooperate on related legal and human rights matters.

Third: Regional and International Positions

1. The Palestinian Cause

Syria steadfastly supports the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and condemns the grave violations of international humanitarian law perpetrated by the occupying authorities in the occupied Palestinian territories. We call on the international community to fulfill its responsibilities in protecting civilians and ending policies of aggression.

2. Aggression Against Syrian Territory

We strongly condemn the repeated Israeli attacks on Syrian soil, which constitute a clear violation of international law and the 1974 Disengagement Agreement. We also warn of the dangers posed by military and political interventions, as well as attempts to undermine Syria's unity through support for separatist movements and outlawed groups involved in violations and drug trafficking.

Fourth: Global Legal Issues

1. Development of International Law

Syria emphasizes the importance of developing international law to achieve balanced justice among nations, free from politicization and double standards, while promoting equality in sovereignty and respect for national particularities.

2. Law of the Sea

We advocate for the peaceful and equitable use of marine resources, the protection of the marine environment, and the principle of fairness in managing shared maritime spaces.

3. Environment and Sustainable Development

Syria views environmental justice as an integral part of social justice. We call for equitable international cooperation that considers the circumstances of developing nations, enabling them to achieve balanced economic growth while meeting environmental protection requirements.

4. Investment and International Trade

We believe that investment is not merely a contractual relationship but a developmental partnership. Syria is working to create a secure and transparent legal environment to attract high-quality investments, while safeguarding investors' rights and national interests.

5. Recovery of Stolen Assets

Syria places utmost importance on recovering public funds looted during the previous era. Competent judicial authorities are:

- Recording financial and major corruption offenses.
- Engaging in international judicial cooperation to trace smuggled funds through banking networks and shell companies.
- Activating mutual legal assistance mechanisms with friendly nations and international financial institutions.

6. Outer Space

We call for a balanced international legal framework to regulate the peaceful use of outer space, ensuring that all nations, including developing countries, have access to its applications in areas such as education, health, environmental protection, and disaster management.

Conclusion: Ladies and gentlemen, the new Syria extends its hand to AALCO to usher in a new phase of international legal cooperation rooted in justice, equality, and the rule of law. International peace and security depend on upholding international law and prioritizing human dignity worldwide.

We express our gratitude to the friendly Republic of Uganda and the Organization's Secretariat for their gracious hospitality. Peace, mercy and blessings of God be upon you.

President: I thank the distinguished delegate from the Syrian Arab Republic and invite the Republic of Türkiye, followed by the Republic of the Sudan, then the People's Republic of China. The Republic of Türkiye, you have the floor.

The Head of the Delegation of the Republic of Türkiye: Thank you Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Kingdom of Thailand for its able and successful presidency of the Sixty-Second Annual Session of AALCO.

I also extend warm congratulations to Republic of Uganda, and to you, Honourable Attorney-General, on assuming the Presidency of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of our Organization.

I further convey my heartfelt congratulations to Madam Vice-President, as well as to H.E. Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, on his re-election as the Secretary-General.

Mr. President, in a rules-based international system, the international law serves as the foundation for peace, stability, and cooperation among nations, ensuring that the principles of justice, equality, and fairness guide our collective actions.

Türkiye remains firmly committed to the preservation and promotion of international law under all circumstances and for all peoples. This commitment is not limited to words, but is consistently demonstrated through Türkiye's active engagement at the multilateral level, its constructive contributions to international organizations, and its dedication to upholding the universal principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. President, the humanitarian situation remains catastrophic in Gaza and calls for urgent intervention. It is the first time that a famine is officially confirmed by UN agencies in the Middle East. Israel is weaponizing hunger against Palestinians. Delivery of humanitarian aid at scale is the priority. Being aware of AALCO's long standing engagement with the topic regarding Palestine since its first introduction on the agenda of the Organization in 1988, Türkiye appreciates the commitment of AALCO to this issue.

As we have already expressed at the Sixty-Second Annual Session, Türkiye has been closely following the case filed by the Republic of South Africa against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) regarding the violation of Israel's obligations under the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Genocide Case). We sincerely hope that the Court will render its decision in the right direction under international law. So far, 13 States including Türkiye, have submitted their Declaration of Intervention to the Genocide Case. Given the extension of the deadline for the counter-memorial, we would like to see more Member States of AALCO would seize this opportunity to file declarations of intervention.

We also submitted written and oral statements to the International Court of Justice, underlining the illegality of Israel's occupation of Palestinian Territory and violation of its international obligations against the United Nations, international organizations and third States, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Mr. President, we are pleased to see work being pioneered by the International Law Commission (ILC) on the progressive development of international law and its codification. The work by the International Law Commission needs to be global in nature and comprehensive for the practices of all countries in the world. In this regard, the increasing synergy between the ILC and AALCO constitutes a significant opportunity. As the 2025 ILC report has recently been published, we are still in the process of analysing and evaluating the report. In this regard, we appreciate the AALCO Secretariat's detailed assessments of the report which would definitely help us in better comprehend the analyses contained therein.

Mr. President, the impact of climate crisis transcends borders, affecting welfare of our societies and sustainability of ecosystems. The AALCO, as a platform uniting countries across Asia and Africa, can contribute to the international efforts to combat climate change within its mandate. In countries with fragile economies, securing funding for sustainable development projects remains a challenge. Continued legal and institutional support can play a vital role in helping them address the adverse impacts of climate change. Many developing countries face difficulties in fulfilling their obligations due to insufficient support. In this regard, AALCO can rise the voice of developing countries with respect to these challenges.

Today's crises are so complex and intertwined that no country is able to shoulder them alone. Therefore multilateral action must be upheld to address these challenges, leaving no one behind. The current global challenges have also underscored the importance of green transition for sustainable development. Dialogue and cooperation are the two main drivers for green

transition based on technology and digitalization. Investing in technological infrastructure will surely accelerate green transition.

We are confident Mr. President, that the Sixty-Third AALCO Annual Session will be a great success and we are looking forward to exchanging views and ideas with AALCO Member States. Thank you all.

President: Thank you. Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from Türkiye. Can we have the distinguished delegate from the Republic of the Sudan.

The Head of the Delegation of the Republic of the Sudan:³ May the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you. I am honoured to stand before you today, representing the Republic of the Sudan in this distinguished legal forum, which brings together the countries of the Asian and African continents, to reaffirm our firm belief in the supremacy of international law and the necessity of its activation to achieve justice, peace, and security for our nations.

I would like to begin by expressing my deepest gratitude to the Republic of Uganda for its generous hosting of this Session, and for the warm welcome and generous hospitality. I also wish to extend my greetings and appreciation to the Secretariat of the Organization for its diligent efforts in preparation and organization.

Mr. President, our Session is being held at a time when my country, Sudan, is going through the most difficult circumstances in its modern history. Since April 2023, our people are being subjected to a brutal aggression by the rebel Rapid Support Forces militia, backed by external parties that do not want stability for Sudan or security for its people.

What is happening in Sudan is not a civil conflict, but rather a systematic aggression targeting the state and its institutions, committing crimes that amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

National and international reports have documented the horrific violations committed by this militia, including killing, forced displacement, systematic rape, destruction of infrastructure, and looting of property. Therefore, we highly appreciate the decision of our esteemed Organization to include a special item on (Crimes and Violations of the Rapid Support Forces and the parties supporting them in the ongoing war in Sudan) on its agenda.

This step represents a victory for justice and confirms that the international community will not stand idly by in the face of these atrocities. We look forward to this Session producing a strong final statement condemning these violations in the strongest terms, rejecting any attempt to recognize the so-called “parallel government,” and calling on all countries to stop supplying weapons to the rebel militia.

Ladies and gentlemen, our pursuit of justice for our people does not stop at our borders. We believe that justice is indivisible. From this standpoint, Sudan reiterated its firm and principled position in support of the justice of the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian people’s legitimate rights.

The ongoing gross violations of international law in Palestine and other occupied territories require a firm stance from our international community. From this platform, we call for ensuring accountability and combating impunity.

³ The statement was delivered in Arabic. This is an unofficial translation done by the Secretariat.

Mr. President, the challenges facing our countries today go beyond armed conflicts to include vital issues that affect the future of our generations. In this context, Sudan attaches utmost importance to the other topics on our agenda:

Regarding the Forum of Experts on Asset Recovery: The funds stolen from our peoples are a fundamental right, and their recovery is not merely a legal procedure, but rather a necessity for achieving development and rebuilding what was destroyed by wars and corruption. We strongly support the establishment of this forum and call for concerted international efforts to develop effective and rapid mechanisms for the recovery of these assets. We are ready to share our experience and learn from the experiences of other countries, especially the pioneering Indonesian experience.

In the field of the Law of the Sea: As a State bordering the Red Sea, Sudan emphasizes the importance of ensuring the security of navigation and protecting the rich marine environment, and calls for strengthening regional and international cooperation to address the security and environmental challenges in this vital waterway.

Regarding the Environment, Sustainable Development, and Trade and Investment law: We believe that achieving sustainable development requires a delicate balance between economic growth and environmental protection, and a fair and equitable international trade and investment system that takes into account the circumstances of developing countries.

Concerning legal issues in Outer Space and Cyberspace: We live today in an era where traditional borders are disappearing, which requires us to develop international legal frameworks capable of regulating these new spaces in a way that ensures their use for peaceful purposes and protects the interests of all States on an equal footing.

Mr. President, distinguished guests, the people of Sudan, despite their deep wounds, are looking to the future. One of their top priorities is building a State of law and institutions, and a State of justice, peace, and development. We welcome the Government of Hope, led by Dr. Kamil Idris, and we see it as a step in the right direction.

Ladies and gentlemen, you have followed the actions of the terrorist rebel militia in announcing the so-called establishment of a Government, in clear violation of the African Union Charter, which calls for respect for the sovereignty of Member States and the integrity of their territories.

What the terrorist rebel militia has done constitutes a dangerous precedent that threatens the unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of African States. We call on the esteemed ministers to follow the approach of the African Union and the United Nations by clearly condemning this behaviour.

Finally, we affirm that the delegation of the Republic of the Sudan will participate effectively and positively in all the deliberations of this Session, in the belief that constructive legal dialogue is the best way to address our common challenges. Thank you for listening.

President: I thank the distinguished delegate from the Republic of the Sudan. I now invite the distinguished delegate of the People's Republic of China. You have the floor.

The Head of the Delegation of the People's Republic of China: Mr. President, at the outset, I have the honour to extend, on behalf of China, warm congratulations to Your Excellency Mr. Kiryowa Kiwanuka, Attorney-General of Uganda, on your presidency for the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO. We firmly believe that under your leadership, the Session will be a great success. It is my further honour to commend His Excellency Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, the Secretary-General of AALCO, and the Secretariat for their hard work over

the past year. Our appreciation is also sent to the Government and people of the Republic of Uganda. Without their gracious hospitality and amazing arrangements, this Session could not have been made possible. We also extend our warmest welcome to Djibouti as a part of the AALCO family.

Mr. President, this year marks the 80th anniversary of the Victory of the World Anti-Fascist War and the founding of the United Nations. As we all know, the purposes and principles of the UN Charter has established the fundamental principles of international law and basic norms of international relations of our modern society, which opened up a new chapter of global governance. Over the past 80 years, the international system with the United Nations at its core has sustained the overall peace of the world and promoted global development and progress.

This year also marks the 70th anniversary of the historic Bandung Conference. In formulating the Bandung Spirit of Solidarity, Friendship and Cooperation, the Conference has inspired the national liberation movements among Asian, African and Latin American States, and started an on-going process of the South-South cooperation and the Non-Aligned Movement. Following the international practices, it is well established that the Bandung Spirit not only applies to the cooperation within the Global South, but also provides guidance for North-South cooperation.

As a part of significant achievements of the Bandung Conference, AALCO came into being in 1956. Since then, connected by international law, AALCO and its Member States have been amplifying the Bandung Spirit, implementing the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and promoting communication and cooperation among Asian and African States, so as to ensure that Asian and African States strengthen their participation in global governance and safeguard their common interests. Consequently, the voice of AALCO has been heard more frequently by the international community. The value of AALCO has also gained better recognition by the international community.

Mr. President, nowadays, transformation not seen in a century is accelerating across the world, geopolitical conflicts keep escalating, multiple crises are emerging, and instability and uncertainty are increasingly prominent. At a time of turbulence, AALCO, as well as Asian and African States should enhance solidarity and address challenges collectively, and provide greater contribution to foster international rule of law and improve global governance. In this regard, China would like to propose the following 3 points:

First, we should uphold international rule of law, safeguarding world peace and justice. At present, a certain major power believes in 'Might-is-right' and attempts to replace international law with jungle law. It intentionally makes use of tariff as a weapon and arbitrarily infringes upon the legitimate rights of all other States, particularly Asian and African States. Such unlawful acts are undermining the root of international rule of law. As a cornerstone of the Global South, we, the Asian and African States, shall work hand-in-hand to resolutely oppose its acts of bully. In the application of international law, there should be no exception or double standards. International affairs shall be dealt with on their own merits. International relations shall be built upon mutual respect, equity, justice and win-win cooperation.

Second, we should adopt an open and inclusive approach practicing true multilateralism. At present, multilateralism is suffering from unilateralism and protectionism as well as various pseudo-multilateralism, including "small-circle multilateralism" and "selective multilateralism". The global village is under imminent risks of division and confrontation. In the wave of such unprecedented changes and chaos, the way out is to live out true multilateralism and to advance towards a community with a shared future for humanity. We,

Asian and African States, shall stand on openness and inclusiveness, not to close the door to others. In such a way, more multilateral cooperation will be deepened and our common interests will be strengthened.

Third, we should advocate win-win cooperation, improving the global governance system. At present, even though the international landscape has intertwined with changes and turbulence, the trend of peace, development and win-win cooperation still prevails in our times. In order to reform and improve global governance, the Chinese President Mr. Xi Jinping put forward the Global Governance Initiative at the “Shanghai Cooperation Organization Plus” meeting on 1 September this year. The Initiative rests on five core concepts, namely, adhere to sovereign equality, abide by international law, practice multilateralism, advocate the people-centered approach, and focus on taking real actions, which aim to build a more just, equitable and inclusive global governance framework. Nowadays, Asian and African States account for more three-quarters of the world’s population and more than half of the UN member States. However, in the current global governance system, Asian and African States are manifestly underrepresented. Therefore, we call upon all Asian and African States to support the Global Governance Initiative. Let us therefore work together to collectively address challenges and pursue win-win results.

Mr. President, the Chinese Government has always attached great importance to the role of AALCO, strongly supported its work, and continuously deepened its cooperation with the Organization. China has hosted three Annual Sessions of AALCO, established the AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre, and launched the “China-AALCO Exchange and Research Program on International Law”. Since 2015, in the framework of the “China-AALCO Exchange and Research Program on International Law”, eight training sessions have been successfully held by the Chinese Government for more than 300 legal officers from over 40 Asian and African States and various international organizations, including African Union and ASEAN. If you would allow me, Mr. President, I have the pleasure to announce that on Tuesday night, the Chinese Side will host a reception in honour of the 10th anniversary of the “China-AALCO Exchange and Research Program on International Law” as well as the opening of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO. All the representatives, delegates and Observers to this Session, as well as all the officials, guests and friends, are cordially invited. You are more than welcome to take part in this great gathering of our AALCO family. Thank you Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much to the People’s Republic of China, and thank you for the invitation. According to my programme now, we should be having a coffee break from 4.30 P.M. to 4.45 P.M., so we are going to break and return to the session at exactly 4.45 P.M. When we return, we will be receiving the statement from the Republic of South Africa, the Kingdom of Thailand, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Kenya, Bangladesh, Republic of Korea, and Japan, in that order. So we will take a break now, and return at 4.45 P.M. for South Africa to take the floor. Thank you.

The Meeting was thereafter adjourned for Coffee Break.

The Meeting was thereafter resumed.

President: I would now like to invite the distinguished delegate of the Republic of South Africa to deliver the general statement.

The Head of the Delegation of the Republic of South Africa: President and Vice-President of AALCO, Secretary-General Dr. Pinitpuvadol, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, we thank the Government and the people of the Republic of Uganda for graciously hosting and

making it possible for this AALCO Session to take place on the African continent, and specifically, in the Pearl of Africa. We wish also to thank the Secretary-General and the AALCO Secretariat, for all the extensive preparatory work which has gone into this Session.

Excellencies, this is my AALCO inaugural address, since taking office as the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development. I would like to reaffirm that, as my predecessors have stated before, South Africa is committed to building a world in which human rights are respected, characterised by equitable development and wherein international law serves humanity rather than the other way around.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, AALCO's role is indispensable in advancing international law, and for enabling African-Asian States to contribute to its development. At this critical juncture, AALCO must not only serve as a bulwark against the erosion of the rule of law, but must serve to move us more concretely in shaping the international legal order. South Africa has always advocated for a balanced approach to international justice - one that respects the fight against impunity, the principle of sovereignty, human rights and the rule of law. These are essential for the maintenance of international peace and security.

This year South Africa commemorates the 70th anniversary of the Freedom Charter – an aspirational document which laid the foundation for South Africa's constitutional democracy. The Freedom Charter envisions a shared humanity across oceans and valleys. In this regard, the Freedom Charter states that “South Africa shall strive to maintain world peace and the settlement of all international disputes by negotiation – not war.”

Next year, AALCO too, turns 70, which makes this an opportune moment for reflection of what has been achieved and be bold in our pursuit of a vision of the future world that is at peace with itself. This moment in our collective history, reinforces the need for legal cooperation, consolidation of our perspectives, and ensure that the voices of Asia and Africa help shape the progressive development of international law. The task before us is clear: to defend international law, to restore faith in multilateralism, and to uphold justice and equity for all peoples of the world.

Mr. President, Excellencies, South Africa's foreign policy is grounded in dialogue, cooperation, and principled respect for international law. We are of the firm belief that the rule of law, not power, must guide international relations.

The International Court of Justice remains central to the peaceful resolution of disputes, and the International Criminal Court to fight against impunity. But their authority depends on the willingness of States to comply. Where compliance is absent, all nations bear responsibility to act collectively to defend the international rule of law.

South Africa will continue to advocate for the reform of the global multilateral architecture so that it can be more reflective of the voices of all the nations of the world. Under the current architecture we have witnessed a growing tendency of disregard for international law and violation of human rights with impunity. The paralysis of the UN Security Council in the face of mass atrocities illustrates the need for comprehensive reform to make the Council more representative, democratic, and effective. The reality is that the international legal architecture is under threat and the multilateral system is strained. Punitive actions taken against judicial officers and international civil servants of the ICC from carrying out their legal mandates undermines the independence and integrity of the international mechanisms and are a direct affront to the principles of international justice. South Africa urges AALCO to galvanise the collective and unified voice of its membership in articulating and reaffirming our commitment to international law, the rule of law, multilateralism, and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

As lawyers, we must build the confidence and summon hope for peoples across the world that the international justice system is effective.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, the promotion of human rights, such as civil and political rights are inseparable from economic and social rights, and must be advanced alongside the right to development and the rule of law. For the Global South, the struggle against poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment is integral to the realisation of human dignity across our continents.

In conclusion, Chair, the Bandung Principles of sovereignty, equality, and peaceful coexistence are under siege. AALCO must continue working towards achieving equity and solidarity, resisting fragmentation of the international order.

Our presence here as States must amplify the collective voice of Asia and Africa at this critical juncture, not only in this hall, but also outside of it - defending the rule of law and advancing an international order founded on justice, equity, and human dignity. South Africa looks forward to contributing to the very important deliberations that will take place during this Session. I thank you Chair.

President: I thank you. Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of South Africa. I now yield the floor to the distinguished head of delegation from the Kingdom of Thailand.

The Head of the Delegation of the Kingdom of Thailand: Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, Mr. President, on behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Thailand, I warmly congratulate you and the Vice-President of this Session, on your elections in this Session. Thailand is pleased to entrust the Presidency to Uganda, and we extend our full support and confidence in your leadership. I also take this opportunity to thank all Member States for the support that made Thailand's Presidency a successful one last year.

I extend our deep appreciation to the Government and people of the Republic of Uganda for their gracious hospitality and excellent arrangements for this Sixty-Third Annual Session.

Finally, I congratulate the Secretary-General, Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, on his re-appointment for a further four-year term. Thailand looks forward to seeing his vision for AALCO come to life, and we stand ready to support him in this important mission.

Mr. President, this year, Thailand reflects on AALCO's enduring role as a bridge — between regions, between peoples, and between problems and solutions. For Thailand, this bridging role has long been part of our diplomatic and legal tradition. From being among the few Asian States to participate in the 1899 Hague Conference on the Pacific Settlement of Disputes to our hosting of the AALCO session last year, Thailand has long sought to build bridges between nations, in service of the international rule of law.

This is why AALCO has always been close to our heart. It, too, is a bridge: a platform where Asia and Africa connect their voices, where their peoples' perspectives are exchanged, and where principles are linked to practice. The substantive agenda before us in Kampala embodies this bridging role.

Mr. President, AALCO was born of a simple but profound conviction: that Asia and Africa, though divided by oceans, could be joined by international law. For nearly seven decades, this Organization has been the bridge linking two continents — not in geography, but in solidarity and shared purpose.

Our deliberations promote the integration of international law that reflects our regions' perspectives. Norms must not be imposed from outside but developed through solidarity, mutual respect, and shared experience. We do not merely follow rules written elsewhere; we weave our traditions and histories into the fabric of international law. From Asia's philosophies of harmony and compassion to Africa's traditions of community and solidarity, our peoples have long advanced their own visions of justice, dignity, and equality. AALCO gives voice to these perspectives within the international legal order.

But for that bridge to remain strong, we must walk across it together. AALCO should be the place where our Member States forge a unified voice — identifying common interests, reconciling diverse positions, and speaking with confidence in global fora. This requires representatives who are not only politically engaged, but also academically, legally, and technically prepared to shape outcomes. It requires that we press for more inclusive international institutions, where Asian and African jurists are central architects of global rules, represented in norm-setting bodies such as the International Law Commission. In this way, AALCO does not simply bridge continents; it empowers them to confidently assume leadership in global norm- setting.

Mr. President, International law has meaning when it serves the people. AALCO must therefore also be a bridge between States and those they represent, making law tangible, concrete, and protective of human dignity.

On Environment and Sustainable Development, our peoples face the most existential challenge of our time: climate change. AALCO has contributed before — for instance, through the Statement of General Principles of International Law adopted in 1992 in Pakistan, which affirmed the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. That principle remains vital today, ensuring that developing States are not deprived of their right to development even as we pursue ambitious climate action. Earlier this year, the International Court of Justice echoed many of the perspectives advanced by Asian and African States, affirming that climate obligations entail duties of due diligence, cooperation, and protection of future generations. This is AALCO's bridge from States to peoples: ensuring law is not an abstraction, but a shield for the vulnerable and hope for our youth – the same hope reflected in our Krungthep Declaration.

Mr. President, the third bridge we must build is to the future — across domains where rules are still unsettled, yet will shape the course of nations. Looking ahead, AALCO must prepare our regions to meet these challenges.

Cyberspace and Outer Space are new frontiers. If others write the rules alone, our regions risk being left as mere recipients rather than writers. Thailand has just launched its first National Position on the Application of International Law in Cyberspace, affirming the application of existing international law in digital domains and calling for an open, secure, and peaceful ICT environment. As a unique forum to articulate our positions, AALCO is uniquely positioned to amplify this voice and ensure that the governance of these commons reflects the voices of Asia and Africa and that they remain open, equitable, and oriented towards the benefit of humankind.

International Trade and Investment law also demands our attention. Fairness must be preserved, regulatory space must be safeguarded, and dispute settlement must be affordable. For too long, the cost and complexity of investor– State disputes have disadvantaged developing countries. Thailand has therefore advanced our proposal to host the Advisory Centre on International Investment Dispute Resolution — a bridge between the technical world of arbitration and the real needs of developing States. We were proud to have hosted the first operationalization

meeting in Bangkok in December 2024, and look forward to continuing this work with all AALCO Members to bring this Centre to life.

Mr. President, we must build bridges deliberately. Between our two continents, between our peoples, and between problems and solutions. Our session this week should sustain this role, ensuring that our regions remain central to shaping law on climate change, the oceans, cyberspace, outer space, investment, and beyond.

Thailand reaffirms its commitment to the principles that have guided us thus far: friendship, solidarity, the international rule of law. From the Krungthep Declaration to Kampala's results, international law remains our bridge — to justice, to peace, and to the well-being of future generations. I thank you.

President: Thank you very much, Kingdom of Thailand. I now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Thank you, Mr. President.

The Head of the Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan: Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, *As-salamu alaykum* and a very good afternoon. It is truly a privilege and an honour to address this august gathering on behalf of the government and the people of Pakistan. Let me begin by expressing my profound gratitude to the government and the people of the Republic of Uganda for their gracious hospitality and for the excellent arrangements made for this session. I also take this opportunity to congratulate the Secretary-General of AALCO for his re-appointment and re-election as the Secretary-General and must also commend him and his team for their untiring efforts in sustaining the momentum for this unique intergovernmental forum that unites two great continents.

This Sixty-Third Annual Session carries forward a legacy deeply rooted in Bandung Conference of 1955, a legacy of solidarity, dignity and commitment to justice among Asian and African nations. Today, in a world confronted by uncertainty and contestation, AALCO's role in articulating common legal positions and advancing the voice of developing nations has become indispensable.

Excellencies, Pakistan stands today at a critical juncture in its democratic and constitutional journey. Despite various challenges, our people remain firmly committed to the principles of democracy, the rule of law and constitutionalism. We continue to strengthen our judicial and institutional frameworks to ensure the governance is transparent, accountable and responsive to the aspirations of our citizens.

In this pursuit, international law and cooperation among developing nations remains vital. For Pakistan, the values enshrined in the UN Charter, sovereign equality of States, non-use of force, non-interference in internal affairs and the peaceful settlements of disputes are not abstract ideals, but guiding principles for our national and international conduct.

Mr. President, let me reaffirm Pakistan's longstanding commitment to the principles of peace and justice. At the same time, we cannot remain silent in the face of prolonged injustices. The people of illegally occupied territories continue to be denied their inalienable right to self-determination as recognised by numerous UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

For decades, these unresolved issues have stood as a test of credibility of international law. The continued occupation, denial of fundamental freedoms and grave human rights violations demand our urgent and collective attention. AALCO, as a body representing more than half of

humanity, must continue to be a moral and legal voice for those who cannot speak for themselves.

Excellencies, our two continents are home to more than two-thirds of the world's population, yet we are disproportionately affected by adverse impacts of climate change. Pakistan, despite contributing less than 1% of the global greenhouse gas emissions, is amongst the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world.

The devastating floods of 2022 and more recent flood situation has caused grave economic and human life losses. This was not just a natural disaster, but a reminder that climate change is a question of justice and equity. Therefore, AALCO Member States must endeavour to work collectively in addressing climate change issues within the international law framework.

Mr. President, the global economic order is increasingly unequal. Developing nations face unsustainable debt burdens, limited access to fair markets and the imposition of conditionalities that undermine their sovereignty. In this context, Pakistan supports AALCO's deliberations on International Trade and Investment law, particularly the reform of Investor-State dispute settlement mechanism, which often tilts unfairly in favour of large corporations.

We must build legal frameworks that protect not only investors, but also the regulatory space of States to pursue their developmental priorities. International economic governance must serve the people, not privilege.

Excellencies, the digital revolution and rapid advances in artificial intelligence bring opportunities, but also legal and ethical challenges. Issues related to data protection, cyber governance and digital sovereignty require serious deliberation. Pakistan believes that developing countries should not be passive recipients of global digital norms, but active participants in shaping them. AALCO, with its vast intellectual capital, is uniquely placed to guide Member States in these emerging areas of international law.

Mr. President, Pakistan has consistently supported the work of AALCO since its inception. We deeply value its contributions to international humanitarian law, the Law of Sea, International Trade and Investment law, and cooperation with International Law Commission.

We particularly appreciate AALCO's initiatives in capacity building, providing technical assistance, training and platforms for exchange of legal knowledge. For countries like Pakistan, with a young and dynamic legal fraternity, such initiatives help nurture expertise and build bridges of understanding. Excellencies, as we deliberate on legal issues of global significance, let us remember that our strength lies in solidarity.

Asia and Africa together represent majority of the world's population, resources and cultural heritage. Our unity gives us the power to shape a just and equitable international order. Pakistan strongly advocates for enhanced South-South cooperation in legal, economic and development affairs.

Our challenges, whether they relate to poverty alleviation, sustainable development or technological transformation, can only be overcome through shared knowledge, collective strategies and a reaffirmation of our common destiny.

Mr. President, in conclusion, allow me to reaffirm Pakistan's unwavering commitment to the ideals of this Organization. Justice, equality, sovereignty and the rule of law. We will continue to collaborate constructively and contribute to AALCO's work and collaborate with all the Member States in pursuits of peace, prosperity and dignity for our people.

Let us continue to uphold the spirit that gave birth to this Organization. Together, we can ensure that the voice of Asia and Africa resonates strongly in the global discourse on international law. I thank you.

President: Thank you very much. Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from Pakistan. I will now yield the floor to the Republic of Kenya.

The Head of the Delegation of the Republic of Kenya: Thank you, Mr. President, Vice-President, Secretary-General, Excellencies, Heads of Delegations, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Kenya, I extend warm greetings and felicitations to this distinguished assembly.

I would like to express our pleasure in attending this auspicious occasion of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization being held in the Pearl of Africa. We take this opportunity to thank the Government of Uganda for their warm hospitality and excellent arrangements for this Sixty-Third Annual Session. Let me join other delegations in congratulating you, Mr. President, the Vice-President, for being elected to lead this Sixty-Third Annual Session and the work of AALCO in the coming year.

Kenya assures you of her full support and cooperation during your time. On behalf of the Kenyan delegation, we also express our sincere appreciation to the outgoing President of the Sixty-Second Session for the accomplishments achieved during his tenure. We also express our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General of AALCO and the AALCO Secretariat for the meticulous preparations of the documents and the smooth Organization of this meeting.

Further, we extend our congratulations to the Secretary-General on his re-appointment at the helm of AALCO, a testament to his exemplary work, my delegation, and I wish him all the best during his second tenure.

Mr. President, we wish to take this opportunity to thank the AALCO Secretariat and the Secretary-General for their tireless efforts in ensuring the work of the Organization and the interests of the two regions are well articulated at various international fora, including the United Nations General Assembly.

This session convenes at a critical juncture in the history of our two continents and the world at large. We are confronted by a complex web of challenges from protracted conflicts and climate emergencies to deepening inequalities and a crisis of materialism. In this context, the role of AALCO as a premier forum for fostering Asia-African solidarity and developing a common legal perspective is more vital than ever.

Kenya is a steadfast believer in a rule-based international order anchored in the principles of the United Nations Charter, including sovereign equality, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and the non-use of force. The erosion of these core tenets threatens global peace and security. AALCO must continue to champion the development and consistent application of international law, ensuring that it remains a tool for justice, development, and the peaceful coexistence of nations, not an instrument for power politics.

A rule-based international system begins with a strong rule of law at the national level. Kenya is on an irreversible path of constitutionalism and democratic governance anchored in our 2010 Constitution. We are committed to strengthening our institutions to deliver justice for all our citizens.

Additionally, Kenya remains deeply concerned by the resurgence of conflict and tragic humanitarian crises. We reiterated our call for the immediate and unconstitutional respect for

international law in all situations of armed conflict. The pursuit of sustainable peace requires not only silencing the guns but also addressing the root causes of conflict, including inequality and exclusion.

Further, we also take note of the adverse effects of climate change, which are an existential threat disproportionately affecting our Asian and African nations, despite our minimal contribution to the crisis. Kenya therefore calls for enhanced ambition and action of climate finance, technology transfer, and capacity building. Our collective advocacy must be for a just and equitable transition to a green economy that does not stifle our development aspirations.

In this respect, the recent adoption and growing gratification of the landmark Agreement On Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction is a testament to what we can achieve through multilateral cooperation. On the same breath, Kenya is particularly interested in discussions on maritime security, the sustainable management of marine resources, and the protection of the marine environment.

In conclusion, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, the Asia-Africa Partnership, forged in the spirit of Bandung, remains a powerful force for good in the world.

Our shared history of struggle and solidarity obligates us to speak with one voice on the issues that matter most to our people, peace, development, and dignity. Let us use this Sixty-Third session to strengthen our bonds, share our experiences, and forge a common legal strategy that advances our collective interests. Let us reaffirm our commitment to a future where international law is the greatest equaliser among nations.

Kenya also takes this opportunity to seek your support for its candidate, Professor Phoebe Okowa, a known public international lawyer for the position of a judge at the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. Professor Okowa brings, with her first experience, exceptional qualifications and commitment on ocean governance and international law, thus making her a formidable candidate for the position. In the spirit of AALCO Member States' co-operation, we humbly seek for your consideration and subsequently vote for the upcoming thirty-sixth Meeting of States to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. Finally, Kenya pledges its full cooperation and constructive engagement throughout these deliberations. I thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished Head of the Delegation of the Republic of Kenya. I now yield the floor to the Head of the Delegation, distinguished delegate from Bangladesh.

The Head of the Delegation of the People's Republic of Bangladesh: Mr. President, Vice-President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, at the outset, allow me to extend warm greetings from the Government and the people of Bangladesh to all the distinguished participants gathered here in Kampala for the Sixty-Third Annual Session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization. We deeply appreciate the gracious hospitality of the Government of the Republic of Uganda and the able leadership of AALCO's Secretariat in convening this important session. It is indeed an honour for Bangladesh to address this august gathering of AALCO's Sixty-Third Annual Session. This milestone reflects our renewed commitment to strengthening regional and inter-regional legal cooperation across Asia and Africa.

Bangladesh's participation in this forum is rooted in its enduring belief in multilateralism, the rule of law, and the solidarity of developing nations. For half a century, AALCO has stood as a unique bridge between the two continents that together represent the majority of the world's

population and a growing share of the global economy. Our nations share common aspirations for peace, justice, development, and dignity for our peoples. Bangladesh sees AALCO as a vital platform through which Asian and African States can shape international legal discourse, protect their collective interests, and contribute constructively to global governance.

Mr. President, the historical ties between Asia and Africa have long been framed by shared struggles against colonialism and common quests for self-determination, sovereignty, and justice. Bangladesh, itself born of a liberation struggle rooted in the principles of international law and self-determination, feels a deep affinity with the aspirations of both continents. Today, as our countries navigate new challenges of globalization, technological change, environmental crises, and persistent geopolitical tensions, we believe the legal dialogue between our regions is more relevant than ever. Bangladesh firmly believes that Asian-African cooperation, through AALCO, can provide both practical solutions and normative contributions to pressing global challenges.

On matters of contemporary concern, Bangladesh attaches high importance to the work of the International Law Commission. We note with appreciation the ILC's continued deliberations at its Seventy-Sixth Session on issues of shared relevance, including the protection of the atmosphere, sea-level rise in relation to international law, and the settlement of international disputes to ensure peaceful relations between States. Bangladesh recognizes the ILC's work as a cornerstone of the progressive development and codification of international law. We also believe AALCO can play a vital role in channelling the collective voice of Asian and African States to the Commission's work, ensuring that perspectives from the Global South are meaningfully reflected.

Excellencies, the Law of the Sea continues to be a subject of paramount importance to many of our Member States. As a littoral State of the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh has always upheld the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 1982 as the "constitution of the oceans." We take pride in our own peaceful settlement of maritime boundary disputes with our neighbours through international adjudication and arbitration. These experiences reaffirm our faith in international law as a means to resolve disputes and ensure equitable access to maritime resources. We encourage all States to respect UNCLOS as the framework for maritime governance, particularly in addressing challenges such as illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, marine pollution, and the sustainable use of marine biodiversity. We believe AALCO should continue to provide a forum for dialogue on the evolving jurisprudence of the law of the sea and its implications for the development interests of our nations.

Turning to the grave question of Palestine, Bangladesh reiterates its unwavering commitment to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. We strongly condemn persistent violations of international law, including humanitarian law and human rights law, in Palestine and other occupied territories by Israel. These acts represent not only a denial of justice to the Palestinian people but also an affront to the integrity of the international legal order. Bangladesh believes that AALCO, drawing upon its moral authority as a voice of Asian and African nations, must continue to highlight this issue, advocate adherence to international law, and support the realization of a just, comprehensive, and lasting solution based on relevant UN resolutions. Our solidarity with Palestine is a matter of principle, grounded in our historical experiences and commitment to justice.

On broader issues of peace and security, the domain of cyberspace and cyber security has emerged as a defining frontier of international law. The transformative potential of digital technologies for development and connectivity is undeniable. Yet, the risks of cyber threats,

data misuse, and digital inequalities are equally profound. Bangladesh supports the ongoing UN processes on cyber governance and calls for a balanced approach that safeguards state sovereignty, protects critical infrastructure, and ensures the open, secure, and inclusive use of cyberspace. We see AALCO as an appropriate forum to exchange perspectives from Asia and Africa on how international law can respond to these new challenges.

Excellencies, environmental sustainability and climate change represent existential challenges for Bangladesh and many other AALCO Member States. As one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world, Bangladesh has consistently advocated for robust international legal frameworks that address environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, and the impacts of global warming. We believe the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, enshrined in international law, must continue to guide climate action. Furthermore, legal instruments relating to sustainable development should prioritize the needs of developing countries and ensure that financing, technology transfer, and capacity-building commitments are met. We welcome the opportunity for AALCO to strengthen inter-regional cooperation on environmental law, including through knowledge-sharing and joint initiatives in renewable energy, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction.

Equally important is the Legal Protection of Migrant Workers, a matter of direct concern to Bangladesh as one of the leading labour-sending countries globally. Millions of Bangladeshi migrant workers contribute to the economies of host countries, including many in Asia and Africa, while supporting their families and communities at home through remittances. Yet, migrant workers often face vulnerabilities, lack of legal safeguards, and violations of their rights. Bangladesh strongly advocates for the strengthening of international and regional legal frameworks to protect migrant workers, in line with the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. We encourage AALCO to intensify its dialogue on this subject, as labor mobility is both an economic necessity and a human rights imperative.

Mr. President, International Trade and Investment law remains central to the development trajectories of our countries. Bangladesh believes that a fair, transparent, and development-oriented trading system is essential for shared prosperity. We call for international legal regimes that are equitable and inclusive, that address the asymmetries between developed and developing countries, and that enable developing nations to harness trade and investment for sustainable development. Bangladesh, on its way of graduating from the LDC category, is particularly attentive to the need for smooth transition measures, preferential market access, and supportive legal frameworks to ensure resilience. We also see opportunities for intra-Asian and intra- African trade, and cross-continental partnerships, to be enhanced through harmonized legal instruments.

In looking to the future, Bangladesh envisions AALCO as a dynamic platform for proactive engagement on emerging international legal issues. These include outer space governance, the intersection of artificial intelligence and international law, legal questions relating to global health emergencies, and the continued evolution of humanitarian law in the face of protracted conflicts. By bringing together the diverse experiences and perspectives of Asian and African nations, AALCO can play a catalytic role in shaping an inclusive and responsive international legal order. We stand ready to share our experiences, to learn from others, and to work together to advance the principles that underpin AALCO's mission.

In conclusion, Mr. President, Bangladesh reaffirms its unwavering support for AALCO's objectives and activities. We commend the Secretariat's tireless efforts in sustaining this unique platform and call upon all Member States to strengthen their engagement. Our challenges are

formidable, but so are our collective capacities. With unity, vision, and respect for international law, Asia and Africa can chart a path toward peace, prosperity, and justice for all our peoples. I thank you, Mr. President, Vice-President and other Excellencies and Delegates. Thank you all.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from Bangladesh. I now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Korea.

The Head of the Delegation of the Republic of Korea: Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor. On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Korea, I extend our sincere gratitude to the Government of Uganda for their generous hospitality in hosting the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO. And I would also like to express our deep appreciation to Secretary-General Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol and the entire Secretariat for their preparations for this meeting.

Mr. President, our world is at a critical juncture. We are facing a multitude of interconnected challenges—from prolonged armed conflicts and shifts in the global economic order to the existential threats of climate change and environmental degradation. The weakening of multilateral norms and rising competition among nations pose a significant test to the international system.

To overcome these challenges and sustain international peace and prosperity, it is more important than ever to uphold the foundational principles that have long secured our peace and prosperity. We must reinforce our shared commitment to universal values, including the promotion of freedom and human rights, the advancement of humanitarianism, and the pursuit of sustainable development. At the heart of this endeavour lies a collective and unwavering faith in the rule of law and our resolve to abide by it.

AALCO serves as a vital platform for the Asia-Africa region to contribute to shaping the future of international law. For decades, this body has facilitated essential discussions on issues ranging from maritime affairs and environmental protection to economic and human rights matters. Through its active engagement with the UN International Law Commission and other international legal forums such as CAHDI, the meeting of legal advisers of the Council of Europe, AALCO has ensured that the diverse voices and perspectives of Asia and Africa are heard in the development of global norms.

The Republic of Korea also remains a dedicated partner in this mission. We are actively contributing to the codification and progressive development of international law. This year, we ratified the BBNJ Agreement in March and are actively engaged in the preparatory work for its implementation. We are also committed to the ongoing work on the deep seabed mining regulations to ensure a just and sustainable framework for future generations.

In the environmental domain, we have continued to advance our efforts on climate change and plastic pollution. As a testament to our commitment, we participated in the proceedings related to the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion on climate change and offered our perspective on this important issue, which we believe helped promote a reasonable interpretation and understanding of the relevant norms. Furthermore, we continue to support developing countries through contributions to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), as well as through technical assistance projects aimed at building their capacity to implement these vital norms.

Mr. President, in the face of these complex challenges such as global conflicts, environmental pollution, climate change, the importance of a unified, law-based approach cannot be

overstated. AALCO's role as a forum for constructive legal dialogue on our common interests is invaluable. The Republic of Korea reaffirms its commitment to this organization and its mission. We look forward to fruitful discussions that will help us lead to a more stable, peaceful, and prosperous future for all. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you so much. With this we reach to the end to our deliberations of the day. We meet again tomorrow. Thank you.

The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

**VII. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SECOND
GENERAL MEETING OF THE AALCO MEMBER
STATES**

VII. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SECOND GENERAL MEETING OF THE AALCO MEMBER STATES HELD ON TUESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2025 AT 10:00 AM

Hon'ble Kiryowa Kiwanuka, the Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda and the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO in the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM: GENERAL STATEMENTS

President: I welcome you all to Day 2 of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization. I now yield the floor to the delegation of Japan for General Statements.

The Head of the Delegation of Japan: His Excellency Mr. Kiryowa Kiwanuka, President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session, His Excellency Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, Secretary-General of AALCO, it is my honour to address the esteemed delegates of the Member States on behalf of the Government of Japan. At the outset, allow me to congratulate Mr. President on your election as Chair of the Sixty-Third Annual Session, and to express utmost gratitude to the Government of Uganda for the warm welcome and kind hospitality bestowed upon the delegates.

I commend the hard work of AALCO Secretariat for preparation of the Annual Session, which features a series of the agenda items, which are of interest of Asian and African countries. Japan has always admired Secretary-General Dr. Kamalinne's effort to consolidate the role of AALCO in international legal forums, with his initiatives to strengthen the spirit of friendship, cooperation, and solidarity among the Member States. From that perspective, we congratulate Secretary-General Kamalinne on his re-election.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, as we witness crises in various parts of the world, Japan once again voices our strong concern on the attempts to unilaterally change to the *status quo* by force or coercion. Disregard of the principle of the prohibition on the acquisition of territory through the use of force is alarming not only to those who are directly affected but to the international order as a whole. Conflicts must be resolved not by military force, but through peaceful means, and international law plays a gatekeeper role in that endeavour.

In that context, allow me to emphasize that this year marks 55 years since the adoption of the UN General Assembly Resolution on the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States. The anniversary offers a fitting opportunity to revisit the significance of the Declaration and the central principle of rule of law.

Mr. President, as a part of its effort to strengthen the rule of law, Japan attaches great importance on international judicial institutions. Currently, Japanese nationals serve as the Presidents of the ICJ and ICC, the esteemed international judicial bodies. I believe this is a recognition of Japan's consistent commitment to peace and the rule of law. Japan continues to strongly support these Courts in light of the severe international environment. Japan is also committed to the process at the ICJ and made oral statements in ICJ Advisory Opinion proceedings. Furthermore, we call upon countries among AALCO Member States that have not yet accepted the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ to do so. Similarly, we encourage accession to the ICC, which plays a vital role in the fight against impunity.

Mr. President, my Government takes great pride in the accomplishments that all Member States have achieved together under the auspices of AALCO, and we will continue our efforts to promote its productivity and efficiency. The importance of AALCO lies in the fact that it is the only international organization on international law, which covers both Asian and African

continent. In the progressive development of international law, the perspectives of Asian and African countries should never be ignored. However, the perspectives of Asian and African countries are not monolithic, and we need to fully understand the diversity among the countries in this region. One way for AALCO to fulfil its role, while fully respecting diversity, is to collect and submit the accumulation of state practices and jurisprudence on specific topics of international law to the ILC. For this purpose, Japan stands ready to support the AALCO Secretariat.

Referring to the work of the ILC, several prominent agenda items were proposed from both practical and academic viewpoints, in a recent session, and we recognize their significance. One of the agenda items, proposed by Dr. Masahiko Asada, aims to provide valuable practical guidance on obligations *erga omnes* in international law. Japan welcomes the proposal as timely for consideration by the ILC, especially given that in recent years the ICJ has been frequently referring to obligations *erga omnes* or *erga omnes partes* in its judgements and Advisory Opinions. Having the ILC's perspective on this matter will provide practical insights for the Member States of AALCO.

Mr. President, the foundation of the rule of law is built by human resources in the field of law. With the aim of capacity-building in international legal affairs, Japan hosts the Tokyo International Law Seminar, an international law training program, for officials from Asian and African countries, with AALCO and the United Nations University as the supporting organizations. This year marked the third seminar, with many AALCO Member countries participating, and we are honoured to have had the participation of Secretary-General Dr. Kamalinne.

Allow me to mention another important effort of Japan in human resource development. The United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI), which is operated by the Ministry of Justice of Japan, offers international training courses for criminal justice practitioners from around the world. Over the decades, UNAFEI has also fostered a global network of more than 6600 alumni from 144 countries/regions that serve as the foundation for effective international cooperation in criminal matters.

In conclusion, we are encouraged that the spirit of the Bandung Conference, which led to the establishment of AALCO after World War II, continues to this day. This spirit embodies the promotion of peace and cooperation, along with a deep respect for diversity. Inspired by these values, we hope that this week's deliberations will be productive and meaningful for all of us. My delegation stands ready to contribute actively. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you, the delegate of Japan. I now give the floor to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

The Head of the Delegation of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar: Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honour and privilege for me to attend this Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO, in the pearl of Africa, Kampala, the Republic of Uganda. On behalf of Myanmar delegation and on my own behalf, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Your Excellency Mr. Kiryowa Kiwanuka, the Attorney-General of Uganda, for the warmest hospitality since our arrival in Kampala. In addition, I would like to extend my congratulations on your election as the new President to this Session. It is truly an honour and a matter of pride.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, today is the special day for us. First of all, I really appreciate the AALCO Secretariat for its best efforts to release the

invaluable publications, including the Yearbook of AALCO, AALCO Journal of International Law, and some notable reports of the AALCO on current global issues. In this meeting, we all agree to confirm the AALCO's budget for the year of 2026.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I have noticed that this meeting focuses on important legal situations. Among them, I would like to discuss on some topics.

On the topic, The Law of the Sea, preservation and conservation of marine environment is crucial for protection of living and non-living resources. It is obvious that Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing activities create a direct threat to food security and socio-economic stability. It is also a violation of national and international fishing regulations. IUU fishing remains one of the serious threats to marine ecosystem. Myanmar is a nation with an extensive coastline and a strategic maritime position. The sea area of our country is rich in living and non-living resources, including fisheries, oil, and natural gas, which are vital for the country's economic growth. Myanmar recognizes both opportunities and challenges under UNCLOS. However, Myanmar remains committed to enhancing its legal and institutional frameworks, while also working hand in hand with neighbouring States and international partners to protect marine resources and combat illegal activities such as unauthorized fishing, smuggling, and piracy.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, with regard to Environment and Sustainable Development matter, Myanmar fully recognizes that economic, social, and environmental considerations are interconnected and must be balanced to achieve long-term well-being in the present and future. According to international commitments, Myanmar has participated in several international agreements related to environmental matters. Moreover, Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP, 2018-2030) has also been adopted and implemented in line with the existing local laws.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, on International Trade and Investment Law, I welcome the Secretariat's comprehensive brief on International Trade and Investment Law. Further, I notice that AALCO has streamlined its discussions on trade and investment under one agenda item since 2018. It is crucial that we work together to shape legal frameworks set to our specific needs. With regard to this topic, I would like to share Myanmar's activities to develop trade and investment sector. In Myanmar, the three special economic zones such as Thilawa, Dawei, Kyauk Phyu were established and the Special Economic Zone Law was enacted in 2014. Likewise, Myanmar carried out key legal reforms regarding to the development of trade and investment, including the enactment of Investment Law, Company Law, Arbitration Law, and Insolvency Law.

Let me share my idea on Alternative Dispute Resolution. We may see great potential of applying the way of mediation and of conciliation which might be faster and more affordable options prior to the arbitration in the settlement of commercial disputes. By applying mediation and conciliation before arbitration, we can save time and cost, offer flexible and confidential processes, preserve relationships, and lead to mutually agreeable solutions.

The next point I am eager to highlight here is the creation of a model investment treaty. Myanmar welcomes and strongly supports Tanzania's proposal to develop a Model Investment Treaty under the umbrella of AALCO. Indeed, our legal systems are diverse, but our investment goals are similar, and such a treaty would provide valuable guidance. We also need to give fresh consideration to establishing an Open-Ended Working Group as an initial step to carry forward AALCO's mandate on this initiative.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, on “Asset Recovery”, it is very crucial to implement for justice. The confiscation of assets related to transitional organized crimes including corruption is a strong deterrent for crimes. Myanmar is a party of United Nations Convention on Anti-Corruption and recently joined the GlobeE Network. Myanmar continues to foster its legal cooperation with international partners. I strongly believe that there is no safe haven for hiding illicit wealth by applying “follow the money” principle.

Another important item of this meeting is related to Outer Space. Indeed, it is clearly acknowledged that outer space is the province of all mankind and shall be used for the benefit of all countries, regardless of their degree of economic or scientific development. Myanmar is party to core international treaties and remains committed to accepting the peaceful use of outer space. In my experience, I would like to highlight that the use of outer space is being dominated by powerful States due to their financial and technological advantages. On the other hand, the developing countries face significant challenges in utilizing outer space due to limited capital and technology. Equity use of outer space should be encouraged through measures such as technology sharing, capacity-building programs, and financial assistance for launching small satellites. Therefore, I would like to urge the delegations to give due consideration and contribute assessment to this matter.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, relating to the matter of Cybercrime, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime highlights that cybercrime poses an ever-evolving global threat, which requires a global response. To address this growing global threat, governments require coordinated efforts, enact comprehensive national law, enhance information sharing, and increase public awareness. As a result, UN General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime, which is the first global treaty. It includes the provisions for both prevention and measures to combating cybercrime. I appreciate the government of Viet Nam for offering to host the signing ceremony for the Convention which is scheduled to take place on 25th to 26th October 2025.

In Myanmar, the Cybersecurity Law was recently enacted on 1st January 2025 and came into effect on 30th July 2025. This Law paves the way to regulate various aspects of digital security and to combat illegal online activities including online gambling. It contains a salient provision on extraterritorial penalties against Myanmar citizens who are found guilty of violations even if these occur outside the country. The said law represents a significant step in the country’s regulation and oversight of digital security.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, as a founding member of AALCO, Myanmar remains an active participant and reaffirms its enduring dedication to the objective and principles of this Organization. I believe that through solidarity and mutual respect, our organization can continue to shape international law in a manner that is fair, equitable, and responsive to the needs of its Member States.

In closing, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all those concerned who contributed their best efforts to organizing this important Session. I also thank all delegations for your valuable and active participation. I truly wish all of you the best of the best in everything you do. Thank you.

President: Thank you, Excellency. I now yield the floor the delegate of Nepal. You have the floor, Sir.

The Head of the Delegation of Nepal: It is a great honour of Nepal to address the Sixty-Third Annual Session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization. At the outset, I would like to congratulate H.E. Mr. Kiryowa Kiwanuka, the newly elected President and H.E. Ms.

Marie Charlotte G. Tang, the Vice-President of this Session and wish them every success in leading the Session to its full success.

My delegation extends our sincere appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Uganda for hosting this important gathering in this beautiful capital city of Kampala and for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to all delegations. Nepal also takes this opportunity to warmly congratulate His Excellency Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol on his re-appointment as Secretary-General of AALCO for the term 2026-29. We are confident that under his able leadership, AALCO will continue to grow stronger as a vital platform for Asia and Africa to work together on issues of international law.

Mr. President, Nepal attaches high importance to AALCO as a forum that unites Asia and Africa to deliberate on issues of international law that matter deeply to our regions and beyond. Our countries share not only history and struggles but also the common aspiration for justice, equity and peace. Through AALCO, we have the opportunity to strengthen cooperation, build consensus and contribute to the progressive development of international law in a way that reflects the priorities of the Global South.

We note with appreciation the rich agenda before us as a landlocked and also a least developed country. Nepal places a strong emphasis on her participation in global, legal and economic framework on the Law of the Sea. Nepal once again stresses the importance of safeguarding the right of landlocked States to have free and equitable access to and from the sea and to participate fairly in the sustainable use of ocean resources.

On Environment and Sustainable Development, Nepal recalls its written and oral statement presented before the International Court of Justice in the hearing for Advisory Opinion on Climate Change. In those proceedings, Nepal underlined that climate change poses an existential threat to many vulnerable States, including mountainous countries like ours. During the proceedings, Nepal comprehended that the principles of equity, common but differentiated responsibility and climate justice must guide international action.

Nepal warmly welcomes and holds in high regard the historic Advisory Opinion issued by the International Court of Justice on 23rd July 2025 regarding the Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change. This landmark Opinion will have positive impact in shaping the global discourse and remedial action to deliver climate justice to the most vulnerable ones. In Nepal, the melting of Himalayan glaciers, unpredictable weather and frequent natural disasters are already devastating life and livelihood.

We therefore call for a stronger international cooperation and effective implementation of global climate commitment to ensure the well-being of present and future generations. We also call for simplified and enhanced access to the Global Climate Fund for developing countries along with more efficient delivery process to realise the commitment.

On Trade and Investment, Nepal is preparing for its graduation from the category of least developed countries in 2026. While this marks a significant achievement, it also presents new challenges as Nepal moves forward. Continued international support and special and differential treatment remains essential to ensure that the graduation process is smooth, sustainable and irreversible. We support a transparent, fair and inclusive multilateral trading system and take into account the vulnerability of graduating countries and allows them to integrate fully and fairly into the global economy.

On peace and security, Nepal reaffirms its principal commitment to the UN Charter, the prohibition of the use of force, respect for sovereignty and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

We are deeply concerned by ongoing violation of international law and international humanitarian law in different parts of the world. Nepal stresses the importance of protecting civilians in armed conflict and upholding international law in all circumstances.

Mr. President, Nepal is committed to the norms and principles of transitional justice. We have constituted the Enforced Disappearances Enquiry Commission and Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Both Commissions are actively working for concluding the rest works of peace process. The Government of Nepal has allocated 1 billion Nepali rupees to the dedicated Fund for carrying out tasks related to the enforced disappearances enquiry and truth reconciliation. Nepal is committed to conclude the peace process taking into account the interests and concerns of the victim.

Mr. President, Nepal believes that AALCO is not only a consultative forum but also a bridge connecting Asia and Africa through solidarity, friendship, cooperation and common aspiration for prosperity. We encourage the Organization to continue involving young legal professionals so that our shared values and priorities are carried forward by the next generation.

In conclusion, Nepal reaffirms its full commitment to the principles and objectives of AALCO. We stand ready to work with all Member States to strengthen international law, promote multilateralism and contribute to peace, justice and sustainable development. We wish the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO every success. Thank you.

President: I thank the delegate from Nepal for their statement. I now give the floor to Malaysia followed by United Republic of Tanzania. Malaysia, you have the floor.

The Head of the Delegation of Malaysia: Thank You. Your Excellency, Mr. Kiryowa Kiwanuka, President of AALCO, Your Excellency Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, Secretary-General of AALCO, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the Malaysian delegation, allow me to thank the Government of Uganda for the warm welcome extended to all of us to their beautiful and precious country, the pearl of Africa. Our utmost appreciation is also conveyed to the Secretariat of AALCO for the excellent preparations and arrangements of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO.

We wish to join other delegations in congratulating Your Excellency Mr. Kiryowa Kiwanuka, President of AALCO and the Vice-President, Her Excellency Ms. Marie Charlotte Tang, for being elected to chair this Sixty-Third Annual Session and the work of AALCO one year from now. We look forward to working with you under your leadership. We would also like to pay tribute to the outgoing President of the Sixty-Second Session of AALCO, Amb. Suphanvasa Chotikajan Tang, who had worked wholeheartedly and tirelessly in spearheading AALCO during her tenure.

Excellencies and distinguished delegates, Malaysia also wishes to place on record our sincere congratulations to His Excellency Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol on his re-election as Secretary-General of AALCO for the term 2026 to 2029. We are confident that under his continued stewardship, AALCO will further strengthen its role as the collective voice of Asian and African nations on international legal matters.

On this, we note with appreciation of the new agenda item introduced by the Islamic Republic of Iran entitled Prohibition of Aggression and Use of Force in International Law, as well as agenda item on Violations of International Law by Rapid Support Forces in the Ongoing War in Sudan, introduced by the Republic of the Sudan. These topics will enrich the breadth of discussions within AALCO and reflect the evolving concerns of our Member States. Malaysia further welcomes the revival of the agenda item on the Legal Protection of Migrant Workers,

which was proposed by the Philippines. We look forward to engaging constructively on this matter.

On the work of the International Law Commission's (ILC), Malaysia underscores the importance of AALCO's role in providing a forum for Member States to deliberate. This process enables us to articulate our collective perspectives on matters of progressive development and codification of international law. Malaysia further warmly welcomes the Republic of Djibouti as the newest Member State of AALCO.

We are confident that Djibouti's membership will further enrich the diversity and strength of our Organization. This year's Session continues the spirit of AALCO since its establishment on 15th November 1956, following the historic Bandung Conference held in April 1955. Since then, AALCO has served as an integral platform for its Member States to deliberate each year on international law matters that are of common interest, as well as reaffirm the founding vision of AALCO. Through solidarity, friendship and cooperation among AALCO Member States, we have successfully accomplished tremendous developments and advancements in international law aspects. While Malaysia acknowledges the importance in enhancing the role of AALCO and its Member States in shaping the future of international law, Malaysia is of the view that increasing international cooperation in addressing international law issues is important too and should be the key outcomes of this Annual Session. As we are now faced with daunting and catastrophic challenges, international collaboration in forms of cooperation and engaging dialogues with other States and international organizations beyond ASEAN and African regions in solving the fragmented world's issues is crucial. This will not only strengthen the voice of AALCO globally, but also propel the development of international law through sharing experiences and best practices.

Excellencies and distinguished delegates, Malaysia welcomes matters enlisted in the agenda of this Annual Session. Malaysia looks forward to participating in the discussions with Member States on the topics included in the agenda. The outcome of which to be used as a basis to advance AALCO's views in a more coherent, effective and meaningful manner. We assure our full cooperation and participation to bring the work of this Annual Session to a successful conclusion.

In closing, Malaysia reiterates our strong support for the work of AALCO as a vital intergovernmental platform for legal consultation and cooperation in Asia and Africa regions. We remain committed to working closely with all Member States and the AALCO Secretariat in advancing the principles of international law that underpin peace, stability and sustainable development. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much, distinguished delegate from Malaysia. I now yield the floor to the United Republic of Tanzania. United Republic of Tanzania, you have the floor.

The Head of the Delegation of the United Republic of Tanzania: Your Excellency Hon. President, the Vice-President, the Secretary-General, Your Excellencies, Head of Delegations, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, good morning. On behalf of the Government and people of the United Republic of Tanzania, I am honoured to express our sincere appreciation for the opportunity to address this Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO. It is a privilege to participate in this Annual Session being held in Uganda, the Pearl of Africa.

We wish to convey our heartfelt thanks to the Government of Uganda for their kindness, hospitality and outstanding organization of this Annual Session. I join hands with the other delegations in congratulating you, Mr. President, and the Vice-President on your election to

lead the Sixty-Third Annual Session and to work with us in the coming year. Tanzania pledges its full support throughout your tenure.

Allow me also to take this opportunity to congratulate AALCO Secretary-General, His Excellency Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, for his reappointment and his distinguished leadership. We wish him continued success in his second term. We understand the weight and pressure that comes with the job, especially at the time of organising annual general meetings, and we salute you and the entire Secretariat for the job well done.

Under the leadership of Her Excellency Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, we recognise AALCO's vital role in fostering legal cooperation, mutual understanding and sustainable development across our regions. Tanzania remains fully committed to AALCO's principles and will continue to support efforts to strengthen its legal framework for cooperation. We particularly underscore the importance of legal cooperation in addressing shared global challenges such as cybercrime, climate change and promotion and protection of investment.

Mr. President, Tanzania welcomes the substantive agenda of this Session on the Law of the Sea, Environment and Sustainable Development, Violations of International Law in Palestine and Other Occupied Territories by Israel and Other International Legal Issues related to the Question of Palestine. We are also committed to Legal Issues in Outer Space, International Trade and Investment Law, Asset Recovery Expert Forum, Legal Protection of Migrant Workers, Prohibition of Aggression and Use of Force in International Law and Protection of Civilians during Armed Conflict and Crimes and Violations of International Law by the Rapid Support Forces in Sudan. These topics are timely and relevant for the prosperity of our region.

Mr. President, as technology advances, the misuse of the internet and social media platforms by perpetrators has become a significant threat, necessitating immediate attention and action. This is a critical moment for international law to consider how best to regulate and counteract the misuse of technology. The increasing prevalence of cybercrime underscores the need for robust legal frameworks that can effectively address this challenge.

By examining the current legal measures in place, there is an opportunity to identify gaps and propose solutions that are responsive to the evolving nature of the threat. The goal is to develop and adapt stronger, more effective laws that can protect the global community from danger of cybercrimes. Tanzania believes that through collaborative efforts, it is possible to create a safer world for all.

Mr. President, climate change is one of the most significant crisis currently confronting humanity. Hence, discussion on Environment and Sustainable Development requires regional intervention as well as AALCO intervention. Her Excellency Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, is leading efforts to mobilise global solidarity in combating the impacts of climate change. She has been emphasising the need for a collective response to this legal challenge, urging world leaders to collaborate with African nations to seize the opportunity to accelerate global clean energy. President Hassan has advocated for a balanced approach that not only addresses environmental concerns but also promotes equality and shared prosperity. She calls on global leaders to recognise the potential in working together to achieve sustainable development while ensuring that no one is left behind. By uniting in this cause, there is a chance to make significant strides toward a more sustainable and equitable future for all.

We take note of the brief by the Secretariat on the topic of Violation of International Law in Palestine and Other Occupied Territories by Israel and Other International Legal Issues Related

to the Question of Palestine. We reiterate our call for a peaceful resolution of disputes and parties to pursue durable peace through a genuine dialogue guaranteed by the goodwill of the entire family of nations rooted in an imperative of the two equally viable States living side by side in peace and harmony.

Mr. President, Tanzania also wishes to share our Mama Samia Legal Aid Campaign, launched in 2023 to expand access to justice for citizens unable to afford legal representation. By 2025, it has reached all 31 regions of Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar. The campaign, anchored in our Legal Aid Act of 2017, has increased awareness, dispute settlement mechanisms, and pro bono services nationwide. We encourage AALCO to consider convening a Legal Aid Forum with the potential of a broader convention to advance access to justice for indigent persons across our regions.

In closing, I reaffirm Tanzania's unwavering commitment to AALCO's mission and its role in advancing prosperity, stability, and sustainability through law. Finally, I warmly invite you all to visit Tanzania, from the snow-capped Kilimanjaro to the beautiful national parks of Serengeti, Ngorongoro, Mikumi, Manyara, and the spice-rich island of Zanzibar.

Thank you for your kind attention. *Asante sana. Webalenyo.*

President: *Asante sana*, distinguished delegate from the United Republic of Tanzania. I now yield the floor to the Republic of Philippines.

The Head of the Delegation of the Republic of the Philippines: Mr. President, Honourable Secretary-General, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. The Philippines warmly congratulates Uganda on its presidency of this Session and expresses appreciation to Thailand for its leadership of the Sixty-Second Session. We convey our gratitude to all Member States for your confidence and trust by electing the Philippines as Vice-President of this Session. We sincerely thank the Government and people of Uganda for their gracious hospitality and commend Uganda's enduring commitment to multilateralism and South-South cooperation.

We also thank the AALCO Secretariat for its excellent preparations and welcome the Republic of Djibouti as AALCO's forty-ninth Member State. The Philippines reaffirms its steadfast commitment to AALCO as a vital platform for advancing legal perspectives of Asia and Africa. AALCO is an important forum that unites these perspectives to contribute to the development of effective and forward-looking legal instruments, to contribute to the development for the common good.

Since re-joining in 2019, the Philippines has contributed meaningfully to AALCO's work in strengthening a just, inclusive, and rules-based international legal order. AALCO plays a crucial role in upholding the rule of law as the foundation for peaceful and just international relations. International law is the great equaliser, ensuring that the voices and rights of all States, regardless of size or power, are heard and respected.

This principle is deeply embedded in the Philippines' legal and diplomatic tradition, including the 1982 Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes. We categorically reject the use or threat of force and reaffirm our commitment to resolving disputes through peaceful legal means. We value AALCO's collaboration with the International Law Commission and support greater representation of Asian and African legal perspectives in its work.

On the topic, the Law of the Sea, we reaffirm our unwavering support for the UNCLOS as the constitution of the ocean. It remains the cornerstone for maritime order, peaceful dispute

resolution, and the protection of marine resources and environments. In dealing with issues affecting the ocean, such as in the marine environment, on marine resources, in the blue economy, in maritime transport, and in maritime security, the Philippines believes that the rights, freedoms, and obligations of States within UNCLOS are paramount. We have to effectively implement the implementing agreements under UNCLOS, and especially strive to achieve the entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement, as well as conclude a global Plastics Treaty. We must continue to champion compliance with decisions and rulings duly rendered through the compulsory dispute settlement mechanisms under UNCLOS, as well as respect for the Advisory Opinions that provide authoritative clarity to its provisions, such as the 2024 ITLOS Advisory Opinion on Climate Change and International Law. The ITLOS Advisory Opinion cemented the ocean climate change, biodiversity nexus, and affirmed how States' responsibilities go beyond the UNFCCC framework and also emerge from our obligations under the UNCLOS.

Mr. President, the Philippines expresses grave concern over the dire humanitarian crisis resulting from conflicts in our region, including the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza. We reiterate our call for full respect for international humanitarian law, with the protection of civilians as paramount. In this regard, the Philippines recalls its hosting of the International Women, Peace, and Security Conference in Pasay City, Philippines in October 2024, reaffirming our commitment to advancing the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda and ensuring women's voices remain central to conflict prevention, resolution, and recovery. The Philippines advances this agenda through key legal instruments, notably the National Action Plan on WPS, first adopted in 2010 as the first in Asia to align with the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, as well as the Magna Carta of Women, also known as Republic Act No. 9710, which institutionalises gender equality and mandates the integration of a gender and development perspective across government policies and programmes.

Mr. President, climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution demand urgent legal and collective action. As one of the world's most climate-vulnerable countries, climate action for the Philippines is both a legal imperative and an existential necessity. Our Climate Change Act guides our response, and we have committed to reducing emissions by 75% by 2030, largely conditional on international support. We are proud to host the Board of the Loss and Damage Fund, institutionalised through Republic Act No. 12019. We remain concerned that contributions to climate finance remain far below what developing countries need.

We welcome the Advisory Opinions from ITLOS and the ICJ, affirming State obligations to address climate-related harm under international and maritime law, including recognition of greenhouse gas emissions as marine pollution under the UNCLOS.

The Philippines also welcomes AALCO's continued attention to Legal Protection of Migrant Workers, a topic we introduced to the agenda. With decades of experience in established systems, the Philippines stands ready to share best practices in migrant worker protection, benefit portability, and crisis response.

As part of our proactive engagement in AALCO, the Philippines chairs the Subcommittee on the Review of the Scale of Assessed Contributions, demonstrating our commitment to AALCO's institutional strengthening and sustainability.

Mr. President, in addressing our ever-complex global challenges, international law must remain our anchor. The Philippines reaffirms its commitment to AALCO's mission and stands ready to work with Member States in advancing the rule of law, peaceful dispute resolution, and sustainable development. Let us move forward together, guided by the enduring Bandung spirit

of solidarity, cooperation, and mutual respect, to build a just and inclusive international legal order for all. Thank you. *Mabuhay*.

President: Thank you, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of the Philippines. I now yield the floor to the State of Palestine followed by the Kingdom of Bahrain, Mauritius and Somalia. State of Palestine, you have the floor.

The Head of the Delegation of the State of Palestine:¹ In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful! Mr. President of the Sixty-Third Session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO), H.E the Secretary-General of AALCO, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. It is my honour to extend to you the greetings of the State of Palestine, its leadership, Government, and people, and to express our deep appreciation to the friendly Republic of Uganda for hosting the Sixty-Third Session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, and to the Secretariat of the Organization for its efforts in organizing this important meeting. It is my pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of H.E., the Minister of Justice of the State of Palestine.

Ladies and gentlemen, we meet today as the entire world witnesses an unprecedented tragedy faced by our Palestinian people, particularly in the Gaza Strip, which for nearly two years has become a theatre of genocidal crimes. So far, tens of thousands of our people have been martyred, the majority of them women and children. Thousands remain missing under the rubble, and tens of thousands are wounded without medicine or medical care. More than 80% of Gaza's population have been forcibly displaced from their homes and now live in tents or in the open, without clean water or electricity, under harsh conditions that threaten their lives daily.

The occupation's policy has not been limited to bombing and destruction, but has taken on an even more brutal form: starvation as a weapon of war. Children are dying of hunger, mothers search for a morsel among the rubble, and an entire people is besieged to death. This is not an incidental outcome of war, but a systematic policy, and a clear crime under the Geneva Conventions.

Ladies and gentlemen, what is happening in Gaza is a continuation of the occupation's approach throughout all of Palestine. In the West Bank and East Jerusalem, illegal settlement expansion, forced displacement, land confiscation, mass arrests, and armed settler attacks are escalating, under complete impunity. The objective of the occupation is clear: to uproot the Palestinian people from their land and impose a colonial settler reality.

Ladies and gentlemen, today, Palestine is not a political issue or a regional dispute, but rather a test of the credibility of the international legal system. Either the international community proves its commitment to international law and human rights, or we will all face the complete collapse of the global justice system.

Accordingly, the State of Palestine calls upon to support the efforts aimed at:

1. The immediate cessation of the genocide, ending blockade and starvation and ensuring the unrestricted entry of humanitarian aid.
2. Supporting the legal efforts before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and supporting the Advisory Opinion issued by the ICJ regarding the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories, in which the Court affirmed that this occupation is "illegal" and called upon the occupying power to end its occupation of these territories. The Court also emphasized the

¹ Statement was delivered in Arabic. This is an unofficial translation done by the Secretariat.

necessity for Israel to cease the settlement expansion and to evacuate all settlers from the occupied territories. This Opinion was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, which subsequently issued a resolution calling upon the occupying power to “end its unlawful presence in the occupied Palestinian territory” within 12 months.

3. Implementing the decision issued by Pre-Trial Chamber I of the International Criminal Court, which issued arrest warrants against Israeli war criminals on charges of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Gaza Strip.

4. Supporting the outcomes of the New York Conference on the Two-State Solution, held under the joint initiative and co-chairmanship of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the French Republic, as an international diplomatic framework to activate the settlement in accordance with United Nations resolutions, leading to the establishment of an independent State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Ladies and gentlemen, in conclusion, we wish to express our profound gratitude to all the brotherly and friendly States that have stood by our just cause, supporting the rights of our people and affirming the Palestinian right to freedom and independence, and to the establishment of an independent State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you.

President: Thank you the distinguished delegate from the State of Palestine for your statement. I now yield the floor to the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The Head of the Delegation of the Kingdom of Bahrain:² Your Excellency the President, Your Excellency the Secretary-General of the Organization, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. At the outset of this session, I am pleased to express my deep thanks and appreciation to the friendly Republic of Uganda and its esteemed Government for generously hosting the Sixty-Third Session of the Asian-African Legal Consulting Organization. We were warmly welcomed in this beloved country, reflecting the deep-rooted relations between our countries and the bonds of solidarity between our peoples. I would also like to extend my deep gratitude to the Secretariat of the Organization, headed by His Excellency the Secretary-General, and his entire team of legal and administrative experts, for their commendable efforts in preparing the documents, arranging the topics, and ensuring a sound organization, all of which contributed to the success of this session and ensured that our deliberations were fruitful and constructive. I cannot miss extending my sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Kiryowa Kiwanuka on his election as President of this Session. We express our full confidence in his wisdom and competence to lead his work to success, and we affirm the Kingdom of Bahrain’s readiness to provide all necessary support and assistance.

Your Excellency, President, the Kingdom of Bahrain, under the wise leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, may God protect him, firmly believes that the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization is not merely a forum for consultation, but rather a legal and diplomatic school that brings together two continents and forms the cornerstone of contemporary international law. Since its founding, the Organization has played an active role in developing customary international law and in enriching discussions on major legal issues, most notably issues of sovereignty, the right of peoples to self-determination, the principles of non-interference and respect for the rules of international humanitarian law.

² Statement was delivered in Arabic. The Secretariat acknowledges with gratitude the official translation provided by the Delegation of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

In this context, the Kingdom of Bahrain prioritizes its support for this Organization, believing that international law is the supreme framework for regulating relations between states and that adherence to its principles remains the fundamental pillar for ensuring international peace and security. International law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, is not static texts, but rather a system of values and ethics that expresses the conscience of humanity and embodies peoples' aspirations for justice and human dignity.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Kingdom of Bahrain has been keen to align its national legislation with its international obligations, particularly in the area of protecting human rights and promoting the rule of law. The Kingdom has worked to develop labour and judicial laws to provide comprehensive protection for migrant workers and guarantee the principle of equality before the law for all residents. It has also made combating trafficking in persons a central issue, continuing its efforts to achieve Tier 1 status for the seventh consecutive year in the US State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report, an achievement that reflects its commitment to the principles of social justice and humanity.

Bahrain continues its efforts to consolidate its position as a regional and international center for arbitration and justice, through its readiness to host the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) and its efforts to strengthen the link between its judicial system and the International Commercial Court in Singapore. This will enhance confidence in the business environment, attract international investment, and enable the Kingdom to contribute to the fair and transparent settlement of international commercial disputes.

The Kingdom of Bahrain also affirms its unwavering commitment to the principles of integrity, transparency, and the fight against corruption in all its forms, based on its belief that corruption is a fundamental pillar for achieving sustainable development and building the confidence of the international community. In this context, the Kingdom is continuously developing its legislative and oversight frameworks and strengthening partnerships with the private sector and civil society. In line with its international responsibility, Bahrain is also committed to actively participating in collective efforts to combat this scourge through close cooperation with international and regional organizations and the exchange of best practices and expertise. These integrated efforts aim to establish an environment based on fair competition and accountability, thus strengthening the Kingdom's position as a leading financial and economic center in the region.

Your Excellency, the challenges facing our world today, whether armed conflicts, humanitarian crises, or the repercussions of climate change, underscore more than ever the need to adhere to multilateral diplomacy as the only option. Current crises remind us that international humanitarian law is not a legal luxury, but rather a humanitarian necessity to protect civilians, ensure the delivery of aid, and preserve human dignity in times of conflict. The Kingdom of Bahrain, while affirming its commitment to the principles of this law, calls for enhanced compliance by all parties and the development of international accountability mechanisms to ensure its respect and preservation.

In this context, we cannot but address the Palestinian issue, which remains at the core of the Kingdom of Bahrain's foreign policy priorities. The Kingdom has affirmed its firm position on the necessity of establishing an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, as the only way to achieve a just and comprehensive peace. In preparation for Bahrain's non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council for the period 2026-2027, the Kingdom will make the Palestinian issue a central focus of its international efforts, building on its balanced approach, distinguished relations with various parties, and its established credibility in multilateral diplomacy.

Ladies and gentlemen, in recent years, Bahrain has demonstrated its ability to assume leadership roles at the regional and international levels. This was demonstrated by its successful hosting of the Thirty-Third Arab Summit in May 2024, which established significant results in strengthening Arab solidarity. Its election as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council also demonstrated the international community's confidence in its approach.

Its approach is based on dialogue and balance, and its sincere efforts to promote international peace and security. In addition, the Kingdom is preparing to assume the presidency of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), enhancing its role in the Gulf integration process and serving the interests of the peoples of the region.

Regarding environmental challenges, the Kingdom of Bahrain places climate and environmental pollution at the forefront of its priorities. It has declared its commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2060 and has adopted practical policies to reduce emissions, combat plastic pollution, and protect the environment for future generations. Believing in the principle of "climate justice," the Kingdom calls for enhanced international cooperation to address these challenges on the basis of solidarity and shared but differentiated responsibilities.

Your Excellency, the President, in conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain expresses its sincere hope that our deliberations at this Session will contribute to enhancing our shared understanding of current international issues, particularly those related to international law in its various branches, and to increasing the pace of coordination and consultation between our countries, thus advancing our joint legal process and embodying the noble principles upon which our esteemed Organization has been based since its inception. We are confident that the outcome of this session will contribute to strengthening the bonds of cooperation between Asia and Africa and consolidating the status of international law as a fundamental reference for resolving conflicts and achieving justice and peace.

May the peace, mercy, and blessings of God be upon you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Kingdom of Bahrain. I now yield the floor to the Republic of Mauritius followed by the Federal Republic of Somalia. Republic of Mauritius, you have the floor.

The Head of the Delegation of the Republic of Mauritius: Thank you, Mr. President, the Honourable Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda for giving me the floor. In the interest of time, Mr. President, I will be brief. At the outset, let me convey the warmest greetings from the Republic of Mauritius, the people and the Government of Mauritius to all of you present here today, Excellencies.

Mr. President, I wish to once again congratulate you and for that matter, the Republic of Uganda, upon your election as the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of our esteemed Organization, AALCO. We are proud that a fellow African is presiding over AALCO and is conducting the business and proceedings in an outstanding manner.

Let me assure you, Excellency, of the full support of Mauritius during the Ugandan presidency. As you are aware, Mr. President, Mauritius and Uganda have excellent bilateral relations both regionally within COMESA and at the African Union where our two countries work collectively to promote regional and continental integration for the benefit of our peoples among other things.

Mauritius also congratulates the Republic of the Philippines for its election as the Vice-President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO and I am reminded that this proposal was first made by Mauritius. On the other hand, I wish to place on record our appreciation to

the former President of AALCO, the Kingdom of Thailand, for the equally exemplary manner in which the affairs and business of our august Organization were conducted over the past year. We want to thank Thailand for all its contributions and cooperation.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate the Secretary-General of AALCO, His Excellency Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, for his reappointment as the Secretary-General for a second four-year term. His re-appointment demonstrates the continued trust and confidence that Member States have in his commitment and ability to lead the Secretariat of AALCO. Furthermore, we are thankful to the Secretariat staff who have spared no effort in preparing all the conference papers, reports and documents for the smooth and effective holding of this Annual Session.

Mr. President, I have a duty on behalf of the Government and people of Mauritius to thank the Government and the people of Uganda for the very warm welcome, a tradition in Africa, hospitality and courtesies extended to the Mauritius delegation since our arrival, as well as for all the arrangements made so far for our stay in Kampala and for ensuring the successful organization of this Annual Session.

Mr. President, distinguished heads of delegations, ladies and gentlemen, Mauritius deeply thanks all African and Asian AALCO Member States for their unflinching support to its long-standing struggle for sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago. This was done with a view to completing its decolonisation process. In fact, Mr. President, on the 22nd May this year, 2025, Mauritius and the United Kingdom signed a historic agreement concerning the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia. Under this agreement, the United Kingdom recognises the sovereignty of Mauritius over the entirety of the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia. This historic victory had been made possible largely owing to the unity and solidarity of the entire African continent and the equally essential support of our Asian friends. Without their support, Mr. President, Mauritius would not have reached this significant outcome with the United Kingdom.

As the Ugandan Minister of Justice said yesterday morning, if the cause is just, then it is a matter of time. And it took many years for Mauritius to obtain this historic victory. The struggle of Mauritius may be considered as a textbook case for AALCO in the field of international law and a source of inspiration as well as reference.

Mr. President, Mauritius joined AALCO in 1972, barely four years after its independence in March 1968. If we are not mistaken, Mauritius is the only African Small Island Developing State in AALCO. As a SIDS, that is, Small Island Developing State, Mauritius faces unique challenges and is at serious risk from rising sea-level caused by global warming.

Moreover, Mauritius, as we know, is situated in the Southwest Indian Ocean, an area prone to cyclones, droughts, and in short, to the adverse effects of climate change. As we grapple with the effects of climate change, Mr. President, coupled with the emergence of new challenges, we are confident that AALCO will continue to play a bigger role in advancing regional and international legal frameworks in the field of international environmental law with a view to enhancing the sustainable socio-economic development of its Member States. Besides climate change, Mr. Chairman, the list of emerging issues continues to grow and includes issues such as digital trade, intellectual property, and data privacy, among others. We are convinced, Mr. President, that AALCO will focus on these issues as well.

To conclude, Mr. President, Mauritius believes that AALCO will remain a crucial platform for legal cooperation and advocacy for its Member States, ensuring that their interests are well represented. Towards this goal, Mr. President, Mauritius reiterates its full support to AALCO and looks forward to fruitful collaboration and cooperation in the years to come.

Mr. President, yesterday you have reiterated in your two or three speeches that delegates must find some time to visit and admire the beauty of Uganda, the Pearl of Africa. While we are not asking for a piece of that pearl, Mr. President, it is humbly requested that despite a very loaded programme, you will release us and give us some free time so that we can at least visit Kampala and dip our feet in the waters of the largest lake of Africa, still known as Lake Victoria. By the way, Mr. President, I was looking at the area of Lake Victoria and found that this lake is almost 35 times bigger than my country. So you can imagine the desire of someone from a tiny, small country to see that wonder of nature.

Finally, Mr. President, I wish to convey our thanks and appreciation to all the protocol officers of Uganda who did and are doing a marvellous job in ensuring the success of our meeting. I have been myself Chief of Protocol in Mauritius on several occasions and I know the amount of effort and dedication that these officers put in, so we thank them very much.

With these few words, Mr. President and Excellencies, I thank you for your kind attention. *Merci Beaucoup.*

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from Mauritius. We are going to ensure that we find some time to allow you to enjoy the benefits of the beautiful Pearl of Africa. Thank you very much for your statement. I now yield the floor to the Federal Republic of Somalia. Federal Republic of Somalia, you have the floor.

The Head of the Delegation of the Federal Republic of Somalia: Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Honourable Ministers, Heads of Delegations, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. It is my great honour on behalf of the Government and the people of the Federal Republic of Somalia to address this distinguished gathering at the Sixty-Third Annual Session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization. I extend my warm congratulations to you, Mr. President, and the Vice-President on your election to preside over this session. I commend the Secretary-General and his dedicated Secretariat for their tireless work in preparing this important meeting.

Allow me to convey our sincere appreciation to the Government and the people of the Republic of Uganda for their warm hospitality and excellent arrangements accorded to me and my delegation for this conference in this beautiful city of Kampala. Excellencies, Mr. President, I bear witness to the words and the truth that Uganda, the host country of this conference today, paid blood and treasure, the highest form of sacrifice for the Somali people, and we remain eternally grateful for the pacification of our country. As a result of these efforts, Somalia is where it is today. It has recovered and is making steady progress. I have to point out that my presence here today is not only by invitation but through the insistence of the Uganda Consul-General to Somalia, my dear friend, General Nathan Mugisha, who led the effort in the liberation of Mogadishu from the scourge of the terrorist outfit al-Shabaab some 15 years ago. Fighting terrorism requires international cooperation and developing a common agenda of strengthening our international cooperation in ridding and eliminating this scourge from the face of the earth.

This session, Mr. President, comes at a time when our regions, Asia and Africa, continue to face both challenges and opportunities. AALCO, as the only intergovernmental organization that brings together our two continents to deliberate on matters of international law, has a vital role to play in strengthening the rule of law, advancing justice, and promoting peace and development. For Somalia, the strengthening of international law is not an abstract aspiration but a daily necessity. We continue to consolidate peace, rebuild our institutions, and advance constitutional governance. The principles of justice, accountability, and the rule of law are

essential for the future of our country, and we deeply value the support of our Asian and African brothers and partners in this endeavour.

Excellencies, Mr. President, we note with particular interest in the substantive agenda items before this session, namely, on cyber law and international law in cyberspace. Somalia welcomes regional and international cooperation to address cybercrimes, ensure cyber security, and protect citizens from exploitation in the digital domain.

On International Trade and Investment, we emphasise the need for a just and equitable system that allows developing countries, particularly those emerging from conflict like Somalia, to benefit from fair participation in the global economy.

On Environment and Sustainable Development, Somalia, as one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change, calls for enhanced international cooperation to address environmental degradation, desertification, rising sea-levels, and climate-induced displacement.

On Palestine, Somalia reaffirms its unwavering solidarity with the people of Palestine in their legitimate struggle for self-determination and calls for respect of international law and the protection of civilians in the occupied territories. On the protection of civilians during armed conflict, Somalia strongly supports its initiatives to uphold international humanitarian law and to ensure accountability for those who commit war crimes and atrocities.

Excellencies, Mr. President, in conclusion, we believe that AALCO should continue to be a strong voice for the developing world in codification and progressive development of international law. It should remain a platform where our common values of justice, sovereignty, and equality of nations are upheld.

Mr. President, Somalia reaffirms its commitment to working closely with the Member States of AALCO to advance the rule of law at national, regional, and international levels. We extend our deep appreciation once again to the host country, the Republic of Uganda, and to the AALCO Secretariat. Thank you very much.

President: Thank you very much from the distinguished delegate from the Federal Republic of Somalia for your statement. According to my schedule, we would have been taking a break at exactly 11.30 A.M. Now this marks the end of the statements from the Member States. We shall then be moving to the Observer non-Member States and the Observer International Organizations. So I think this is a good time for us to take a break and return at 11.45 A.M. when we start with the Observer non-Member States. I thank you. We take a break. The statements shall start at exactly 11:45 A.M. Thank you.

The Meeting was thereafter adjourned for Coffee Break.

The Meeting was thereafter resumed.

President: Good morning, again. I am sure we have all had a cup of tea, coffee and I trust you have had some of the best coffee you have tasted. So let us reconvene. Before the break, I had mentioned that we had completed with the Member States. My apologies. We have one more statement from our newest Member, the distinguished delegate from Djibouti. The distinguished delegate from Djibouti, you have the floor to make your statement.

The Head of the Delegation of the Republic of Djibouti: Thank you. Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished delegates of AALCO Member States, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

I am delighted to deliver on behalf of the Republic of Djibouti my country's inaugural General Statement at the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO. At the outset, the Republic of Djibouti wishes to renew its deep appreciation to the Government and people of the Republic of Uganda for the warm hospitality and for the excellent arrangements made for the successful hosting of this Annual Session. Djibouti also takes this opportunity to congratulate the newly appointed President and Vice-President of this Session.

We are confident that their leadership will guide our deliberation to a fruitful and productive outcome. We further welcome the renewal of the mandate of the Secretary-General and commend his continued dedication to strengthening the role and relevance of AALCO. We express our sincere gratitude to the Secretariat for its unwavering support to Member States and for the comprehensive and multiple reports prepared on the various agenda items selected by Member States. These efforts continue to provide invaluable legal insight and facilitate informed discussion and cooperation among Asian-African Members.

Mr. President, Djibouti reiterates its longstanding and unwavering support for the cause of the Palestinian people and we affirm its commitment to the realisation of their legitimate and inalienable right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital. We remain gravely concerned by the crude and escalating violations of international law committed against the Palestinian people, including the prolonged illegal occupation of Palestinian territory and the perpetration of innumerable and intolerable acts, constitutive of grave breaches of international law.

Djibouti supports all legitimate political and legal avenues aimed at holding perpetrators accountable and achieving justice. It is a duty grounded in common legal principles, historical responsibility, and human conscience. We stand firmly behind international initiatives within the UN system, the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court, and other multilateral forums that seek to uphold international law and ensure the protection of Palestinian rights.

Mr. President, as a coastal State on the Strait of Bab El Mandab, strategically located at the crossroad of major maritime routes, Djibouti remains fully committed to the Law of the Sea, including the full implementation of the UNCLOS. Djibouti values the important role of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in the peaceful settlement of disputes and the development of the Law of the Sea. Djibouti was involved in the request for the Advisory Opinion on the specific obligations of states under the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea with respect to climate change. We also ratified the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction, BBNJ Agreement, in July 2025.

We reaffirm our resolute engagement in promoting maritime security, including through the Djibouti Code of Conduct and the subsequent Jeddah amendment, which offer crucial frameworks for regional cooperation to combat piracy and other transnational maritime crimes in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden.

Mr. President, climate change, particularly sea-level rise, poses an existential threat to coastal and low-lying nations. Djibouti is acutely aware of these risks and has taken steps to address climate change. The Government has adopted a series of ambitious initiatives, including the National Adaptation Plan, the promotion of renewable energy, the development of climate-resilient infrastructure, and the expansion of marine protected areas. We continue to engage actively in international climate negotiations and call for enhanced cooperation and financial support for mitigation and adaptation in vulnerable countries.

Mr. President, we appreciate the valuable work on numerous topics of importance undertaken by the AALCO Secretariat and commend the active engagement of Member States to promote a strong and dynamic Organization capable of tackling current and upcoming challenges. Djibouti attaches great importance to the unique and historic role of AALCO in assisting its Member States to commit to, navigate, and influence in the spirit of solidarity and mutual respect that was embodied in the 1955 Bandung Conference, the crafting and upholding of international law. We recognise this forum as a precious and distinct forum platform for coordinating positions between Asian and African countries and for ensuring that our voices are heard and respected on the international legal stage.

Djibouti thanks the Member States for their warm welcome and reaffirms once more its strong commitment to AALCO's mission.

President: Thank you. Thank you very much the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Djibouti for your maiden statement. You are most welcome to AALCO. That marks the end of the statements from the Member States. We will now move to the observer non-Member States. I yield the floor to the Russian delegation. The distinguished delegate from the Russian Federation, you have the floor.

The Head of the Delegation of the Russian Federation: Dear Mr. President, dear colleagues, good morning. Let me start by congratulating the authorities of Uganda upon organising this Session in such a beautiful setting. We trust that the Session itself will be as much a success. For Russia, Annual Meetings of AALCO remain an important occasion to share our views on the current situation in international law and maybe more importantly to listen to our numerous friends from Asia and Africa.

Our relations with these two continents are developing at a high pace. For example, the Russia-Africa partnership forum launched in 2019 is gaining momentum, reflecting the complex and truly strategic nature of this relationship. We are looking forward to the third Russia-Africa Summit scheduled for 2026. With Asia, we welcome the recent summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation held in Tianjin, China, as well as the multiple dialogue mechanisms that we enjoy with ASEAN, the Arab League, and other regional fora.

Mr. President, international law is one of the many areas where views of Russia largely coincide with approaches of our African and Asian friends. Together, we stand for true multilateralism, mutual respect, promoting unity rather than divisions. We believe it essential to preserve and implement the universally recognised principles of international law, including those enshrined in the United Nations Charter. These ideas have been supported by leaders in the Tianjin Declaration. They stressed adherence to building a more representative, democratic, fair, and multipolar world order.

Let me also draw your attention to the “Russian-Chinese Declaration on Further Strengthening Cooperation to Uphold the Authority of International Law”, signed by our Foreign Ministers in May this year. Among other things, Russia and China reject the practice of double standards and oppose actions that undermine peace and stability under false pretense of rule of law or a rules-based order.

Mr. President, many delegations have underscored the importance of the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes. In this context, let me once again draw your attention to the situation in the field of international justice. Unfortunately, we are witnessing further attempts to abuse international judicial mechanisms for narrow, short-term political goals. We are convinced that in the long run, this is detrimental to the credibility and integrity of judicial bodies. One example of such deterioration is, of course, the so-called International Criminal Court. Our

attitude to that body is well-known. Over the past year, it has continued its policy of ignoring fundamental rules of international law and of targeting non-Member States. We call upon all countries to have a closer look at this dangerous trend, as indeed every country may fall victim of this approach. The European policy of bribing the court with voluntary contributions on the one hand and the United States sanctions against ICC officials on the other are yet another indication of the political nature of the ICC.

Mr. President, one institution that has managed to preserve its independence and impartiality is the International Court of Justice. It is essential to maintain the fair geographic representation of judges as well as a balanced civilisations and legal systems of the world. Meanwhile, we are carefully studying the ICJ Advisory Opinion on the obligations of States in the field of climate change. It is already clear that some conclusions of the court will require further analysis and discussions in which Russia intends to take an active part.

Dear colleagues, as you know, one of Russia's concerns regarding international law is the practise of unilateral coercive measures or sanctions. The number of States willing to raise their voice against this neo-colonial phenomenon is growing, and we applaud the decision of the UN General Assembly to proclaim an international day against unilateral coercive measures to be observed on 4th December each year.

Mr. President, dear colleagues, an important milestone in the development of international law has been the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime. Russia is proud to have been one of the pioneers of that Convention. We call upon all states to sign it at the upcoming ceremony in Hanoi, and we will discuss these matters later today at the dedicated event organised by Viet Nam, China, Russia and the UNODC.

Dear colleagues, I wish I could speak more of the current international legal issues, including on the horrendous violations of international law committed against the Palestinian people, as well as against the Islamic Republic of Iran. But time is short, so let me conclude by wishing all of you interesting and fruitful discussions at this session, and later at the Sixth Committee of the UN General Assembly. Thank you very much.

President: Thank you very much, distinguished delegate from the Russian Federation. We will now move to Observer intergovernmental organisations. The International Committee for the Red Cross, I yield the floor to you.

The Head of the Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross: Your Excellencies, Honourable Ministers, distinguished guests, it is a great honour to address this Assembly on behalf of the International Committee of the Red Cross. I wish to thank the Government of Uganda and the Secretariat of AALCO for convening this important meeting, and for the opportunity to share a few reflections at this critical moment.

I would like to congratulate Uganda for being appointed as the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO. I would like also to congratulate His Excellency Dr. Kamalinne for his re-appointment as the Secretary-General of AALCO. Ladies and gentlemen, today we gather at a time when the human cost of armed conflict continues to weigh heavily on societies across both Africa and Asia. This suffering is not distant or abstract. It is a real and immediate failure in the destruction of homes, in the targeting of hospitals, in the breakdown of essential infrastructure, in long-lasting trauma experienced by communities. The law is clear, even wars have limits, but far too often these limits are ignored.

International Humanitarian Law, IHL, the body of the law that governs the conduct of war, exists to protect those who do not or no longer take part in hostilities. It is a reflection of simple

but powerful ideas that even, in times of armed conflict, our shared humanity must be preserved. However, this legal protection only has a meaning if they are respected, if they are known, and if they are made a priority by those who have the power to ensure their implementation.

It is in this spirit that I am pleased to share with you the vision in growing momentum behind the global initiative of International Humanitarian Law. This is not a new treaty or a legal instrument. It is a political initiative launched by ICRC together with the diverse group of States to renew and reinforce commitment of IHL. It calls for States to place the respect, promotion, and implementation of IHL at the heart of national and international decision-making as it has been mentioned this morning as well. The initiative is driven by the cognition that the challenges we face today are complex, fast-evolving, and often transnational. The nature of conflict is changing from urban warfare to cyber operations, from the use of autonomous weapons to the collapse of public service and the pressure of prolonged violence. Yet, the suffering of civilians remains constant. That is why this initiative aims to move from reaffirming principles to translating them into action through legislation, through policy, through practice. At the heart of this initiative lies a simple but powerful conviction that respect for the law in times of war is not a luxury. It is a necessity. The protection that IHL offers to civilians, to detainees, to wounded combatants, and to essential civilian infrastructure is not conditional. It applies regardless of the cause of the conflict, regardless of who the parties are, and regardless of where the fighting takes place. And yet, too often, these protections are disregarded or even deliberately violated.

The global initiative calls for a new political will to ensure that IHL is integrated into defence planning, into military training, into national legislation, and into public discourse. Since the launch of the initiative in September 2024, we have seen encouraging momentum. Over 130 States have participated in consultations, including many Africans and Asians. The engagement has been rich, substantive, and most importantly led by the perspective and realities of the States themselves. The thematic areas are emerging from the first phase, such as protection of hospitals, the preservation of civil infrastructure, the legal challenge posed by the new technologies, and the link between IHL and peace process are being taken forward by states through dedicated work streams. We are especially proud to see countries from this region not only participating but co-leading this effort.

Mr. President, African and Asian countries can share important lessons, from efforts to strengthen national IHL committees, to the incorporation of IHL military training curricula, to regional leadership and responding to humanitarian needs and commitment is there. This is why the initiative also calls for a shift in how we think about investment. The ICRC President has stated, if States invest in defence, they must go invest in IHL. This means budgeting for training for legal advisory roles and armed forces and so on.

Excellencies, IHL is shared responsibility. The Geneva Convention have near universal ratification. They are not the law of some, they are the law of all. But like any legal framework, they require consistent renewable commitments, particularly in the area where warfare is evolving rapidly through cyber means, autonomous system and conflict.

So, I will conclude by cutting my speech. Your voice, your experience and your leadership to ensure that this initiative reflects the full diversity of legal tradition, operational realities and humanitarian priorities. So, we continue to collaborate with AALCO and with all other Members to promote this initiative. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the International Committee of the Red Cross for your statement. We will now receive a statement from the Hague

Conference on Private International Law, followed by the International Institute for Unification of Private Law and then the Permanent Court of Arbitration. The HCCH, you have the floor.

The Head of the Delegation of The Hague Conference on Private International Law: Excellencies, distinguished delegates, at the outset, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election and on the effective leadership of this session. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Uganda for their warm and generous hospitality.

My thanks extends to AALCO for inviting the HCCH once again to this Annual Session. We at the HCCH truly value and appreciate the productive cooperation and exchange we enjoy with AALCO. I would also like to personally thank and express my gratitude to the Secretary-General, Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, and his dedicated team at the Secretariat for the pleasant and fruitful relationship we have developed. I look forward to continuing to build on this excellent foundation and to deepening our cooperation even further.

Mr. President, in the statements delivered yesterday and this morning, we have heard several references to the fundamental importance of strengthening and respecting the rule of law, the benefits of international cooperation, the need for tolerance, mutual respect, sustainable growth, rule-based cross-border trade, and the value of diversity. These principles apply to relations between states but equally extend to cross-border relations between individuals, families, their children, commercial operators, and investors. This is precisely where the work of the Hague Conference on Private International Law, the HCCH as we call it these days, comes in. Our work covers three main areas in the civil and commercial field, international family and child protection law, transnational litigation and the authentication of public documents, and international commercial, digital, and financial law. Across these areas, we have developed multiple Conventions that address essential private international law questions such as which court has jurisdiction, which law applies, and whether a foreign judgement in civil or commercial matters can be recognised and enforced in another state. Furthermore, where needed, our instruments provide effective cooperation mechanisms between judicial and administrative authorities to address practical challenges in cross-border situations.

At a time when multilateralism and the rule of law are under pressure, it is all the more important that we support work at the international level that produces normative instruments which have a direct, practical impact on people's lives and the way commercial operators conduct their cross-border business. This form of practical, effective multilateralism is needed more than ever, a form of multilateralism that people can directly relate to and where they can see and experience its benefits.

I, thus, invite all AALCO States to be active actors of this crucial global effort conducted by the HCCH. HCCH Conventions matter and they work. To date, there have been more than a thousand ratifications or accessions to our Conventions. The most recent treaty action from an AALCO State is the accession of the Philippines to the Taking of Evidence Abroad in Civil or Commercial Matters Convention in May earlier this year. But much remains to be done. Not even half of AALCO Member States are currently members of the HCCH. The most recent AALCO state to join the HCCH as a member was Mongolia back in 2021. Encouragingly, Bahrain is in the process of being the next one. Also, several AALCO States are already party to one or more HCCH conventions without being members of the Organization. This shows that our instruments are relevant and useful to the AALCO community. However, while non-Member States benefit from our work, they cannot participate in the developments of new instruments because they are not Members.

Mr. President, before I conclude, may I extend a warm invitation to all delegations. At 1 P.M. today, the HCCH will hold a dedicated side-event in one of the meeting rooms on the lower

grounds. I know that at this time you have a choice between lunch, another side-event, and the HCCH session, but I can assure you that learning more about the HCCH will be an informative and stimulating experience. While we may not be serving food, I promise that the HCCH side event will also fill your appetite for knowledge and actions. With that, I thank you and wish you a productive Sixty-Third Annual Session. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the HCCH. It is clear you say you cannot live on food alone, so think about that. I will now yield the floor to the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law, UNIDROIT, to make their statement. You have the floor.

The Head of the Delegation of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT): Honourable President, Vice-President, and Secretary-General of AALCO, Excellencies, good morning. It is an honour and a pleasure to represent UNIDROIT in my capacity as Deputy Secretary-General at this Sixty-Third Session of the Asian African Legal Consultative Organization. I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to the President and Vice-President for their election and my gratitude to the Government and the people of the Republic of Uganda for excellent hospitality. I would also take this opportunity to thank the AALCO Secretary-General for the kind invitation and congratulate him on his re-appointment and the AALCO Secretariat for their excellent support. Indeed, we are honoured of our mutual observer status with AALCO, with whom UNIDROIT has signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2024 to further strengthen our existing exchanges and cooperation.

Next year, Excellencies, UNIDROIT will celebrate its centenary while AALCO will turn 70 years old. Both organisations were founded at different but equally challenging times, recognising that good laws can be instrumental to economic and social well-being and peace. Excellencies, let me here briefly recall that UNIDROIT is an independent intergovernmental organisation which was founded as part of the League of Nations in 1926. We now have 65 Member States from all continents, 16 of which are also AALCO Member States, latest accessions are Singapore and Mongolia. But many more States have actually benefited from at least one of our treaties, more than 135 States in all. Our aim is to formulate internationally harmonised technical and practical modern standards for private law and in particular for commercial law and international trade. I would like to highlight here, if I may, the important role of private and commercial law towards the achievement of shared sustainable development goals, which is sometimes underestimated.

Excellencies, UNIDROIT uses an inclusive methodology in cooperation with many intergovernmental organisations, including regional organisations such as the African Union, APEC and ASEAN, as well as international financing institutions. Looking at AALCO's rich agenda, we can see that there are numerous synergies with the work of UNIDROIT. Honourable President, allow me to briefly refer to only a few of them in the interest of time.

In relation to the pursuance of sustainable development goals, our instruments in the field of private law and agricultural development stand out, such as the Legal Guide on Contract Farming and the Legal Guide on Agricultural Investment Contracts in collaboration with UN Specialised Agencies FAO and IFAD, as well as the newly adopted Model Law on Warehouse Receipts in partnership with our sister organisation, UNCITRAL, which is aimed at facilitating access to credit to small to medium enterprises, particularly in the agricultural sector.

With regard to International Investment Law, the ongoing International Investment Contracts Project, in collaboration with the ICC, is fully complementary to the work of other organisations and offers states and private investors a list of principles accompanied by commentary and appropriate model clauses that balance the protection of investment with the

need to ensure the protection of environment, labour, civil society and the right of individuals and local communities. And they can, of course, be adapted then by the Governments and investors. More generally, our work on international contracts is used as a useful tool for contracting parties and arbitrators, as demonstrated in our visit to one of the AALCO Regional Arbitration Centres in Hong Kong SAR.

I will, I think, stop here, because time is short. There are many other technical, practical instruments that might be interesting, which were already adopted by many AALCO Member States. On behalf of UNIDROIT, I wish to thank you once again, the Honourable President of this session, and the AALCO Secretary-General, Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, for inviting UNIDROIT to observe this Session. We look forward to strengthening our ties and establishing avenues of cooperation with the Secretariat and its membership. And I am at your disposal, should you have any questions or comments about our work. Thank you very much for your attention.

President: Thank you very much, the Distinguished Delegate from UNIDROIT. And then we shall now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Permanent Court of Arbitration. Permanent Court of Arbitration, you have the floor.

The Head of the Delegation of the Permanent Court of Arbitration: Mr. President, Excellencies, esteemed heads of delegation, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Karim M'ziani, and I am a Legal Counsel at the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

On behalf of the Secretary-General of the PCA, I would like to thank the Secretariat of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization for kindly inviting the PCA to be one of the observer delegations in the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO, and the Republic of Uganda for hosting us. This year, as we gather to deliberate on legal issues within our geopolitical landscape, I wish to highlight three interlinked themes that are of importance to Asia and Africa, investment and robust legal systems, diplomacy and collaboration, and finally, amicable dispute resolution.

First, investment and robust legal systems are important for sustained economic development. Asia and Africa are home to some of the fastest growing economies in the world. Asian and African States are expected to be the highest real GDP growth rates in 2025. This high economic growth is largely driven by foreign investment. To maintain this momentum, States need to cultivate investor confidence, which depends on the presence of robust legal systems. Investors must be assured that treaties and contracts will be observed and enforced, that disputes will be resolved fairly and efficiently, and the legal environment kept stable and predictable.

Second, diplomacy and collaboration between States are central to applying the rule of law and abiding by international law. The effective use of international organisations such as the PCA also depends on diplomatic engagements by States. By becoming a contracting party to the PCA, a State demonstrates its commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes. Through the conclusion of host country agreements, contracting states are offered to host PCA-administered proceedings in their territory. This is not only to facilitate access to neutral arbitration but also to enhance the host country's reputation as an international arbitral forum that upholds the rule of law.

Third, to expand on the role of the PCA in the amicable resolution of disputes. The PCA assists in a wide range of dispute resolution mechanisms that will be further presented during our side event on Thursday. These mechanisms are employed in cases involving various combinations of States, State entities, international organisations, and private entities.

With 126 years of experience in the peaceful resolution of international disputes, the PCA has handled over 257 Investor-State arbitration and 37 interstate arbitration involving either African and/or Asian claimants and respondents.

Lastly, I warmly invite all delegations to take part in the side event titled Pathways of Interstate and Investment Disputes, jointly hosted by the PCA, the Republic of India, the Republic of Uganda, and the AALCO Secretariat that will take place on Thursday and during lunchtime. On behalf of the PCA, let me seize this opportunity to once again express our gratitude to AALCO for its gracious invitation to its Sixty-Third Annual Session and the Republic of Uganda for hosting us. Thank you for your attention and I look forward to the fruitful exchanges that await us in this session.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the PCA. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much. We have now come to the end of the second general meeting. I thank you all for your insightful contributions and active participation.

We are now going to take a break owing to the very powerful submission from the distinguished delegate from Mauritius. We have now stolen 30 minutes to allow you to go and take the benefit of the beautiful Lake Victoria. So, we shall from here, all of us will head out and ensure that you take benefit and at least dip your feet into the Lake Victoria for about 15 minutes and then we shall reconvene here at 2.30 P.M.

However, I would like to inform you that we have two side-events and like HCCH has told you, you cannot live on food alone but you need to also pick some wisdom. So, we shall have two side events running at one o'clock and delegates and members are invited to attend these events.

The first side event is on "The road to Hanoi: Opening for the signature of the UN Convention against Cybercrime" and the second side event is titled "HCCH: The global law in action serving AALCO States". So, I will hand over to the emcee now to give us more direction. So, as you go out to enjoy Lake Victoria, please remember to come back and join the side events, then we can have lunch and then reconvene at exactly two o'clock. I thank you very much for your kind participation and I wish you a quick break, a wonderful break and then we will see you all again at 2.30 P.M.

The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

**VIII. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THIRD
GENERAL MEETING OF THE AALCO MEMBER
STATES**

VIII. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THIRD GENERAL MEETING OF THE AALCO MEMBER STATES HELD ON TUESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2025, AT 2:30 PM

H.E. Ms. Marie Charlotte G. Tang, Ambassador Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Philippines to the Republic of Uganda, with residence in the Republic of Kenya and the Vice-President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO in the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM: REPORT ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL LAW COMMISSION AT ITS SEVENTY-SIXTH SESSION

Vice-President: We shall now take up the agenda item on matters related to the work of the International Law Commission at its seventy-sixth session. We are fortunate to have Professor Dr. Bimal Patel of India and Professor Dapo Akande of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland with us in person. And then we have Professor Nilüfer Oral from Türkiye, Professor Masahiko Asada from Japan, Ambassador Xinmin Ma from the People's Republic of China, and Prof. Mārtiņš Paparinskis of Latvia will join us virtually. I thank each one of them for accepting our invitation. To commence this session, I invite the AALCO Secretariat to make the introductory remarks. Mr. Secretary-General, you have the floor, please.

Secretary-General: Thank you, Madam Vice-President. Excellencies, distinguished delegates. It is a privilege to welcome you to this session on “Select Items from the Agenda of the International Law Commission.” As you know, under Article 1 (d) of the Statutes of AALCO, the Secretariat has been entrusted with the mandate to examine the topic considered by the ILC and to report our findings to the Member States. Over the years, this mandate has enabled AALCO to play a meaningful role in progressive development of international law, while making sure that the voice of Asia and Africa are clearly heard.

Excellencies, at its seventy-sixth session in 2025, the Commission addressed a broad range of important topics, including “Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction”, “Succession of States in respect of State responsibility”, “General principles of law”, “Settlement of disputes to which international organizations are parties”, “Prevention and repression of piracy and armed robbery at sea”, “Subsidiary means for the determination of rules of international law”, “Non-legally binding international agreements” and “Sea-level rise in relation to international law.” In addition, the Commission has added two new topics to its future programmes of the work, “Due diligence in international law” and “Compensation for the damage caused by internationally wrongful acts.”

Excellencies, AALCO and the ILC have enjoyed a long-standing and close working relationship. In practice, ILC members have often participated in AALCO's Annual Sessions, and in turn, the Secretary-General of AALCO has regularly attended the session of the ILC in July. These actions have strengthened our cooperation and ensured that the voice of our regions remains connected to the wider process of codification and progressive development of international law.

In this Annual Session, we are honoured by the presence of two distinguished members of the ILC, Professor Bimal Patel and Professor Dapo Akande. We are also grateful to all the ILC members who, while unable to join us in person, have kindly shared pre-recorded video messages on some of the most important subjects discussed at the seventy-sixth session. Their insights are of immense value in setting the tone and guiding our direction here in Kampala. On behalf of the Secretariat, I wish to place on record our deep appreciation for their participation and support. It is indeed a great honour for us to benefit from their expertise and engagement. AALCO's engagement with the ILC has always been substantive and impactful. Through careful analysis and informed recommendations, AALCO has enriched the

Commission's work and ensured that Afro-Asian perspectives are heard. Our recent series of webinars with the ILC members, including on *Immunity of State Officials from Foreign Criminal Jurisdiction* and *Shaping International Investment Law*, were also very well received, providing a valuable platform for dialogue and scholarly exchange. Looking ahead, the Secretariat is committed to further strengthening this collaboration.

We will continue to engage with ILC members through scholarly and expert exchange to identify areas where AALCO can add the value, whether through State practice, expert input, or well-considered observations. Our goal is to ensure that the priorities of our Member States are fully represented when these matters are debated at the global level. Excellencies, our work with the Commission is not simply a matter of procedure. We are guided by the belief that the codification and development of international law must be inclusive, fair, and grounded in the lived realities of Asia and Africa. This conviction reflects our shared responsibility to help build a just and democratic international order. I therefore warmly encourage all Member States to participate actively in our deliberation on this item agenda. Your insight and contribution are essential to help guide the developments of international law in a way that advance our common priorities and shared aspirations. Thank you.

Vice-President: I thank the AALCO Secretariat for their remarks. May I now invite the Honourable Members of the International Law Commission to kindly present their statements. May I invite Professor Bimal Patel to take the floor from the podium, please? You have the floor, Mr. Patel.

Dr. Bimal N. Patel, Member, International Law Commission¹: Your Excellencies, Secretary-General Ambassador Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, AALCO staff members, Observers, ladies and gentlemen. It is my honour to appraise the Sixty-Third Session of AALCO with my statement on the work of the UN International Law Commission. Indeed, it remains a distinct honour to present the same for the last three consecutive years, and I thank Secretary-General H.E Pinitpuvadol for facilitating and host Governments for inviting me to deliver the same.

The Commission had eight topics, with varied level of progress, for consideration. These include: "Sea-level rise in relation to international law", "Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction", "General principles of law", "Subsidiary means for the determination of rules of international law", "Settlement of disputes to which international organizations are parties", "Succession of States in respect of State responsibility, non-legally binding international agreements, and prevention and repression of piracy and armed robbery at Sea". However, owing to time constraints arising as a consequence of the reduction of the session, due to financial liquidity crisis in the UN, the Commission was only able to adopt a final report on the topic "Sea- level rise in relation to international law". While the Commission was able to advance in the consideration of the draft conclusions on General principles of law and the Draft Articles on Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction, their second reading could not be concluded. Similarly, the conclusion of the topic on "Succession of States in respect of State responsibility" had to be postponed to the seventy-seventh session. These delays will have knock-on effects in the upcoming years.

The Commission adopted the final report of the Study Group on "Sea-level rise in relation to international law". This report, together with the advisory opinion rendered by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, International Court of Justice and Inter-American Court on Human Rights, constitutes a valuable body of persuasive international legal materials as the

¹ Full text of statement as submitted to the Secretariat.

international community seeks to address the multiple challenges posed by climate change and, in particular, sea-level rise. It would indeed be useful if AALCO is able to organise a special meeting of the Member States to discuss these legal materials to formulate their positions and allow States to benefit from its excellent legal assistance. Indeed, United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea has become a living constitution of the Oceans as these international legal and judicial bodies have extensively clarified provisions of the Convention. It can be hardly out of place to mention in this regard the latest Awaza Program of Action adopted in Turkmenistan August 2025, which provides amongst others, climate resilience priority.

Excellencies, the topic of “Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction”, drew significant attention of the members of the Commission due to its politically sensitive nature and the differences within the Commission and within the Sixth Committee member States was highly evident. Few significant comments need to be drawn at this stage. Some Members appreciated the comprehensive compilation of recent judicial decisions, national legislation and comments of States. However, concerns were expressed that the practice cited lacked geographical balance and relied too heavily on decisions from developed countries, with limited inclusion of perspectives from other countries. Calls were also made to consider regional instruments to proactively solicit input from underrepresented regions, including Africa and Asia. Several members emphasized the need to strike a careful balance between sovereign equality of States and accountability for serious international crimes. It was instructive to record that not all policy issues needed to be resolved within the Commission and could be appropriately left for States to address through negotiation. Draft article 7 (Crimes under international law in respect of which immunity *ratione materiae* shall not apply) in particular remains the most controversial article. Concerns have been raised on the fact that the majority of the case law in relation to Draft Article 7 referred to in the Special Rapporteur’s reports and in the commentaries adopted on first reading focused on a particular group of States and was not representative enough. In this regard, it was emphasised that consensus among members was fundamental to enhancing the Commission’s credibility and authority.

The debate remained inconclusive as a number of Members voiced support for retaining Draft Article 7, while some Members reiterated their objections and reservations to the draft article as a whole. This is an area where the Commission could indeed benefit from the State practice of AALCO Members. In this regard, a dedicated Working Group to address some of the controversial Articles could be established to provide regional input into the ongoing discussions.

Concerning the topic of “General principles of law”, I am pleased to note that AALCO has actively pursued this topic, but the AALCO input found no mention in the Special Rapporteur report presented at the 2025 session. A rectification was suggested by me in this regard. There are certain concerns which remained valid even as of today such as the work of the Commission does not clearly distinguish between General principles of law as an autonomous source of international law, peremptory norms of general international law (*jus cogens*) and principles of international law in a broader sense. Some Members argued that the Commission should avoid engaging in an exercise of extensive progressive development on a topic concerning one of the sources of international law. In this connection, I expressed that the Commission’s final outcome on the topic should reflect State consent as a cornerstone of international law and be firmly anchored in State practice. It requires hardly any reiteration that general principles of law were products of specific social and historical contexts and, historically, they have been defined by their substantial ambiguity and fluidity as a source of international law and had rarely been invoked. Like other topics, concern remains about the limited number of written observations submitted by States on the Draft Conclusions adopted on first reading, as well as

the underrepresentation of certain regions, including Asia and Africa, in the input received by the Commission. In view of the increasing importance of international law and its sources, it would be useful that AALCO Members proactively participate in the debates in the Sixth Committee and give their inputs.

Concerning the topic of “Subsidiary means for the determination of rules of international law”, the report opened a space for critical reflection on structural inequalities in the production and reception of international legal doctrine, and that the Commission has been called upon to approach the topic with openness to pluralism and difference. It was emphasized that the Commission’s treatment of teachings should engage with diverse intellectual traditions, including those inspired by critical, feminist and post-colonial legal theories. Some Members indicated that the authority accorded to legal writings should be assessed in light of the historical, political and ideological contexts in which they were produced, recognizing that such writings might not be ideologically neutral and that claims of universality might obscure underlying regional perspectives.

Concerning the topic “Settlement of disputes to which international organizations are parties”, the Commission deliberated matters concerning disputes between international organizations and private parties. With an aim to ensure the topic benefits from the widest regional and State practices, especially, international organisations are playing an important role to achieve the UN Charter aims and objects. Additionally, since Africa and Asia now have more international organisations than there were in the previous century, it is humbly encouraged that all Member States and beyond may provide input, especially those States who are hosting international and regional organisations.

Another notable topic of consideration within the Commission is “Non-legally binding international agreements”. In contemporary practice, Non-Legally Binding International Instruments have subdued formal binding agreements both numerically and in terms of relevance. However, the way they interact with other sources of international law and the legal effects, direct or indirect, created by them is currently unclear. Nonbinding agreements can serve as the basis for binding instruments made later; provide interpretive guidance for binding agreements; clarify or expand upon the requirements of binding obligations; and influence the development of customary international law. Given the crucial role they play, it is extremely important to discern identifiable criteria to differentiate binding agreements (treaties) from Non-Legally Binding International Instruments. The work of the Commission should reflect the positions of all UN regions and major legal systems on Non-Legally Binding International Instruments. While CAHDI and the Inter-American Juridical Committee have done a commendable job at putting together practice of American and European States, this framework, especially the doctrinal questions surrounding differentiating a Non-Legally Binding International Instruments from a treaty and determining the indirect legal effects that they create, cannot possibly be transposed for Asia and Africa. Arab, Asian, African civilisations have unique indigenous practices and jurisprudence on the Non-Legally Binding International Instruments. The wealth of practices of the nations belonging to these civilisations may have remained largely undocumented or may have not been available to them even during the long-history of colonisation which has witnessed, among others, systematic destruction of documentations and studies of these nations or these may be available with the formal colonisers only and the validity, correctness and other evidentiary values of such documents themselves require an objective perspective. Simply mechanical reading of these instruments and using them as evidence of state practice for the purposes of justification of current position of international law can be misleading or represent half-truth only. These concerns expressed by members from Asia and Africa need to be pursued at domestic level.

Concerning the topic of “Prevention and repression of piracy and armed robbery at sea”, the Commission has been called upon to clarify the definitions of maritime piracy and armed robbery at sea and the attendant issues such as, legality under international law on the presence of private security guards on board a merchant vessel for protection against pirates and armed robbers; Characterization of the acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea, taking into account the partitioning of the marine environment into various maritime spaces; Shortcomings in the definition of ‘piracy’ under 1982 UNCLOS in relation to acts committed for ‘private ends’.

With regards the topic of “Succession of States in respect of State responsibility”, I, as Chairman of the Working Group prepared a report for the Commission which would have brought the work of the Commission on the topic to an end. However, the liquidity crisis has decisively impacted conclusion of work on this topic. As the delegations may kindly recall the topic of Succession of States in respect of State responsibility was received positively by States pursuant to its relevance to the daily concerns of the people and potential to fill gaps following the codification on succession. However, concerns were raised regarding its contemporary relevance and the consequent difficulty in building consensus amongst States on the topic. The Commission faced a difficult task, as debates on continuation or discontinuation met with lengthy arguments in favour of either side within the Commission as well as the Sixth Committee. On the one hand, continuation of the study faced with questions and issues outlined in the second part of my report, including whether it would eventually result in an instrument that is both useful and universally accepted. On the other hand, several States underlined the need to continue the study even in the form of draft guidelines as these would aid in appreciating the evolving status of Succession of States in respect of State responsibility. My report contains a summary of the difficulties that the Commission would face if it were to continue its work on the topic and explains the reasons for the discontinuance of such work. Besides, the report contains the summary of the issues and questions that constituted the work of the Commission. It also identifies and summarises the challenges that were faced during the examination of the topic. The report also contains an annex showing the evolution of draft articles and guidelines. A multilingual bibliography is provided as an addendum to the Chairman’s report. It is indeed a matter of deep satisfaction and respect for linguistic diversity that I contributed multilingual bibliographies for various topics and I thank my team of excellent researchers and linguistic staff for their contribution.

At the end of the Session, the Commission decided to include the topics “Compensation for the damage caused by internationally wrongful acts” and “Due diligence in international law” in its programme of work and to appoint Mr. Mārtiņš Paparinskis of Latvia and Ms. Penelope Ridings of New Zealand, respectively, as Special Rapporteurs. In this regard, it is heartening to see that a prevailing concern regarding imbalance in the regional representation is finding some historical correction. Besides, Mr. Charles Jalloh from Sierra Leone and Mr. Yacouba Cisse (earlier) from Cote d’Ivoire and now Mr. Louis Savadogo from Burkina Faso, proposals made by myself on the topic “Legal aspects of accountability for crimes committed against United Nations personnel serving in peacekeeping operations” and Mr. Mingashang from the Democratic Republic of Congo on the “Principle of Non-Intervention in International Law” and “Identification and legal consequences of obligations *erga omnes* in international law” by Mr. Masahiko Asada of Japan are included in the long-term program of work of the Commission. Such concerted and concentrated sustained efforts can help in mitigating the regional disparities that have been a cause of concern since the inception of the Commission. The Member States may kindly recall my emphasis on including the topic on Accountability

for crimes committed against UN personnel serving in Peacekeeping Operations. Consistent efforts pay off.

Excellencies, till now I have provided the summary and suggestions concerning the work of the Commission concluded at the 2025 session, as the AALCO Members are aware, two works of the Commission, namely the “Crimes Against Humanity” and the “Protection of persons in the event of disasters” resulted into the calls expressed by the President of the UN General Assembly to elaborate legally binding instruments. As the efforts to negotiate instruments on these topics gather pace, the proactive contribution of AALCO in all preparatory meetings and conferences would be hugely important.

Young jurists specializing in international law, as well as young professors or Government officials pursuing academic or diplomatic careers from Egypt, Nepal, Cameroon, Nepal, Lebanon, China, Burkina Faso, Thailand, India, participated in the 2025 International Law Seminar. Since its inception in 1965, 1,361 participants from 179 countries have attended the Seminar and 828 have received a fellowship. These young jurists and official pursuing academic or diplomatic careers benefitted from participation in the ILC deliberations and had gained insights on various topics and general international law issues from various members of the ILC.

Pursuant to resolution 77/103, UN General Assembly through ILC established Trust Fund to support Special Rapporteurs, Chairs of Working Group of the ILC through providing assistance to eligible young international law professionals and scholars from developing countries. I am sure they will make use of this dedicated funding mechanism. Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, France and the United Kingdom have made contributions to the Fund.

A good number of eminent international law scholars and practitioners from AALCO members have recorded lectures for the Lecture Series, prepared introductory notes for the Historic Archives and contributed their scholarly writings to the UN International Law Audio Visual Research Library. Their unique and varied perspectives make it possible for the United Nations to offer authoritative international law training and research materials from a multicultural perspective through the Audio-visual Library of International Law. The aim of this unique resource is to promote a better understanding of international law as seen through the prism of diverse legal systems and cultures. I am sure more and more international law scholars from AALCO members would be invited to contribute to this extremely valuable resource base.

Finally, expressing deep gratitude to the Ministry of External Affairs of India, various activities promoting studies and research in international law were carried out by the Rashtriya Raksha University- Center of International Law, an Institution of National Importance, in collaboration with Legal and Treaties Division of the Ministry and AALCO. The collaboration resulted into a landmark event celebrating 75 years of the International Law Commission in which senior UN Officials, members of ILC, Secretary-General and senior officials from AALCO, diplomats and scholars from several AALCO members participated. A copy of the ILC@75 in the service of peace, security and humanity is available for your kind collection. Similarly, in view of amendment to regulation 102 of the UN Charter concerning multilateral depository practices by the UN Secretary-General and to promote studies and research on treaty law and practice among African and Asian states, a workshop was organised at RRU with the generous financial support of the Indian Council of World Affairs. The workshop brought scholars and officials dealing with treaty law and practice matters of the African and Asian states together at RRU. A publication on this will soon be ready for the benefit of international legal community. Besides a dedicated scholarship fund has been established by the RRU Center of International Law to support international law researchers and students from Africa and Asia.

Importance of international law in contributing to realising the aspirations of humanity for the holistic development, security and peace is becoming more than ever imperative. Role of the International Court of Justice, International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, among other international judicial bodies, for dispute settlement and advisory opinion have become increasingly important and developing countries, including Africa and Asia are resorting to these bodies in search for solutions and clarifications of international law. These trends are welcoming as these nations participation in these bodies enrich the regional content of international law. I underlined in detail the importance of role of ICJ in bridging the disparities and narrowing developed-developing countries divide at the 3rd Forum on the Developing Countries and International Law held in Beijing and role of Regional Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region for the Protection of Marine Environment: Legal Dimensions, in the field of Law of the Sea, at the second interdisciplinary conference organised by the University of Ghana last week.

In my address during the Sixty-First and Sixty-Second AALCO Annual Sessions, I highlighted the necessity of studying the state practice of Asian-African States in relation to various ILC topics. Specifically, now, the reports on the topics SSSR and Draft Article 7 on the Immunities of State Officials now expressly call for the need for a broad examination of Asian-African State practice.

Multilingualism is an inherent feature of AALCO, with member states using Arabic, English and French, among others. It is essential to recognize scholarship in these various languages. To foster respect for our multilingual world and in specific 6 languages of the UN, I deliver my statements in all six languages and with plenary oral statements in French. This has been a matter of deep appreciation for our Francophonie colleagues in the ILC.

I pay respect to the past and present members of the ILC from the Asian-African region, whose contributions have helped bridge the regional representation gap in the evolution of international law. As we celebrate 80 years of the United Nations and 76 years of the International Law Commission, representation of all regions equally is becoming a necessity.

I thank your Excellencies, distinguished delegates, AALCO Secretary-General and staff members and all participants and observers for your kind attention and look forward to sustain my engagements with you in promoting international law studies and research and capacity-building programs. Thank you.

Vice-President: I thank Professor Patel for his remarks. May I now invite Professor Dapo Akande to take the floor, please? Sir, you have the floor.

Dr. Dapo Akande, Member, International Law Commission: Good afternoon. It is a pleasure and indeed an honour to be here at this Annual Session of AALCO and a privilege to contribute to the discussion on the work of the International Law Commission. I am very grateful to the AALCO Secretary-General and to the dedicated Secretariat for the very kind introduction, a very kind invitation, to discuss the role of the ILC in the promotion of the codification of international law and its progressive development.

Before I get to the substance of the work of the International Law Commission this year, I would like to begin by expressing deep regret that this year's session of the ILC was dramatically and drastically cut short because of the liquidity crisis affecting the United Nations. As members of AALCO will know, the ILC meets in Geneva each year to consider a range of topics in international law, and that session is typically scheduled for 10 to 12 weeks. For this year, the United Nations General Assembly had scheduled that the ILC would meet for 12 weeks.

However, regrettably, because of the financial issues at the UN, that session was reduced to just five weeks. This had a very significant impact on the work of the Commission. The Commission had in its programme of work sought to complete in 2025 work on three topics, Sea-level rise in relation to international law, Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction, and General principles of law. However, the financial situation meant that the Commission could only complete work on one of those topics, the sea-level rise topic. The Commission had also scheduled to complete the first reading of two other topics, Subsidiary means for the determination of rules of international law, and Settlement of disputes to which international organisations are parties, but the Commission could not, in fact, complete the first reading of those topics. In fact, we did not even have time to have substantive discussion on a number of topics on the agenda of the Commission.

Despite the financial situation, the Commission did make substantive progress on some of the topics on its agenda. I would like to devote the time that I have today to discuss progress that the ILC made on one of the topics on its agenda, and that is the topic of Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction. This is the topic that has been on the agenda, the current agenda of the ILC, for the longest period of time, more than 20 years.

The Commission completed a complete set of Draft Articles on this topic in 2022, and referred that set of articles to the UN General Assembly. The Commission commenced its second and final reading of the work on this topic in 2024, and continued that discussion in its 2025 session. In its consideration of this topic, the ILC has made clear that it is considering the general regime of immunity of state officials from the criminal jurisdiction of foreign states.

The Commission is not considering special regimes of immunity for particular types of officials, and so Draft Article 1, paragraph two, as adopted on second reading, makes clear that this topic does not extend to diplomatic immunity, consular immunity, special missions immunity. The Commission has also made clear that it is considering immunity from the criminal jurisdiction of foreign states. Thus, Draft Article 1, paragraph three, makes clear that the present Draft Articles do not affect the rights and obligations of states under international agreements establishing or relating to the operation of international criminal courts and tribunals as between the parties to those agreements.

The ILC has distinguished two types of immunities of state officials. Immunity *ratione personae*, which applies to a limited group of senior State officials. And immunity *ratione materiae*, which grants immunity to all State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction, but only in relation to their official acts. There has been a discussion within the ILC about who is entitled to immunity *ratione personae*. The ILC has decided in Draft Article three that this type of immunity applies to the head of state, the head of government, and the foreign minister, the so-called troika. However, it is important to note that what the ILC has decided here on immunity *ratione personae* is without prejudice to the special regimes of immunity. For example, immunity of special missions, which may in fact apply to those outside the troika when they are abroad on special mission. The troika are entitled under Draft Article three of the ILC's work to immunity from all exercise of foreign criminal jurisdiction. And this is without distinction as to whether the proposed exercise of criminal jurisdiction relates to official acts or to private acts.

However, in Draft Article four, the ILC says that this immunity applies to those entitled to it during their period of office. It is fair to say that over the years, the ILC's consideration of immunity *ratione materiae*. This is the second type of immunity. The ILC's consideration of that type of immunity has been more difficult. You will recall that this is the immunity that applies to all State Officials, but only in relation to their official acts. When the ILC adopted

the Draft Articles on first reading, the Commission included exceptions to this immunity for certain international crimes. Members of the Commission had in fact been divided on this issue. States had also been divided on this issue, as is evident in their comments at the UN. The ILC revisited this issue on second reading at its session this year.

There were three particular questions that the Commission faced. First, should this exception for international crimes be retained? Second, if it was retained, which crimes should be included in this exception? And third, how should those crimes be defined? The Commission had long discussions on this topic and decided to retain the exception for international crimes based not just on current state practice, but on practice relating to prosecutions for international crimes at the end of the Second World War. The Commission included three additional crimes to the list of crimes in respect of which immunity *ratione materiae* is not available.

That was this year, the Commission added these three crimes. The crime of aggression, slavery, and slave trade. Since these are established crimes under international law. Third, the Commission decided not to define those crimes by reference to the Statute of the International Criminal Court. So not to include a reference to the ICC Statute, but to provide more generally that this exception applies to these crimes, as they exist under international law. I should make it clear that members of the Commission were still not unified on whether this exception exists under current international law or not. But two points of significance should be noted. First of all, the Commission is of the view that its work on this topic should, if possible, be the basis for a future treaty. So that it will be for states to have the final word on this issue.

Second, the Commission will have a set of procedural guarantees that will apply to any situation in which an official of a state may be affected by the exercise of criminal jurisdiction by another state. Unfortunately, because of the financial situation at the UN, the Commission could not give time at this year's session to those procedural guarantees. And we will have to return to them next year. So in conclusion, I want to thank you, Madam Vice-President and Mr. Secretary-General, and express my thanks to all the delegations for your time and for your attention.

Vice-President: Thank you, Professor Akande, for your statement. And now we have the video statements. May I now invite Professor Nilüfer Oral to take the screen?

Dr. Nilüfer Oral, Member, International Law Commission: Greetings to all of you from Singapore. I am so sorry I cannot be with you in person at the AALCO meeting. Due to conflict in schedule, it was not possible. But I do send my appreciation to Secretary-General for the invitation and to all the delegates who are in Uganda for this important meeting. Today, I am going to talk very briefly about the work of the International Law Commission on Sea-level rise in relation to international law.

Our work officially started in 2019, when the topic was placed on the current work agenda and a Study Group was established with five co-chairs. Those co-chairs included Patrícia Galvão Teles for protection of persons, Juan José Ruda Santolaria looking at the topic of statehood, Bogdan Aurescu and myself looking at the topic of sea-level rise, and also Yacouba Cissé, who is looking at African practice and the law of the sea. Also, I should add that there was a request made by the Federated States of Micronesia directly to the Commission for the Commission to take up the topic of sea level rise and international law. And it's very, very rare that we receive a direct request from a State, so this was important for us. Basically, the mandate of the Study Group, which is in the syllabus that we prepared, was to do a mapping exercise of the existing international law, its gaps, the existing instruments in relation to sea-level rise and these three subtopics. We were not to engage in codification or progressive development. And it was also understood that the final outcome would be a final report on sea-level rise in relation to

international law, accompanied by a set of conclusions prepared by the Study Group. Now, the co-chairs between 2020 and 2024 wrote a total of four independent reports on the individual subtopics. However, in 2025, we prepared a consolidated final report on all three subtopics.

We also addressed something we had not done before, the crosscutting issues. Those are the issues that run across law of the sea, protection of persons, and statehood. And in addition, in that final report, we included a set of draft conclusions. Now, the report and the draft conclusions served as the basis of the discussions for the final meeting of the Study Group in Geneva during the previous, just this year's meeting of the International Law Commission. And I am happy to say that with very minor revisions, the draft report and the conclusions were adopted unanimously by the Commission on whole. Now, I do not have time to go through all these conclusions that also included the crosscutting issues. But I would like to say this. What is very important is that what we observed, and this is particularly true of the law of the sea, that in this relatively short period of time, four years, there has been a remarkable convergence of views by States on the legal issues we addressed where there was uncertainty. And if I can take the example of law of the sea, for example, it was not clear because at the time the law of the sea convention was negotiated and adopted; climate change and sea-level rise simply were not an issue.

So it was not clear whether the baseline, which is the starting point for all the maritime zones, was an ambulatory baseline that had to be updated should there be changes in sea-levels. And in particular, when we are talking about climate change and those changes can be quite significant. It is just not there. Also, it was not clear whether there was an obligation for States to update nautical charts in sense of the baselines. Nautical charts are important for navigation, but was there also a corollary obligation in relation to baselines? Another issue important was whether sea-level rise constituted a fundamental change of circumstances that would require or give a state party to a binding maritime boundary treaty legal basis to terminate that treaty. There are other issues as well, but these are the most significant. Over the past four years, we observed a clear convergence of views across all regions-Latin America, the Caribbean, Oceania, the Middle East, Europe, and Asia-that there is no obligation to update baselines in response to sea-level rise. Importantly, States also agreed that they may preserve existing, lawfully established baselines, in accordance with the Law of the Sea Convention, and consequently maintain their maritime boundaries and maritime zones despite sea-level rise. There is no obligation to change these. That fundamental change of circumstances would not apply. Therefore, no need, no worries about existing maritime boundary treaties being challenged. And very important was underlying all of this was the principle of predictability, certainty, and stability. And so there is more to say, but I only have about five minutes.

So what I would like to say is this also. The work of the Commission has been quite influential, and we see that because in the very recent advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice, the work of the Commission was specifically referred to in the advisory opinion. And if you look at paragraph 362 of the advisory opinion, it says, "the court considers that the provisions of UNCLOS do not require states' parties, in the context of physical changes resulting from climate change related to sea-level rise, to update their charts or lists of geographical coordinates that show the baselines and outer limits of the maritime zones once they have been duly established in conformity with the convention. For this reason, states' parties to UNCLOS are under no obligation to update such charts or lists of geographical coordinates". In addition, the court also made reference to statehood and addressed this, although with a slight nuance, stating basically that sea-level rise would not necessarily impact statehood. Anyway, I have only this time to share with you the outcome, a very important outcome, by the International Law Commission, and I think, if I can speak on behalf of my

Commission members, I think we are pleased with this outcome. And of course, now the ball is in the States' hands, and I know AALCO also contributed, gave us their views as well, and we look forward to see how states will take these very important issues forward. Thank you so much.

Vice-President: Thank you, Professor. May I now invite Professor Masahiko Asada for his statement? The screen is yours, Professor.

Dr. Masahiko Asada, Member, International Law Commission: Thank you very much for inviting me to this important annual conference. My name is Masahiko Asada, ILC Member from Japan. This year, I wish to discuss a subject of current important topic of international law, obligations *erga omnes*, a concept increasingly relevant in international litigation and for all States, including those of Asia and Africa. Understanding who may invoke responsibility when these obligations are breached has significant implications for all States of the international community.

Over the past two years at AALCO Annual Sessions, I spoke on Non-legally binding international agreements last year, and Sea-level rise in relation to international law the year before. Although I cannot attend this year due to conflicting engagements, I am grateful to Secretary-General Kamalinne for inviting me to speak on the topic of my choice. I have chosen the topic of obligations *erga omnes*, which I have proposed in ILC and approved for its long-term programme of work earlier this year.

The notion of *erga omnes* effects was famously described by Professor Christian Tams as “mysterious but significant.” Such mystery and significance reflects not only the complexity of the concept itself, but also its practical importance and relevance, particularly to States from Asia and Africa. Indeed, almost all ICJ cases alleging breaches of such obligations have involved States from these regions, either as a claimant or a defendant, or sometimes both.

So what are obligations *erga omnes*? The ICJ provided a landmark definition in 1970 *Barcelona Traction case*, stating that they are, “the obligation of a State towards the international community as a whole.” In view of the importance of the rights involved, all States can be held to have a legal interest in their protection.

The quote referred to the prohibition of acts of aggression, genocide, slavery, and racial discrimination as prime examples. One of the most significant legal consequences of breaching obligations *erga omnes* is that all States, not only the injured States, but also non-injured States, have standing to bring claims before international courts and tribunals. This is because a breach of such an obligation affects the international community collectively, enticing any State to invoke the responsibility of the defaulting State.

This principle is codified in Article 48, Paragraph 1 of the ILC's Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts of 2001 (ARSIWA). It provides that any State, including non-injured States, may invoke responsibility of another State if A, the obligation breached is owed to a group of States, such as treaty parties, or B, the obligation breached is owed to the international community as a whole, typically under customary international law. The former obligations under A are called obligations *erga omnes partes*. The latter in B is called obligations *erga omnes* in the strict sense. The first case in which the ICJ acknowledged standing for a non-injured state was *Belgium versus Senegal* of 2012 concerning an alleged breach of the Convention against Torture. Since then, all cases filed by non-injured States before the ICJ have concerned alleged violations of obligations *erga omnes partes*, such as the *Gambia versus Myanmar*, *Canada and the Netherlands versus Syria*, *South Africa versus Israel*, and *Nicaragua versus Germany*.

Although the ICJ confirmed its jurisdiction in the *Gambia versus Myanmar*, it has yet to rule definitively on jurisdiction and admissibility in the other cases. Nevertheless, it is almost certain that the court will maintain its established jurisprudence of acknowledging standing. By contrast, the situation was less certain regarding obligations *erga omnes* strict sense under customary international law.

The court has so far refrained from declaring on this point in contentious cases, refraining from even referring to Article 48 of ARSIWA, which covers both obligations *erga omnes* and *erga omnes partes*. However, in advisory proceedings, the court has recently changed its position. In the *Climate Change Advisory Opinion* of 23 July 2025, it acknowledged that obligations pertaining to the protection of the climate system are obligations *erga omnes*.

And after quoting Article 48, Paragraph 1B, which is on obligations *erga omnes* strict sense, stated that, “responsibility for breaches of such obligations may be invoked by any State when such obligations arise under customary international law.” Now that both obligations *erga omnes partes* and obligations *erga omnes* give rise to the right for any State or any treaty party to invoke responsibility of States breaching them, the international community faces a key challenge. That is, any State might bring a claim at any time against a state allegedly breaching these obligations.

For the stability of interstate relations, it is imperative to clarify or clearly identify which obligations can have such consequences. Listing only those obligations recognised by international courts and tribunals so far may create the false impression that no other obligations *erga omnes* exist. Conversely, expanding the list without sufficient recognition discuss adverse consequences such as diluting the concept.

Therefore, establishing clear criteria for identifying obligations *erga omnes* is more important than producing an incomplete or overly broad list. At the same time, clarifying the real consequences of breaching those obligations is equally essential. The question of whether any state may bring a case before international courts and tribunals in cases of alleged breach of obligations *erga omnes partes* is largely settled.

And also, the same applies to obligations *erga omnes* strict sense. But other questions remain. For example, can non-injured States invoke responsibility even if the injured State has explicitly chosen not to? Can multiple States invoke responsibility sequentially or simultaneously seeking different remedies such as cessation, restitution or compensation? How should compensation awarded to a non-injured State be treated? Can a legal interest of all States in compliance with obligations *erga omnes* satisfy the requirement for third party intervention including the existence of an interest of a legal nature as provided for in Article 62 of the ICC Statute? Do answers to these questions differ between obligations *erga omnes* and obligations *erga omnes partes*? These are questions still to be answered.

Additionally, the ICJ and the ILC have taken somewhat different approaches regarding legal consequences of a breach of an obligation *erga omnes*. The ICJ has consistently declared that breaches of obligations *erga omnes* entail duties for all states of non-recognition, non-assistance and cooperation. On the other hand, the ILC’s articles on state responsibility in Article 41 associate these duties with serious breaches of pre-emptive norms.

These norms do not perfectly overlap with obligations *erga omnes*. So, clarifying whether these duties of non-recognition and cooperation flow from obligations *erga omnes* or from *jus cogens* norms is a long-standing question to be resolved. These are some of the issues I intend to clarify through discussions of the topic at the ILC.

Ultimately, it is crucial to strike a balance between promoting the rule of law in the international community through obligations *erga omnes* and ensuring legal stability and predictability amid increasing litigation by non-injured states. I believe that outcome documents on this topic would provide valuable practical guidance and clarification for states helping to navigate these complex issues. Specifically in the ILC, my aim is to develop clear criteria for identifying obligations *erga omnes* and to clarify the legal consequences of these breaches in a way that strengthens the rule of law while preserving stability in international relations.

Should you be interested in this topic, reference may be made to the ILC's annual report for this year, UN Document A/80/10 Annex 3, where my proposal is elaborated in greater detail. I very much look forward to collaborating with Asian and African Member States on this important task. Thank you very much.

Vice-President: Thank you, Professor. Now may I invite Mr. Xinmin Ma to take the screen?

Ambassador Xinmin Ma, Member, International Law Commission: Honourable Secretary-General Kamalinne, distinguished Mr. President, delegates and friends, I am deeply honoured to address AALCO's Sixty-Third Annual Session as a member of the International Law Commission.

I welcome this opportunity to exchange views with Member States and experts on our work and to share the latest developments in the codification and progressive development of international law. AALCO and ILC, though different in nature and structure, share a common mission, promoting international law. We in Asia and Africa are not mere participants but true architects of international law.

It was China's vision eight years ago that embedded the progressive development of international law and its codification in the UN Charter, establishing the foundation for the ILC. Throughout these eight decades, the Commission has fulfilled its mandate, making vital contributions to our modern international legal system and the UN Charter-based post-war order. AALCO, embodying the Bandung spirit, has united Asian and African nations to advance our common interests through international law.

Our achievements speak volumes from pioneering the exclusive economic zone and a common but differentiated responsibility to establishing the five principles of peaceful co-existence. By supporting Member States in shaping customary international law and key international treaties, we have amplified the voice of Asia and African nations in global legal discourse. The future of international law depends on our region's active participation and success demands continued collaboration between ILC and AALCO.

Yet, despite these achievements, we must confront an uncomfortable truth. International law remains heavily influenced by Western perspectives. Developing nations, non-English and non-French speaking countries and societies rooted in non-Western civilisation still lack adequate representation in shaping international law and ILC's work.

Our mission is clear. We must ensure international law and Commission's work genuinely reflects universal State practice and *opinio juris*, embracing the rich diversity of the world civilisations and legal traditions. This requires our continued dedication and persistent effort.

As we consider our ongoing work, let me now turn to this year's seventy-sixth session of the ILC, focussing particularly on our near final work regarding General principles of law, which is approaching completion in its second reading phase. The seventy-sixth session convened in Geneva from April 28 to May 30 this year. Due to UN budget constraints, our usual 12-week

session was drastically reduced to just 5 weeks, prompting significant concern among Commission members.

Despite this limitation, we address eight crucial topics. Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction, Sea-level rise in relation to international law, General principles of law, Subsidiary means for the determination of rules of international law, Settlement of disputes to which international organisations are parties, Prevention and repression of piracy and armed robbery at sea, Succession of States in respect of State responsibility, and Non-legally binding international agreements. The Commission also added Compensation for damage caused by internationally wrongful acts, and Due diligence in international law to this programme of work.

Additionally, three topics were added to our long-term agenda. The principle of non-intervention in international law, the identification and legal consequences of obligations *erga omnes* in international law, and the legal aspects of accountability for crimes committed against UN personnel serving in peacekeeping operations. In this session, we achieved two milestones.

The completion of our final report on sea-level rise and its implications for international law, and the adoption of draft conclusions on General principles of law following their second reading.

The Commission began its study of General principles of law in 2018, led by Special Rapporteur Marcelo Vázquez Bermúdez from Ecuador. During this session, we marked decisive steps forward with the adoption of 12 draft conclusions in their second reading. These conclusions addressed fundamental aspects, including the scope, category, function, criteria for identification of General principles of law, the relationship between General principles of law and treaties and customary international law, and General principles of law with limited scope of application. Given our abbreviated session, the complete adoption of these conclusions and their accompanying commentaries will take place at the seventy-seventh session in 2026. This work on General principles of law extends our investigation of the sources of international law.

As outlined in Article 38 of the ICJ Statute, building upon our earlier work on identification of customary international law, this effort significantly advances our understanding of the sources of international law. And I will highlight three key features that emerge from our study. Firstly, it recognises a fourth category of sources of international law, namely General principles of law that may be formed within international legal systems. These stand distinct from treaties, customary international law, and General principles of law that are derived from national legal systems. For a long time, general principles were sought to stem primarily from domestic law, sparking debate over whether their General principles of law that may be formed within international legal systems. The draft conclusions of the second reading confirm that it can establish that the international legal system, like a domestic system, possesses the capacity to create distinct principles.

The Special Rapporteur identifies clear examples, including the principles of sovereign equality and consent to jurisdiction, as well as the principles of international law recognised in the Charter of the Nuremberg Tribunal and its judgments, and the principle of speciality, which governs the functioning of international organisations. This recognition marks significant advancement in legal theory and enriches our international legal system. However, we acknowledge that the international community still needs to reach consensus on which principles qualify and how to determine the inherent criteria for their identification.

Secondly, it clarifies the functions of General principles of law. The draft conclusions emphasise that General principles of law serve as foundations for substantive rights and

obligations, as well as tools for interpreting and complementing other rules of international law. When other rules prove insufficient to resolve a particular issue, we turn to these General principles of law.

This conclusion honours the original intent behind Article 38 of the ICJ Statute, using general principles to fill gaps in treaties and customary international law, preventing situations where the court lacks legal basis. It also respects the status of these principles as independent sources of international law, offering clear guidance for their application. Thirdly, it confirms the status of regional general principles of the law within the international legal system, after examining regional and sub-regional legal systems and practises.

The Special Rapporteur introduced a new draft conclusion, Article 12, which acknowledges General principles of law with a limited scope of application. This aligns with the Commission's approach to the draft conclusions on the identification of customary international law and represents progressive development rather than mere codification. Importantly, this creates broad opportunities for regional organisations, such as AALCO, to develop and interpret rules within the sphere of influence.

Dear Colleagues and Friends, these developments in ILC's work merit our close attention and engagement as they move through the process. I thank the Secretary-General Kamalinne for this opportunity, and wish you all a productive conference. Thank you all.

Vice-President: Thank you, Mr. Ma, for his statement. I now invite our last speaker from the ILC, Professor Mārtiņš Paparinskis to deliver his statement.

Prof. Mārtiņš Paparinskis, Member, International Law Commission: Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Mārtiņš Paparinskis. I am a member of the United Nations International Law Commission and the chair of its seventy-sixth session. Let me begin by expressing my gratitude to the Secretary-General of AALCO for his invitation to attend, and my great sorrow that unfortunately I am not able to be with you in Uganda. I hope that I will be able to join AALCO discussions in the following years.

In the time allocated to me, let me briefly introduce the work that the International Law Commission addressed and completed this year. You may know that due to the liquidity crisis of the United Nations, the International Law Commission was able to convene out of the allocated twelve weeks only for five weeks, which had significant implications on its ability to engage and achieve with the ambitious programme planned. Nevertheless, the International Law Commission did manage to complete a significant amount of high quality work, which I will introduce.

The Study Group on Sea-level rise in relation to international law concluded its work and the Commission adopted the final report of the Study Group, which is annexed to the annual report of the International Law Commission. The Commission noted in this report issues relating to law of the sea, statehood and protection of persons, as well as possible ways forward. And I noted that the International Court of Justice has referred favourably to the final report of the Study Group in its advisory opinion obligations of states in respect of climate change delivered on the 23rd of July.

The Commission continued its work on the Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction in second reading, and the drafting committee concluded its work in relation to Draft Article 7 to 9, including the important Draft Article 7, regarding the question whether and in what circumstances immunity *ratione materiae* is inapplicable in cases of international crimes. And the conclusions of the drafting committee in that regard need to be read in the

context of the statement of the chairperson of the drafting committee, as well as a discussion on the plenary when this statement was taken note. We also continued the work on the topic of General principles of law.

The drafting committee concluded its work on the draft conclusions on General principles of law in the second reading, and the work will continue next year in relation to commentaries, which were not able to conclude this year due to the shortened session. The Commission also made good progress on the topic of Subsidiary means for determination of rules of international law. Again, the drafting committee concluded its work on the text of the draft conclusions in the first reading, the commentaries being left for the next year.

Unfortunately, due to the shortened session, the Commission was able to allocate only a very limited amount of time, one or even a half Working Group meeting for the remaining topics, mainly the topics of Settlement of disputes to which international organisations are parties, Non-legally binding international agreements, Prevention and repression of piracy and armed robbery at sea, and Succession of States in respect of State responsibility. The work remains to be done next year, but the discussions on these matters were summarised in the respective chapters of the annual report, and no doubt, the Special Rapporteurs and the chair of the Working Group would benefit from your comments on the matter in New York. The penultimate point that I want to make is that it was an eye to the future.

The Commission included three new topics in its long-term programme of work, a topic proposed by Mr. Mingashang, the Principle of non-intervention in international law, a topic proposed by Mr. Asada, Identification and legal consequences of obligations *orga omnes* in international law, and a topic proposed by Mr. Patel, legal aspects of accountability for crimes committed against United Nations personnel serving in peacekeeping operations. The Commission also decided to include two new topics on the current programme of work, appointing Special Rapporteurs in relation to Due diligence in international law, Madame Penelope Ridings, and in relation to the topic of Compensation for the damage caused by internationally wrongful acts, I was appointed as a Special Rapporteur. The final point that I want to make is that there are certain issues in which the Commission has particularly requested the comments and information provided by States by the deadline of 1st of December of this year, which are identified in Chapter 3 of the report. I look forward to discussing these matters with you in person in New York. Thank you for your attention.

Vice-President: I thank Professor Paparinskis and all the distinguished members of the ILC for their enriching statements on the topics on the work of the ILC at its seventy-sixth session. Now I open the floor for statements on the topic. Discussions on this topic are open to both Member States and Observers. I wish to remind that Member States and Observers wishing to make any statements on this item should please register with the AALCO Secretariat. It is requested that the delegations be mindful of the time limit, which is five minutes, so that we can maintain the timings and accommodate as many States as possible. In any case, your entire statement will be reflected in the verbatim record of the proceedings to be prepared by the AALCO Secretariat. Further, to facilitate this work, Member States are recommended to submit a written statement to the Secretariat via email, as63@aalco.int. If the statement were to be made in Arabic, it would be appreciated if an English translation were also provided.

I now invite, we have the list of States which have inscribed are, in this order, Republic of India, followed by the Republic of Türkiye, and then the Islamic Republic of Iran, and then Japan, Malaysia, Kingdom of Thailand, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, and then the Republic of Korea. So without further ado, I invite the distinguished delegate from the Republic of India to make his statement. You have the floor, sir.

The Delegate of the Republic of India: Thank you, Madam Vice-President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. At the outset, our delegation would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the comprehensive report prepared by the AALCO Secretariat on matters relating to the work of International Law Commission at its seventy-sixth session. We also take note of the ILC report A/80/10. We also take note with regret that the Commission's session in 2025 was reduced from 12 to 5 weeks due to liquidity crisis, and this has considerably impacted the Commission's programme of work. This session could focus only on four out of the eight topics which are currently on the agenda.

Madam Vice-President, now turning to the topic of Sea-level rise in relation to international law, we would like to note that as a country having one of the longest coastlines, India is aware of the impact of sea-level rise and the immense challenges of understanding the complex legal and technical issues associated in particular relating to the law of the sea and international law in general. India has taken note of the final consolidated paper as prepared by the co-chairs, which was deliberated by the Study Group as well as the final report of the Study Group adopted by the Commission. We appreciate the in-depth analysis of the topic and the views expressed by the members of the Study Group as well as the Member States sharing their practices, in particular on statehood and protection of persons affected by sea-level rise.

On the issue of statehood, we are of the view that preserving maritime zones once established under UNCLOS, notwithstanding physical changes to coastlines, carries important implications for the maintenance of legal certainty, sovereign rights and access to marine resources. This needs to be clearly articulated and could be useful for future discussions. Legal pathways for affirming the stability of maritime zones need to be discussed in detail.

Concerning the issue of protection of persons from sea-level rise, the cooperation between States would be of vital significance in handling the case of cross-border movement of people affected by sea-level rise. While we recognise the existing legal framework which provides protection guarantees, the gaps need to be studied thoroughly and may be brought out through soft law framework suitable to Member States. On the topic of Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction, we appreciate the work of the Commission and take note of the Special Rapporteur's second report by examining Draft Articles 7 to 8 as adopted on the first reading. We encourage the efforts of the Commission which, while drafting and debating these Draft Articles aimed at promoting trust, mutual understanding and cooperation based on good faith between the foreign State and the State of the official and offering safeguards against possible abuses and politicisation in the exercise of criminal jurisdiction over an official of another State.

We acknowledge the need to guarantee respect for the principles of sovereign equality of States, which is the foundation of Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction. So much so, the immunity belongs to the State and for the official acts performed or done in exercise of State authority. This topic holds great significance as it is directly related to the performance abroad of officials of a State. The topic is complex and politically sensitive. Consideration of this topic would require a balanced approach taking into account existing laws and practices on the related issues. We would like to reaffirm our earlier views concerning the possible approach of the Commission towards finding a solution to reconcile the divergent views of its members and other stakeholders on Draft Article 7 in its next reading on the topic. We see that Draft Article 10 on notifying the State of the official, although an important procedural safeguard, the timing and content and particularly regarding the ongoing investigations on confidentiality need to be looked at.

Madam Vice-President, on the topic of settlement of disputes to which international organisations are parties, we appreciate the efforts of the Special Rapporteur in compiling his third report focussing on the discussion of disputes between IOs and private parties. On the topic of Non-legally binding international agreements, we welcome the Special Rapporteur's second report and its focus on discussing general elements of the topic, its purpose, scope and the form of outcome. We have taken note of the Special Rapporteur's analysis on the distinction between treaties and Non-legally binding international agreements based on jurisprudence, practice and doctrine, and the next steps to be addressed in the future work. Madam Vice-President, on the Prevention and repression of piracy and armed robbery at sea, we appreciate the efforts put in by the newly appointed Special Rapporteur, Mr. Louis Savadogo, towards identifying points of law which could constitute as major themes for the work of the Commission on the topic. We take note that the Commission has provisionally adopted seven Draft Articles on the topic so far.

Madam Vice-President, India attaches great importance to the topic of Succession of States in respect of State responsibility. We welcome that the Commission has decided to establish a Working Group on the topic and appointed Mr. Bimal N. Patel as the Chairman of the Working Group and for considering the draft report of the Working Group. We take note of the chair's expectation that the revised draft report would put the Working Group in a good position to proceed and efficiently conclude its work on the topic at the seventy-seventh session. Given the complex nature of the topic, it is important to have clear and fair rules in place to govern the consequences of State succession, including in relation to State responsibility. I will just take a minute, Madam Vice-President.

On the topic of subsidiary means for determination of rules of international law, we would like to express our appreciation for the efforts of the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Charles Chernor Jalloh, for his third report on the topic, which analysed teachings and other subsidiary means for determination of rules of international law, in particular narrowing down the focus of the report to only two topics, the work of the public and private expert bodies, and the resolutions or decisions of certain international law organisations. The function of subsidiary means is to only assist in the determination of rules of international law. On Draft Conclusion 3, we believe that it sets out useful general criteria for assessing the weight of subsidiary means. The authority of teaching was not necessarily accepted from the outset, but one emerged over time through the process of scrutiny and contestation. Whether the scope of the decisions of courts and tribunals include the decisions of quasi-judicial entities, such as human rights treaty bodies, also needs further clarity. I thank you, Madam Vice-President.

Vice-President: I thank the distinguished delegate from the Republic of India for his statement. Next, we have the Republic of Türkiye, followed by the Islamic Republic of Iran. The distinguished delegate from the Republic of Türkiye, you have the floor, please. Thank you.

The Delegate of the Republic of Türkiye: Thank you, Madam Vice-President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates. Considering the importance of international law in international relations, we are pleased to see work being pioneered by the International Law Commission on the progressive development of international law and its codification. I thank the members of ILC for their valuable and insightful statements they shared with us on the work of ILC. The work by the ILC needs to be global in nature and comprehensive for the practices of all countries in the world.

In this regard, the increasing synergy between the ILC and AALCO constitutes a significant opportunity. I would like to thank the Secretariat for the comprehensive report on the work of ILC and briefly share Türkiye's views. It's a cause of concern that the work of ILC in 2025 has

been adversely affected by budgetary constraints of the UN. Needless to say that the Commission being mandated on the progressive development and codification of international law has made a significant contribution to the international order. Therefore, it is important to enable the Commission with the necessary means to continue its activities accordingly. We concur with the point raised by the Secretariat regarding the concerns about limited geographical representation in case law and State practice in relation to the topic on Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction.

As a matter of fact, while conducting doctrinal research on different topics in the ILC studies, the issue of focussing on limited geographies has been also criticised with regard to other topics. In this framework, we reiterate the Secretariat's assessment about limited geographical representation. It might be useful to dwell on this issue within the AALCO as to better reflect the case and State practice of the region.

Madam Vice-President, with regard to the references made to UNCLOS in various parts of the report on the work of ILC, Türkiye wishes to reiterate that UNCLOS is not the only legal framework regulating all activities in the oceans and seas. In this context, due consideration should also be given to the relevant *acquis*. The reason we did not become part of the Convention is due to its serious shortcomings, particularly with regard to the enclosed and semi-enclosed seas where special circumstances prevail, such as the Aegean Sea. Hence, we would like to confirm that neither Türkiye's participation in the Sixty-Third Annual Session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization nor approval of any report within the frame of AALCO by the Government of the Republic of Türkiye is without prejudice to the rights and interests of Türkiye as a non-party to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982 and cannot be construed as a change in the legal position of Türkiye with regard to UNCLOS.

Madam Vice-President, as a country surrounded by sea, safeguarding freedom of navigation is vital for Türkiye. We have always been a resolute supporter of rule of law at sea. Preserving freedom of navigation, ensuring the peaceful use of seas and oceans, and protecting international trade and seafarers from piracy and armed robbery are priority objectives for us. Regional conflicts undermine maritime security, as seen in the Red Sea, where Israeli aggression in Gaza has fuelled instability and threatened navigation. Lasting calm requires addressing the root cause of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and ending Israeli atrocities.

Türkiye actively contributes to the international efforts against piracy, armed robbery and terrorism at sea and remains committed to strengthening global cooperation for maritime security. Madam Vice-President, Türkiye welcomes the inclusion of sea-level rise in relation to the international law in the programme of work of the International Law Commission as well as its central position at the informal consultative process on oceans and the law of the sea. Türkiye believes in the necessity of promotion of international coordination and cooperation from all the countries affected by the sea-level rise to the study of the Commission and encourages examination of the legal aspects of the sea-level rise.

Therefore, the adoption of the final report prepared by the co-chairs of the Study Group, Ms. Patrícia Galvão Teles, Ms. Nilüfer Oral and Mr. Juan José Ruda Santolaria, which addressed all three subtopics-law of the sea, statehood and the protection of persons affected by the sea-level rise is a milestone achievement in response to the sea-level rise. Türkiye is thankful for their hard work and dedication. Türkiye is aware that sea-level rise has potential impact on not only the environment and the livelihood of coastal communities but on statehood, maritime jurisdiction areas and statelessness. Indeed, numerous studies prove that sea-level rise could have catastrophic effects on Small Island States and States with low-lying coastal areas.

However, the potential legal effects of sea-level rise need in-depth research and analysis. The literature is immature. That's why Türkiye encourages the consultations and discussions on the Study Group's analysis of the legal dimensions of sea-level rise. I thank you all.

Vice-President: I thank the distinguished delegates from the Republic of Türkiye. Now I give the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran, followed by Japan. Sir, you have the floor, please.

The Delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Thank you, Madam Vice-President. My delegation takes note with appreciation the Secretariat's comprehensive report regarding the work of the AALCO in relation to the ILC. Our working methodology does need improvement and a mechanism is necessary to reflect the views of AALCO to the ILC on a regular basis. Since the Commission's report has been issued quite recently, we present a few comments about the work of the ILC during this session, and our full views will be presented during the upcoming session of the UNGA Sixth Committee.

Madam Vice-President, with respect to the topic Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction, we take note of the second report of the Special Rapporteur. This topic, however, has been since its inclusion on the agenda of the ILC in 2007 a topic of contentious views among Member States, and therefore cannot be deemed conclusive as it stands today. States' views differ on the scope of immunity *ratione materiae* and immunity *ratione personae*. As we have stated before, designating which State officials are entitled to absolute immunity *ratione personae* from foreign criminal jurisdiction must be commensurate with the actual realities on the ground. In fact, limiting immunity *ratione personae* to the troika is not consistent with the realities of modern international relations. That is suggesting that such officials are more than the ILC's suggested "troika". Meanwhile, we believe that immunity should not be deemed as equivalent to impunity. Therefore, its scope is limited in favour of the responsibility and accountability of States' officials. These should, however, benefit from consistent State practice. As a result, it is too early for the work of the Commission on the topic to take the format of Draft Articles. Furthermore, some cases referred to by the Special Rapporteur have been raised by a few States on a selective and controversial basis without considering associated facts, including the reaction of the relevant States, thus lacking any legal credibility.

Madam Vice-President, regarding the second topic, Succession of States in respect of State responsibility, we take note of the establishment of the Working Group of the Whole. It is regrettable that due to the reduction of the length of the seventy-sixth session, the Working Group could hold a single meeting with the oral report of the chair. We note the discontinuation of the work of the Commission on the topic mainly due to the paucity of State practice. As highlighted by some members of the Commission, States generally prefer to resolve questions concerning the Succession of States in respect of State responsibility through the conclusion of *ad-hoc* agreements. The work of the Commission could serve as a useful guideline for having the relevant successors and predecessors of States accountable for internationally wrongful acts.

Madam Vice-President, on the topic of General principles of law, we take note of the fourth report of the Special Rapporteur. With respect to the conclusion and recognition of a general principle of law, we welcome the use of the phrase "community of nations" instead of "civilised nations". This signifies the trend towards equal participation of sovereign States in the process of formation of General principles of law. Since General principles of law mainly derive from national legal systems, State recognition remains pivotal in all cases. Therefore, paragraphs (3) and (4) of draft Conclusion 2 need to be amended to demonstrate better the ancillary nature of

actors other than states in relation to the formation of General principles of law. On the draft Conclusion No. 3 concerning the two categories of General principles of law, our concern persists. As we have stated before, General principles of law “that may be formed within the international legal system” as stipulated in subparagraph (b) of Conclusion 3 and further elaborated in Draft Conclusion 7 do not fall within the ambit of Article 38, paragraph 1(c) of the ICJ Statute, as the latter does not encompass a second category of General principles of law formed within the international legal system. Contrary assertion by the Commission would be a direct engagement in progressive development in terms of sources of international law. With regard to the Draft Conclusion No. 6, we welcome the consideration by the Special Reporter of our previous comments as to the key importance of transposition of a principle common to the various legal systems of the world to the international legal system, in so far as it is compatible with the latter.

Madam Vice-President, as concerns Sea-level rise in relation to international law, we take note of the final consolidated report of the Study Group on issues related to statehood and to the protection of persons affected by sea-level rise. As concerns the law of the sea aspects of the topic, we basically concur with the views of the Study Group that the principle of *rebus sic stantibus* would not apply to delimitation lines as it is subject to the exclusion set forth in article 62, paragraph 2 (a), of the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (VCLT). It seems, however, that there are different views concerning the issue of statehood.

The International Court of Justice, in the recent Advisory Opinion on Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change, has an assessment on this issue. Judge Tomka, however, in his declaration casts doubt as to the validity of the assessment. In his words, the classical notion of statehood is virtually inseparable from a land and a people.

The work of the Study Group in relation to the protection of persons affected by sea-level rise presents an unprecedented balanced combination of what international law has to offer in terms of international human rights law, refugee law, humanitarian law, and disaster law frameworks. Practicality remains central when it comes to implementation, which highly depends on cooperation of States and their voluntary contribution. On the final output due to the complex and novel issues discussed in relation to the three subtopics, we concur with several members of the ILC on the appropriateness of draft conclusions or guidelines with commentaries to clarify the scope and details of each provision, including State practice and jurisprudence. To conclude, Madam Vice-President, we hope that consideration of the topics on the agenda of the ILC and interaction with ILC members will continue with the support of the Secretariat and the Member States. I thank you, Madam Vice-President.

Vice-President: I thank the distinguished delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran. I now give the floor to the distinguished delegate of Japan followed by Malaysia. Japan, you have the floor, please.

The Delegate of Japan: Thank you, Madam Vice-President. At the outset, I would like to express our appreciation to the AALCO Secretariat for its comprehensive report on the work of the ILC and for encouraging the Member States to submit their comments and observations to the ILC. Given that State practice is a very basis for the progressive development of international law and its qualification, Japan would like to reiterate its view that more and more Asian and African perspectives should be reflected in the work of the ILC. In this regard, Japan remains open to all options of ways and means to achieve this goal.

Japan also appreciates the leadership of the chair of the International Law Commission this year, Professor Pappas, as well as the contribution of all the members of the Commission. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate Japan’s firm position that the rule of law must

be upheld. To ensure the rule of law, promoting the progressive development of international law and its qualification is essential.

In this regard, it is regrettable that the seventy-sixth session of the Commission this year was held in a significantly reduced format due to the liquidity crisis facing the UN. As an opportunity to enhance dialogue between the Member States and the Commission, Japan welcomes the Commission's decision regarding the next session and hopes that sufficient resources necessary for its convening will be secured. Now, I would like to pick up the topics of Sea-level rise in relation to international law in which international cooperation is crucial.

Japan recognises that the risk of land submersion due to climate change-induced sea-level rise is an urgent issue of the international community. It has been recognised as a serious and imminent problem, not merely a legal matter, particularly for those States that were most affected by the phenomenon. The Commission, during this year's session, adopted a final report consolidating previous discussion on this issue.

Particularly, the Commission stated its view that States are under no obligation to update the baselines, geographical coordinates, or the outer limit of a maritime zone established under the UN Convention on the Laws of the Sea to account for changes as a result of climate change-related sea-level rise. This is a very position that Japan has officially endorsed as having fully considered the Commission's view and State practices. Japan welcomes the ICJ's recognitions on this point in its recent advisory opinion.

Japan understands that the final conclusions presented by the Commission during this year's session are intended to provide guidance for countries' policy decisions from a legal perspective. Taking into account the request of States facing sea-level rise, Japan notes with great interest that these conclusions are expected to stimulate future international legal discussions on sea-level rise. Japan remains committed to working and discussing with other States toward reaching a consensus on this issue, taking into account the direction indicated by the Commission and the position of each State.

Madam Vice-President, regarding the discussion of the ILC this year, Japan would like to take this opportunity to highlight that it has been decided that the topic, identification and legal consequences of obligations *erga omnes* in international law, proposed by ILC member Professor Asada, will be included in its long-term programme of work, while the significance and necessity of identifying obligations *erga omnes* in the Commission have been explained by the proposed Professor Asada himself in the video message earlier. Japan believes that the proposal is highly appropriate and timely. Japan also expects that it will be of great importance in addressing current issues related to international law as well as in policymaking of each country.

With regard to climate change, for instance, the aforementioned ICJ Advisory Opinion acknowledged that obligations pertaining to the protection of the climate system are obligations *erga omnes*, highlighting that its responsibility for breaches of such obligations may be invoked by any State when such obligations arise under customary international law. What remains of the requirement of injury for standing before the Court-to say nothing of the permissibility of unilateral countermeasures-will need to be seen.

Establishing appropriate criteria for identifying these obligations from a legal perspective and clarifying the legal consequences of breaches will contribute to strengthening the rule of law in the international community while ensuring legal stability and predictability.

In conclusion, Japan reiterates its full support for the works of the ILC and commits to working and discussing with other States on the topics under consideration.

Vice-President: I thank the distinguished delegate from Japan for his statement. I now give the floor to the distinguished delegate of Malaysia, and this will be followed by a coffee break. Distinguished delegate of Malaysia, you have the floor please.

The Delegate of Malaysia: Madam Vice-President, Your Excellency, Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. Malaysia records its appreciation to the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization Secretariat for providing its Members this opportunity to further converse and share their observations. Malaysia notes the significance of this topic for the codification and progressive development of international law and how this meeting has become a platform for the AALCO Member States to articulate their views on the work done by the International Law Commission.

As regards to Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction, Malaysia notes that there are proposals to have a more non-exhaustive list for crimes. Malaysia views that any introduction of crimes in the list requires careful consideration and deliberation as these crimes are mostly defined according to their respective treaties.

On Sea-level rise in relation to international law, Malaysia expresses concern over proposals aimed for adaptive interpretation of existing legal instruments like UNCLOS to address sea-level rise, contending that such reinterpretation risks undermining the original intent and Malaysia advocates for practical, short-term solutions.

In relation to Prevention and repression of piracy and armed robbery at sea, Malaysia had in 2023, submitted information on its legal framework and practice, including regional cooperation mechanisms and their application on uncrewed vessels and autonomous ships.

On General principles of law, Malaysia welcomes the revised phrasing of Draft Conclusion 9, which broadens the scope of “teachings” but the phrase “may serve as a subsidiary means” should be retained to assist in the determination of a general principle. On Draft Conclusion 12, Malaysia views that there remains ample scope for its refinement and enhancement to improve clarity, legal certainty, and practical applicability.

In relation to Subsidiary means for the determination of rules of international law, Malaysia notes as to date, draft conclusions 1 to 8 were provisionally adopted by the ILC. However, Malaysia believes that there are remaining issues for draft conclusions from 9 to 13 which needs further clarification and evaluation as the resulting effect may not be harmonious or will be in line with their original intent.

To conclude, Malaysia applauds AALCO’s recommendation on matters related to the work of the International Law Commission and we look forward to having a productive discussion on this topic.

Vice-President: I thank the distinguished delegate from Malaysia for his statement. We are ahead of schedule, but we will now proceed to a coffee break and resume our consideration of the topic at 4.45 with the following statements from the Kingdom of Thailand, followed by the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, and then the Republic of Korea, followed by the People’s Republic of China. So let us take a break. See you back at 4.45. Thank you.

The Meeting was thereafter adjourned for Coffee Break.

The Meeting was thereafter resumed.

Vice-President: So I hope you had a good coffee break. Now let us resume our consideration of the report of the work of the ILC at its seventy-sixth session. So we have the following speakers in this order, Kingdom of Thailand, followed by Viet Nam, followed by the Republic of Korea, then the People's Republic of China, and then the United Republic of Tanzania. So I give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Kingdom of Thailand. You have the floor, please.

The Delegate of the Kingdom of Thailand: Thank you, Madam Vice-President, Mr. Secretary-General, Excellency, distinguished delegates. At the outset, allow me to extend our sincere appreciation to the AALCO Secretariat for convening this important discussion. Thailand also wishes to commend them for organising valuable webinars on topics under consideration by the International Law Commission, in which Thailand was honoured to participate, as well as for preparing the comprehensive report on the Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction webinar. These activities have enriched our deliberations and reinforced AALCO's role as a crucial bridge between our region and the work of the Commission.

Thailand congratulates the members of the International Law Commission for the productive result of their seventy-sixth session, notwithstanding the liquidity crisis of the United Nations, which regrettably led to a limited session. We pay tribute in particular to ILC members from AALCO Member States, whose contributions continue to shape the codification and progressive development of international law. In particular, we warmly congratulate members whose proposals were recently inscribed in the long-term programme of the work of the ILC, all from AALCO Member States: Professor Mingashang for "The principle of non-intervention in international law"; Professor Asada for "Identification and legal consequences of obligations *erga omnes* in international law"; and Professor Patel for "Legal aspects of accountability for crimes committed against United Nations personnel serving in peacekeeping operations". Their achievement affirms the intellectual excellence of our regions and reflects the leadership of AALCO Member States.

Madam Vice-President, the importance of AALCO and the ILC and the enduring relationship between these two bodies cannot be overstated. As explicitly provided in AALCO's statutes, our organization bears the mandate to comment on the work of the Commission, thereby adding Asian and African perspective into the codification and progressive development of international law. In this regard, Thailand hopes that the traditional exchange of views between the commission and AALCO can be revived at the next year's session. Thailand supports the study of topics that offer concrete benefits for Member States by reflecting contemporary State practice. In particular, international investment law remains a pressing matter.

We welcome the inclusion of the topic "Compensation for the damage caused by internationally wrongful acts" and "Due diligence in international law" in the ILC Programme of Work and congratulate Mr. Mārtiņš Paparinskis and Ms. Penelope Ridings on their election as Special Rapporteurs for these subjects, respectively. At the same time, we regret that the liquidity crisis has curtailed the Commission session, limiting the time available for in-depth deliberations. We hope that a sustainable solution will soon be found so that the ILC may resume sessions of sufficient length to allow full consideration of the important topic before it. This also affects

the international law seminar, which remain an essential training ground for young lawyers from underrepresented regions, particularly in Asia and Africa. Thailand strongly supports its continuation.

Now, moving on to substantive matter.

On Sea-level rise in relation to international law, Thailand welcomes the consolidated final report of the ILC Study Group. Sea-level rise and climate change is a matter of great concern, especially for Small Island Developing States as it undermines sovereignty itself and represents one of the greater legal and fundamental challenges of our time. Thailand notes with appreciation that the recent Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on Climate Change, which many Asian African States, including Thailand, participated in, complements ILC work, including its reflections on the presumption of continued statehood.

On General principles of law and on Subsidiary means for the determination of rules of international law, Thailand expresses appreciation to the Special Rapporteurs for their fourth and third reports, respectively. Thailand underlines the importance of consistency in the ILC's outputs under the overall theme of "sources of international law," encompassing both completed and ongoing topics. We regret that, owing to the shortened session, the conclusions could not be adopted in their entirety, and hope that they will be finalised at the seventy-seventh session.

On Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction, Thailand notes the adoption of Draft Articles 1, 3, 4 and 5, together with their commentaries. We will continue to follow the discussions closely, mindful of the delicate balance between ensuring accountability and upholding sovereignty, the cornerstone of inter-State relations. Thailand also takes note with interest of the work of the Working Group established this year, including those on settlement of disputes to which international organisation are parties. Non-legally binding international agreements; Succession of States in respect of State responsibility and Prevention and replacement of piracy and armed robbery at sea. These topics are of direct relevance to Asian and African States, and Thailand will continue to follow their development with close attention.

Madam Vice-President, Thailand wishes to conclude by reaffirming its support for the important mandate and significant contribution of both AALCO and the ILC to our rule-based multilateral system. It is only through our participation that international law can truly reflect the perspectives and practice of Asian and Africa. We urge AALCO and its Member States to continue their active engagement with the Commission to reinforce our collective voice and to lead in advancing the codification and progressive development of international law. Thank you.

Vice-President: Thank you, I thank the distinguished delegate of Thailand for her statement. I now give the floor to the distinguished delegate of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam followed by the Republic of Korea. Viet Nam, you have the floor, please.

The Delegate of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam: Madam Vice-President, first and foremost, our delegation wishes to express its sincere gratitude and appreciation for the comprehensive report prepared by the AALCO Secretariat concerning the select items on the agenda of the International Law Commission during its seventy-sixth Session. We deeply value the ongoing efforts of the ILC in advancing international law.

Turning to the critical topic of Sea-level rise in relation to international law, as a nation particularly susceptible to the impacts of rising sea-levels, Viet Nam places paramount attention on the legal examination of this phenomenon and its far-reaching consequences for the

development of States, as well as for the overall stability and security of international relations. We wish to reaffirm the overarching importance of the United Convention on the Law of the Sea, UNCLOS, in addressing all maritime concerns, including those arising from sea-level rise.

We underscore the vital need for legal stability, a concept we believe is fully encapsulated within UNCLOS. Therefore, it is our firm position that maritime boundaries, when legitimately established in accordance with UNCLOS, should remain unchanged, notwithstanding the profound effects of sea-level rise. Viet Nam also attaches utmost importance to the principle of sovereignty over natural resources and equity in the careful examination and resolution of the legal consequences of sea-level rise. We further emphasise the fundamental principles of sovereignty, sovereign rights, and territorial integrity, which must be diligently applied to safeguard the rights and interests of all States, especially those most vulnerable to these changes.

Regarding the topic, Prevention and repression of piracy and armed robbery at sea, Viet Nam fully supports a comprehensive approach to preventing and suppressing the greater threats on the high sea and in areas beyond national jurisdiction. We strongly advocate for enhanced international cooperation in this regard. It is essential that all regulation and preventive measures are consistent with UNCLOS, which we view as the constitution of the ocean and the definitive legal framework governing all maritime activities. Viet Nam also encourages continued research to codify regulation, specifically addressing armed robbery at sea. Such endeavour must strictly adhere to the fundamental principle of international law, notably the UN Charter and the UNCLOS.

We welcome the ILC deliberation on this issue, which has contributed to clarifying the rules for combating piracy and armed robbery at sea. In doing so, it should be cautious with the approach to apply universal jurisdiction to armed robbery at sea. We reaffirm the coastal State's jurisdiction, including repression, over armed robbery at sea. It is important to gather the views and practical experiences of Member States, and we hope that our contribution, together with those of others, will continue to create a solid, practical foundation for the work of the ILC.

Finally, concerning the topic of Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction, Viet Nam underscores the immense importance of addressing this complex issue, recognising its crucial role in fostering amicable relations among States, stabilising international relations, and promoting the peaceful settlement of international disputes. We believe the Draft Articles must accurately reflect the international custom, taking into account a diversity of legal and cultural perspective of different countries. In this context, Viet Nam stresses the need for a careful balance between sovereign equality and accountability for serious international crimes. I thank you, Madam Vice-President.

Vice-President: I thank the distinguished delegate from the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. Now I give the floor to the distinguished delegate of the Republic of Korea, followed by the People's Republic of China. Republic of Korea, you have the floor, please.

The Delegate of the Republic of Korea: Thank you, Madam Vice-President. The Republic of Korea wishes to express its sincere appreciation to the AALCO Secretariat for its excellent report, which provides an in-depth analysis and valuable observations regarding the work of the ILC. My delegation would like to make comments on four topics considered at the seventy-sixth session of the ILC.

First, we welcome the adoption of the final report of the Study Group on Sea-level rise in relation to international law, and the conclusion of the Commission's consideration of this topic. The Study Group has carried out comprehensive and in-depth research on the

fundamental questions of statehood and the protection of persons affected by sea-level rise. The Government of the Republic of Korea fully shares the concerns of low-lying island States that face grave challenges posed by climate change. In this context, in May 2023, Korea expressed its support for the 2021 Pacific Islands Forum Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the Face of Climate Change-related Sea-Level Rise. Korea has also participated in the advisory proceedings of both the ICJ and ITLOS, thereby contributing to the development of judicial opinions on climate change and protection of the marine environment. We believe that this final report will provide a solid basis for future discussions on building institutional frameworks to address the grave threats posed by sea-level rise.

With respect to the topic of General principles of law, my delegation wishes to reiterate its position. In his fourth report, the Special Rapporteur noted that many States had expressed concerns and doubts about the category of general principles formed within the international legal system, but he nevertheless maintained the text and affirmed that such principles could emerge within the international legal order. We consider that, unlike general principles derived from national legal systems, the existence and content of those allegedly formed within the international legal system remain contested, and that it is difficult to distinguish them clearly from customary international law. We therefore call on the Commission to give this issue careful and prudent consideration.

On the topic of Subsidiary means for the determination of rules of international law, my delegation notes that, through the Special Rapporteur's third report, the Commission engaged in an in-depth exchange of views on whether elements such as outputs of private expert groups, pronouncement of public expert bodies, and resolutions of international organisations and international conferences may constitute Subsidiary means for the determination of rules of international law. We look forward to further discussion on this point. We also recall Draft Article 7, which confirms the lack of legally binding precedents in international law. Judicial decisions are an important subsidiary means, and the Republic of Korea accords them due respect. At the same time, we stress that the decisions of international courts and tribunals, including those of the ICJ, do not bind States other than the parties to the case, and do not have binding precedent. We further note that courts and tribunals sometimes reach different reasoning on similar legal questions, and that dissenting or separate opinions may at times be more persuasive than the majority view. Each judicial decision should therefore be carefully assessed when determining its weight as evidence of general rules of international law.

The recent ICJ judgement on the delimitation of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles illustrates this point. Its reasoning has been subject to significant scholarly criticism. The proposition that States may not assert the outer limits of their extended continental shelf within 200 nautical miles of the baseline of another State has never acquired the authority of the general rule of international law. The Republic of Korea reiterates its opposition to such a proposition.

Finally, with regard to the topic of Succession of States in respect of State responsibility, my delegation welcomes the Commission's decision to discontinue its work on this topic. Many States have pointed to the lack of sufficient and consistent State practice required for codification. We value the Commission's decision to take those concerns into account, and we also wish to commend the Working Group for its dedicated efforts in studying this topic over the past years. Thank you, Madam Vice-President. Thank you.

Vice-President: I thank the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Korea. I now give the floor to the distinguished delegate from the People's Republic of China followed by the United Republic of Tanzania. Sir, you have the floor, please, China.

The Delegate of the People's Republic of China²: Thank you, Madam President. The ILC is a significant legal institution responsible for the promotion of the codification and the progressive development of international law under the UN Charter. Since its establishment, the Commission has made outstanding contributions to the shaping, consolidation, and advancement of international legal order. China has consistently attached great importance to and firmly supported the work of the Commission. Taking advantage of this opportunity, we would like to share our opinion with colleagues from the region on the following topics:

Working methods of the Commission: Transformations of the world unseen in a century are unfolding at a faster pace. Facing new challenges and situations, China believes that the Commission should constantly improve and refine its working methods. First, the Commission should uphold the orientation of the needs of all countries, take into full account the opinions of Member States, especially those from Asia and Africa, and make the codification and progressive development of international law more in line with the actual needs of the international community. Second, the Commission should uphold a comprehensive and equal representation of the main forms of civilization and of the principal legal systems of the world, take full consideration into regional and linguistic balance, and attach more attention to the judicial practice and academic achievements from Asian and African States. Third, the Commission should uphold a problem-oriented approach. The topics should focus on the problems arising from the diplomatic practice of various States, issues related to the common interests and concerns of the international community involved in global threats and challenges, and issues that existing international law and rules but lack clarity. Last, the Commission should uphold the tradition of seeking consensus through consultation, maintaining the principle of consensus in the Commission, and seek common ground while shelving differences.

China notes that at the present session, the Commission decided to incorporate into the long-term programme the topics “The principle of non-intervention in international law”, “Identification and legal consequences of obligations *erga omnes* in international law” and “Legal aspects of accountability for crimes committed against United Nations personnel serving in peacekeeping operations”, which were all proposed by ILC members from Asia and Africa. China welcomes and hopes that the Commission will conduct researches in a prudent, inclusive, and balanced manner to ensure the outcomes truly reflect the opinions of all countries and universal State practice.

Sea-level rise in relation to international law: Sea-level rise is a common challenge for the international community. This year the Commission unanimously adopted the final report submitted by the Study Group and concluded its consideration of the topic. The Study Group sorted out the legal viewpoints and practice of various countries, providing a wealth of materials on relevant issues. China appreciates this contribution. Based on the final report, the international community should further focus on and research the following issues: First, to continue safeguarding the interests of Small Island States and developing countries. Small Island States and developing countries are victims of sea-level rise. Damaging their marine interests, or even terminating statehood solely because of sea-level rise would cause a profound injustice and undermine the stability of the international rule of law. Conclusions in the final

² The Delegate of the People's Republic of China while delivering the statement stated that they were sharing their opinions on two topics and would submit their written opinions on the remaining topics to the Secretariat. The above statement is the full text of the written statement kindly submitted by the Delegation of the People's Republic of China to the Secretariat.

report such as “there is no provision in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea that imposes an obligation on States to update baselines, geographical coordinates or other limits of maritime zones once duly deposited with the Secretary-General in accordance with the Convention”; “Article 1 of the 1933 Convention on the Rights and Duties of States ... does not address the question of the continuity of statehood in the context of climate change-related sea-level rise” are in line with the interests of Small Island States, developing countries, and the international community as a whole, which should be developed and upheld. Second, to properly address the relationship between the UNCLOS and customary international law. As noted in the final report, “no provisions were included in the Convention to address climate change-related sea-level rise in relation to baselines, the outer limits of maritime zones and the status of islands and of archipelagic waters”, which once again highlights the limitations of the Convention, as it does not constitute the entirety of the Law of the Sea.

China reaffirms that, beyond the Convention, the rules in customary international law regarding historic waters, historic ownership and historic rights are also important grounds for the maritime interests of States, which can provide legal support for the safeguard of maritime zones and interests that have disappeared due to sea-level rise, and should be given due attention in future study. Third, the right to self-determination and the issue of statehood in the context of sea-level rise must be prudently addressed. The right of self-determination only applies to two scenarios, namely peoples under colonial domination or foreign occupation. Sea-level rise does not fall under the scenarios where the right to self-determination applies.

China commends the conclusions on “the continuity of statehood in the context of climate change-related sea-level rise is based on the right of States to preserve their existence, the right of each State to preserve its territorial integrity” in the final report. However, at the same time, the final report related the issue of sea-level rise to the concept of the right to self-determination, might expansively interpret the scope of application of the right to self-determination, presents a questionable position.

Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction: The Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction stems from the principle of sovereign equality. It relates to the political dignity and personal security of State leaders and serves as a cornerstone for the stable functioning of international relations. China would like to express two main points regarding this topic: First, Draft Article 7 of this topic creates multiple exceptions to immunity *ratione materiae*. This crucial provision does not reflect international consensus, nor can it be argued that the said exceptions constitute customary international law. It should be noted that the treaties on which this Draft Article is based lack universality, and the State practice cited is scarce, which is concentrated in European and American regions and thus lacks representativeness and universality. For many years, there have been significant controversies and divergences within the Commission and among States regarding these exceptions to immunity *ratione materiae*. The Commission should continue to patiently listen to and fully respond to the views of all States and should not rush into conclusions.

Second, to prevent the abuse of litigation, it is imperative to provide sufficient procedural safeguards for the Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction. China noted that during the current ILC session, the Drafting Committee had provisionally adopted Draft Articles concerning the scope of application of procedural provisions and the examination of the question of immunity. China supports the Commission’s continued and increased focus on the issue of procedural safeguards, its full consideration of the views of all States, and its

ongoing efforts to improve the relevant articles to ensure that the immunity enjoyed by State officials is earnestly respected.

General principles of law: General principles of law serve as one of the sources of international law under Article 38 of Statute of the International Court of Justice, therefore the research on this topic holds significant importance. China congratulates the Commission which adopted draft conclusions 1 to 12 on second reading, and hopes that the Commission will continue to prepare and consider corresponding commentaries based on Statute of ICJ, in order to ensure they are prudent and reasonable. Draft conclusion 3 provides that General principles of law contain the principles “that may be formed within the international legal system”, and draft conclusion 7 stipulates that their identification standard is “to ascertain that the community of nations has recognized the principle as intrinsic to the international legal system”. Actually, there has been some different opinions in the international community and the Commission over whether such General principles of law exist. China hopes that the Commission will continue to conduct an in-depth study of this issue, and further explain the conditions of formation of such General principles of law, provide examples of relevant international practice and clarify their relationship with customary international law and existing principles of international law in commentaries. China believes it will be helpful to reach the consensus and provide clear guidance for understanding and applying the relevant rules.

Subsidiary means for the determination of rules of international law: The research of this topic will enable the Commission’s work to cover all contents of sources of international law in Article 38 of Statute of the International Court of Justice, which also holds significant importance. The third report by the Special Rapporteur focuses on “other means generally used to assist in determining rules of international law” besides “judicial decisions” and “teachings” in Article 38. China recognizes the value of this research.

First, regarding the works of expert bodies, China believes that the definition and scope of “expert bodies” in draft conclusion 9 remain to be clarified. Whether the works of expert bodies serve as “teachings” or “other subsidiary means” needs to be analyzed specifically in light of different situations. For example, the authorization and working methods of human rights treaty bodies are special. The decisions and concluding opinions they make through the procedures for individual communications are not authoritative interpretations of relevant treaty provisions. The nature of such works should be regarded with caution.

Second, regarding the resolutions and other texts produced by international organizations or adopted at intergovernmental conferences, China believes some resolutions can serve as subsidiary means. For example, in the *Chagos* Advisory Opinion, ICJ used General Assembly resolution 1514(XV) of 1960, which is Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples, as the subsidiary means of determination of right of self-determination in customary law. In addition, resolutions may also be used such as sources of international law, e.g., resolutions of Security Council, or evidence for identification for customary international law. China hopes that the Commission will further clarify different functions of resolutions in commentaries, and point out the specific criteria that need to be considered when assessing the weight of this kind of subsidiary means.

Settlement of disputes to which international organizations are parties: China noted that the Special Rapporteur for this topic submitted the third report this year, and proposed five draft guidelines. China has the following understandings regarding this report and the draft guidelines within: First, this report focused on disputes that are, in most cases, non-

international and of a private law character, involving the application of relevant domestic laws or internal charters of international organizations. While China raises no objection to the Commission's study of this issue, we do think that it would be inappropriate to overly focus on disputes of a private law character, so as not to deviate from the original intention of this topic, which is to focus on international disputes to which international organizations are parties.

Second, draft guideline 10 "access to justice" gives priority to arbitration and litigation as means of settlement of disputes between international organizations and private parties. China noted that in both second and third reports of this topic, the Special Rapporteur mentioned that many international organisations stated in the questionnaire that, whether dealing with international disputes or disputes with private parties, informal dispute settlement techniques, such as negotiations and consultations, were still the most commonly used means. Comparing with arbitration or litigation, negotiation and consultation normally have shorter duration and lower costs, and are more efficient. Therefore, China is of the opinion that, when proposing suggestion for the means of Settlement of disputes to which international organizations are parties, draft guidelines should take into account the circumstance and nature of the dispute, respect the mutual consent of the parties to freely choose the most appropriate means of dispute settlement, and should not mechanically promote and prioritize arbitration and litigation as the preferred means to settle all kinds of disputes.

Non-legally binding international agreements: There have been wide international practices on Non-legally binding international agreements for its flexibility and convenience, which contributes to the international cooperation. China holds the following opinions of this topic: First, the topic should focus on international practices between or among subjects with international legal personality, such as States and intergovernmental organizations. As to the practice of sub-State authorities, we propose to exclude it from the topic, because it depends on issues like the treaty-concluding power of local governments under constitutional system of different countries. Meanwhile, the result of this ILC topic should not alter the present norms such as VCLT or relative customary international law.

Second, China notices that, the so called "South China arbitration award" has been referred several times in the report, and we are deeply concerned about it. Chinese government has objected that award consistently, because the award oversteps its jurisdiction, arbitrates against the law, and obviously errs in ascertaining facts and applying the law. The award is null and void. Just as Gilbert Guillaume, former President of the ICJ, put it, "The tribunal did not interpret the text (the UNCLOS); it rewrote it completely." The Chinese side believes that referring to such erroneous award does nothing to strengthen the analyses; instead, it provokes greater controversy. China noticed that suggestions to delete such reference were made by ILC members during the ILC discussion.

Prevention and repression of piracy and armed robbery at sea: Piracy and armed robbery at sea are security risks commonly faced by the international community at present. The codification and progressive development of relevant international rules will contribute to combat criminal acts at sea, maintain the security of sea passages and safeguard the safety of life and property. China supports the Commission's continued in-depth research of this topic. China believes that the Draft Articles should be consistent with international law, including UNCLOS, and should not jeopardize the principle of the Freedom of the High Seas established in the UNCLOS, the universal jurisdiction of States over the crimes in question and the exclusive jurisdiction of flag States, the sovereignty of the coastal State, its sovereign rights and its jurisdiction, so as to

preserve the balanced package established in the UNCLOS. China expects the Commission to continue promoting the research of this topic.

Succession of States in respect of State responsibility: In the current session, the Commission decided to establish a Working Group to draft the report that would bring the work on the topic to an end, and consider it during the seventy-seventh session to be held next year to finally finish the work on the topic. China believes that the Commission's decision is pragmatic. Given the scarcity and lack of universality of State practice, and the difficulty in examining the *opinio juris* of States, it is indeed difficult for the Commission to continue its consideration. China will follow the next steps in this topic. That is all. Thank you, Madam President.

Vice-President: I thank the distinguished delegate of the People's Republic of China. I now give the floor to the distinguished delegate of the United Republic of Tanzania. You have the floor, please.

The Delegate of the United Republic of Tanzania: Thank you, Madam Vice-President. The United Republic of Tanzania commends the ongoing efforts by the International Law Commission on very important topics of international law. Regarding the topic of Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction, the United Republic of Tanzania is a signatory to various international instruments that recognise and uphold the principle of Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction, which is essential for maintaining sovereign equality, non-interference in internal matters and stable international relations. Such instruments include the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations and the United Nations Convention on Special Missions, which oblige State parties to respect immunities of high-ranking officials, such as heads of State and government, as well as immunities for acts performed in an official capacity, in line with the customary international law.

Furthermore, the United Republic of Tanzania is a member of regional instruments, such as the African Union Constitutive Act and aligns with the African Union's position on preventing the abuse of universal jurisdiction in foreign criminal proceedings against serving African leaders, which can undermine sovereignty and regional stability. The African Union has consistently emphasised the need to balance immunity with accountability, particularly in the context of international crimes, while cautioning against politically motivated prosecutions. In compliance with such international and regional obligations, the United Republic of Tanzania has incorporated provisions on immunities into its domestic legal framework, including the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, the Diplomatic and Consular Immunities and Privileges Act, the Criminal Procedure Act, and the Extradition Act.

These laws provide mechanisms for recognising and enforcing immunities in criminal proceedings, ensuring coordination between domestic authorities and foreign jurisdiction, and facilitating mutual legal assistance where immunities do not apply. Furthermore, recognising the application of immunity from foreign criminal jurisdiction involves complex issues of State practice, procedural safeguards, and exceptions for serious international crimes. The United Republic of Tanzania supports ongoing efforts by the International Law Commission to codify and progressively develop this area of law.

In that regard, the United Republic of Tanzania affirms its commitment to the global dialogue on balancing immunity with the fight against impunity for international crimes. It is our belief that AALCO's progressive work on immunity will facilitate meaningful exchange among state members, bridge divergence, and promote a harmonised approach that respects sovereignty

while advancing justice. Madam Vice-President, in conclusion, the aspects highlighted above will contribute immensely to international efforts in clarifying and applying immunities, thereby supporting stable interstate relations and the rule of law. In a nutshell, the United Republic of Tanzania commends AALCO's initiatives on this topic and looks forward to constructive interventions at this session. Thank you for your kind attention.

Vice-President: I thank the distinguished delegate of the United Republic of Tanzania, and are there any further requests for the floor? There being none, we have exhausted our list of speakers for the item, and we have successfully concluded the proceedings of our second day. I thank all the delegates for their statements, and I thank all the six members of the International Law Commission and everybody for your valuable contributions. I would like to inform the delegations that tomorrow, Wednesday, we will start the fourth general meeting at 10 a.m. with the topic Law of the Sea. So it is 10 a.m., I kindly request all delegations to assemble at this plenary hall on time so that we can start the proceedings as scheduled.

I also wish to inform everyone that the drafting committee will meet shortly at the Bunyoni Hall for the drafting committee. Thank you, and we look forward to our continued discussions tomorrow. So I now give the floor to the emcee to make announcements about tonight's dinner or reception. Emcee, you have the floor, please.

The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

**IX. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOURTH
GENERAL MEETING OF THE AALCO MEMBER
STATES**

IX. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOURTH GENERAL MEETING OF THE AALCO MEMBER STATES HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2025, AT 10:00 AM

Hon'ble Kiryowa Kiwanuka, Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda and President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO in the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM: THE LAW OF THE SEA

President: Good morning, all distinguished delegates. I hope and trust you had a wonderful Day Two, and had some good rest last evening. I would now like to call the meeting to order. We will now start today's proceedings with the Fourth General Meeting. The topics to be considered in today's meeting will be the Law of the Sea, Environment and Sustainable Development, Violation of International Law in Palestine and Other Occupied Territories by Israel and Other International Legal Issues Related to the Question of Palestine, Legal Issues in Outer Space. We will start today's proceedings with the topic on the Law of the Sea.

Member States wishing to make statements, please register with the AALCO Secretariat, as is our practise. May I kindly remind all delegations in line with AALCO's established practise that any conflicts or bilateral matters, particularly between our Member States as well as issues related to internal affairs of a Member State, should not be raised directly or indirectly during this Session. At this point, I will invite the AALCO Secretariat, the Deputy Secretary-General, to make the introductory remarks on the substantive topic, the Law of the Sea.

Mr. Yong Zhu, Deputy Secretary-General, AALCO: Thank you, Mr. President. Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. The Law of the Sea has long been one of the oldest and perhaps the most deliberated topics on AALCO's agenda. First introduced in 1970 on the initiative of the Republic of Indonesia, it has remained central to our Organization's work for more than five decades. The contributions of AALCO's in shaping international law of the sea are widely acknowledged. Concepts such as the exclusive economic zone, the recognition of archipelagic State and the rights of landlocked States, all of which later found codification in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, were first deliberated in AALCO forums, which underscores the role of Asian and African States in shaping a global legal order for the oceans. Building on this legacy, the Secretariat brief on the Law of the Sea for the Sixty-Third Annual Session turns to three pressing and contemporary clusters of issues. First, marine environment protection. Second, maritime safety and security. Third, capacity building for developing States.

Excellencies, the topic of marine environment protection covers the regulation of marine pollution, the growing challenge of ocean acidification, governance of deep seabed mining, and the legal implications of offshore renewable energy activity. Our discussions will also consider how best to strengthen the new international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ).

The topic of maritime safety and security includes discussions on piracy and armed robbery at sea, where cooperation among coastal, regional, and international actors remains essential. The current Secretariat brief reflects on maritime migration and displacement patterns, which continue to pose humanitarian, legal, and security challenges for many Member States. With a focus on the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021 to 2030), the topic of capacity-building for developing States deals with how to bridge persistent gaps in access to funding, technical training, and applied technologies so that all AALCO Member States can participate fully in sustainable governance of the oceans.

Excellencies, the Secretariat brief outlines these themes in detail and provides a basis for deliberations today. Member States are welcome to share their national perspectives and proposals so that AALCO may once again contribute meaningfully to the codification and the progressive development of international law of the sea. I thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, Your Excellency, the Deputy Secretary-General, for your statement. Members, distinguished delegates, clearly this is a matter of grave importance to Member States of AALCO, both landlocked or otherwise. This topic has consistently featured on our agenda and your intervention has always been very, very welcome and is of utmost importance so that we as AALCO can participate in shaping the direction of this legal question. I will now invite delegates from Member States to make their statements. On the list, I have the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the United Republic of Tanzania, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of India, the Republic of Türkiye, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Thailand, and we will take the next list. We will now move to the statement from the distinguished delegate from the United Republic of Tanzania. United Republic of Tanzania, you have the floor.

The Delegate of the United Republic of Tanzania: Thank you, Mr. President. His Excellency, Mr. President, distinguished guests, good morning. The United Republic of Tanzania would like to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General of AALCO for organising this meeting. It brings us to deliberate on issues relating to The Law of the Sea without forgetting implementation of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, UNCLOS. In the contemporary global environment, maritime security, particularly the menace of maritime crimes like piracy, human trafficking, illegal fishing, smuggling goods, and marine terrorism poses a significant threat to safety of navigation and the overall safety and welfare of both seafarers, passengers aboard, and port workers. The implications of such threat extend beyond immediate safety concerns. They can disrupt international trade routes, resulting into substantial financial losses and economic repercussions for numerous countries.

The United Republic of Tanzania, as a coastal State and Member State of UN, ratified the UNCLOS in 1995. Since then, we have committed to its implementation and the integrated manner of its provisions into our national laws and policies. In promoting the safety of life at sea, Tanzania has ratified the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, SOLAS, and International Ship and Port Facility Security Code, ISPS Code, to ensure safety measures are complied with. State control inspections are conducted as per regional cooperation, such as Indian Ocean Memorandum of Understanding. The United Republic of Tanzania has ratified some security Conventions, such as Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against Theft of Maritime Navigation (SUA Convention), and it has established a comprehensive legal framework encompassing various aspects of maritime security, including piracy, illegal fishing, smuggling, human trafficking, and terrorism. The country is a signatory of the Djibouti Code of Conduct and International Ship and Port Facility Security Code, ISPS. This demonstrates Tanzania's commitment to addressing maritime threats in line with global standards.

Tanzania actively participates in regional and international initiatives to enhance maritime safety and security. Tanzania is a Member State of International Maritime Organisation, IMO, Indian Ocean Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control, IOMoU, Indian Ocean Rim Association, and the country collaborates with neighbouring coastal States, regional organisations, and international partners to share information and coordinate efforts to combat maritime threats. Such cooperation contributes to a collective response to cross-border challenges.

Tanzania emphasises the importance of capacity building and technology transfer to enhance the capabilities of developing nations in marine science, maritime safety, and resource management. We urge developing countries and international organisations to support these efforts through technical assistance, funding, and knowledge sharing. Despite the progress made, Tanzania also continues to face challenges in fully implementing UNCLOS, particularly in the areas of cyber sabotage against private ships, technology transfer, and resource management.

We call upon the AALCO Member States to continue working together in providing technical assistance, financial support, and capacity-building initiatives to enhance the ability of developing countries to meet their obligations under the Convention on those small islands. Additionally, we emphasise the need of ongoing dialogue and cooperation between coastal and landlocked States, regional organisations, and international institutions to ensure that the principles of equity, sustainability, and the rule of law enshrined in UNCLOS are upheld. The United Republic of Tanzania reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the full and effective implementation of UNCLOS. We believe that the Convention remains a cornerstone for ensuring peace, stability, and prosperity in the world's oceans. Tanzania will continue to work collaboratively with the international community to safeguard the oceans for future generations while promoting sustainable development in our maritime zones. Thank you for your attention. *Asante Sana.*

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from Tanzania, for your statement. I, now, invite the distinguished delegate from the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to make their statement, followed by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Delegate of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam: Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, our seas and oceans are today confronted with convergence of complex and interlinked challenges, from climate change, competing maritime claims, to persistent inequalities in access to marine technology. In this challenging time, UNCLOS remains the constitution for the ocean, the comprehensive legal framework governing all activities in the oceans and seas for all States, large and small, coastal and landlocked.

Viet Nam was one of the first countries to ratify UNCLOS in 1994. All our maritime zones are determined in full compliance with UNCLOS. Viet Nam serves as a good example in the peaceful settlement of maritime disputes, having successfully completed our four maritime boundary delimitations with neighbouring countries. Viet Nam has also continuously improved our national legal system in accordance with UNCLOS, and at the same time, strengthen enforcement capacity and ensure transparency. Together, the international community, Viet Nam is fully committed to undertake efforts to protect the marine environment and achieve sustainable development goals related to the ocean, in particular SDG 14. In Viet Nam's opinion, measures should be taken to promote financial aid, capacity building, transfer of modern and high technologies to help developing countries, including Small Island States, least developed countries, and countries most vulnerable to climate change to effectively protect the marine environment.

Viet Nam welcomes the successful conclusion of the third United Nations Ocean Conference held in Nice, which delivers an action-orientated political declaration governing political will to accelerate SDG 14 implementation. We are also pleased to note that the BBNJ agreement has now been ratified or approved by 56 States and regional organisations. Viet Nam is proud to be among the first States to approve the agreement.

We are also pleased to share that in June 2025, Viet Nam has, for the first time, assumed the chairmanship of the Thirty-Fifth Annual Meeting of State Parties to UNCLOS. This reflects

the high trust and confidence that countries have for Viet Nam's capacity in management and leadership in multilateral processes and mechanisms within the framework of the United Nations, which also shows the international community's recognition and appreciation of Viet Nam's role and contributions to the common efforts to promote the implementation of the Convention and global ocean governance.

Ladies and gentlemen, fully aware of the serious challenges faced by the seas and oceans and the important role of international law, as a responsible member of the international community, Viet Nam wishes to contribute its most valuable human resources to address these challenges by enhancing the effectiveness of international law enforcement at sea.

For this reason, Viet Nam has nominated Associate Professor Dr. Lan Anh Nguyen for the position of Judge at ITLOS for the period 2026-2035. Dr. Lan Anh is currently Vice-President of the Diplomatic Academy of Viet Nam, Vice-President of the Asian Society of International Law, and Arbitrator under Annex VII of UNCLOS. She has represented Viet Nam in various international legal mechanisms, including at the International Court of Justice. Her academic and diplomatic career spans many high-level multilateral fora, intergovernmental negotiation processes, and her academic authority is well recognised both regional and internationally. Her commitment to universal values, such as inclusiveness, sustainable development, and integrity is fully consistent with the mandate of ITLOS and the urgent needs of our time. If elected, Dr. Lan Anh will be the first Southeast Asian woman to hold the position of Judge at ITLOS, thereby enhancing the representativeness, diversity, and gender balance of the tribunal and contributing to the effectiveness of its operation.

To conclude, the challenges we are facing are too vast for any nation to solve alone. But together, under the framework of UNCLOS and in its implementing agreements, we can ensure a peaceful, sustainable, and equitable ocean for the present and future generations. We will send you the full statement of our delegation. Thank you, Mr. President.¹

President: I thank you, the distinguished delegate from the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. I now yield the floor to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran: *Bismillahirrahmanirrahim.* Thank you, Mr. President. Allow me at the outset to thank the AALCO Secretariat for its comprehensive report on the topic.

I would like to reiterate my delegation's position on a number of issues related to this agenda item. As a signatory State to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the UNCLOS, the Islamic Republic of Iran recognises the importance of this international legal framework in addressing activities related to oceans and seas to the extent falling within the ambit of its purpose and scope. Nonetheless, the Islamic Republic of Iran reaffirms its principal position that the UNCLOS is not an exclusive and the sole legal framework for activities pertaining to oceans and seas. We continue to assert that any reference to the UNCLOS should be met and understood in tandem with relevant international law, including other relevant legal instruments and frameworks. The UNCLOS, in isolation and apart from other relevant legal instruments and frameworks, could not address all activities in oceans and seas.

¹ The above statement is the full text of the written statement kindly submitted by the Delegation of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the Secretariat.

We believe that the adoption of the legally binding agreement on the conservation and the sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction represents a great milestone in the global efforts to protect and sustainably use biological resources in areas beyond national jurisdiction. We assert that the common heritage of mankind is the guiding principle to achieve the objectives of the BBNJ Agreement, including the access and sharing of benefits of marine genetic resources. This principle provides a great legal foundation for a fair and equitable regime that would allow all countries to benefit from the potential marine biodiversity presents in terms of food security and economic prosperity and to address challenges of conservation and sustainable use of marine genetic resources. In this context, regional cooperation within the existing instruments and frameworks is also essential to ensure sustainable management of marine resources and to further protect the delicate ecosystems that are vital for the livelihoods of communities in the region.

Mr. President, in order to achieve “The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development” (2021-2030), we stress that much greater efforts should be undertaken by States and all other stakeholders, including through international cooperation and coordination as well as by providing not only capacity building but also transfer of marine technology and knowhow to the developing countries. The Islamic Republic of Iran highly values the efforts made on sustainable fisheries management, which have an outstanding role in supporting the economic activities of some developing countries, conservation of marine resources, healthy maritime ecosystems, and ensuring food security for all.

With due attention to the decrease of marine resources in recent years, planning for responsible fisheries management, the use of selective fishing methods and combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing should be on the agenda of all countries, regional fisheries management organisations, and relevant international institutions. In this regard, it is necessary for countries to take urgent action in the form of national programmes and international cooperation to raise knowledge and awareness of fishermen and actors involved in management of marine resources by capacity-building. Rapid population growth, industrialisation, urbanisation, increasing fishing demands, droughts, and other natural disasters caused by climate change effects and ineffective development policies are degrading the natural resources at an alarmingly rapid rate and thus pose serious threats to sustainable development in our region. Sea-level rise, loss of biodiversity, and depletion of the population of fauna and flora are other issues that we face in our region.

Last but not least, Mr. President, in addressing this august meeting on promotion of international cooperation as related to oceans and seas, we should not lose sight of the detrimental impact of unilateral coercive measures. Such internationally wrongful acts, which are flagrant violations of the fundamental principles of international law and the principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, impede international cooperation, trade, and commerce, including through oceans and seas. These unlawful measures also undermine the capacity of affected States in performing their relevant obligations related to, amongst others, marine environment pollution and other activities in oceans, and also impede access of affected countries to required technologies in addressing threats facing the ocean. We reiterate that these unlawful measures should be terminated, and States should desist and refrain from promulgation and applying or otherwise giving effect to such illegal measures. I thank you, Mr. President.

President: I thank you, the distinguished delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran. I now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Republic of India.

The Delegate of the Republic of India: Thank you, Mr. President, and good morning to all colleagues. The oceans represent Earth's most expansive ecosystem, spanning nearly 75% of our planet's surface. This vast marine domain serves as a dynamic stage for a host of complex and interwoven global challenges, including climate change, economic livelihoods, international trade, and geopolitical security. This year marks a pivotal moment in global efforts surrounding the oceans and the Law of the Sea in particular. The international community has deepened its engagement, reflecting a growing recognition of the central role played by oceans in shaping our planet's future. A grasp of the intricate connections between ocean health, climate systems, and sustainable development continues to evolve, offering new insights and opportunities for collaborative action.

Mr. President, since its adoption, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, along with its associated institutions, has been instrumental in guiding the responsible and equitable stewardship of ocean resources. It has laid down the foundation for peaceful cooperation, legal clarity, and sustainable use of the seas for the benefit of all humanity.

The Oceans Conference held this year in June served as a defining moment in global ocean governance, placing renewed emphasis on the urgent challenges facing our marine systems. The high-level gatherings centred on accelerating collective action and galvanising stakeholders to conserve and sustainably manage the oceans, seas, and marine resources, advancing the implementation of SDG Goal 14. India has participated actively in the conference, reaffirming its commitment as a leading implementer of SDG 14. This engagement underscores India's proactive role in addressing interconnected global issues such as climate change, economic resilience, maritime trade, and regional security.

India recognises both the challenges and opportunities that oceans present, from promoting sustainable fisheries and curbing marine litter and plastic pollution to harnessing affordable renewable energy, fostering ecotourism, and strengthening early warning systems for disaster risk reduction. Building resilience and adapting to climate change remains central to these efforts.

Looking ahead, India is committed to advancing innovative technologies in offshore renewable energy, aquaculture, deep seabed mining, and marine biotechnology. These emerging sectors offer new avenues of employment, economic growth, and global competitiveness.

Beyond UNCLOS, India is a party to several key international agreements that reinforce its dedication to the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources. These include the Agreement on the Implementation of Part XI of UNCLOS, the 1995 Fish Stocks Agreement, MARPOL 73/78 on Marine Pollution, the 2004 International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, all aimed at curbing the spread of invasive aquatic alien species, as well as the London Convention of 1972. Together, these instruments reflect India's comprehensive approach to regulating ocean activities and safeguarding marine ecosystems.

Mr. President, India's commitment to the conservation and sustainable management of ocean, seas, and marine resources is reflected, as was said earlier in SDG 14. As a part of this effort, India has signed the Agreement on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, also called as BBNJ, reinforcing our dedication to safeguarding marine ecosystems beyond sovereign boundaries. We are actively engaged in formulating our national law on this agreement before we ratify it. India has also played a vital role in supporting the effective functioning of key institutions established under UNCLOS, including ITLOS and the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. These

bodies are essential to ensuring the Convention's provisions are implemented fairly and that the benefits of ocean use are equitably used.

India's leadership in ocean affairs spans decades, and it was one of the first countries to be granted pioneer investor status in the Indian Ocean. India's naval forces play an important and crucial role in humanitarian and security activities, delivering emergency aid, conducting evacuations, and patrolling vital sea-lanes to combat piracy.

India is concerned with illegal fishing practises and those relating to maritime safety and security, including acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea. We have put in place a comprehensive Maritime Anti-Piracy Act of 2022 to give effect to UNCLOS provisions relating to piracy on the high seas, which also recognise the need for all states to cooperate to the fullest extent possible for repression of piracy at sea. We are also actively engaged with the work of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, also called as CGPCS, which has contributed significantly in combating piracy in the Western Indian Ocean region.

Mr. President, India remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing sustainable development of its blue economy in alignment with the 2030 agenda, particularly through the implementation of SDG Goal 14. We look forward to working collaboratively with global partners to safeguard and preserve our oceans, recognising their health is vital to our shared pursuit of sustainable development and long-term prosperity.

Mr. President, to showcase India's commitment to the subject of the Law of the Sea, India has nominated Professor Bimal Patel, Member of the International Law Commission, as a candidate for election to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea for the term 2026-2035. I thank you, Mr. President.

President: I thank the distinguished delegate from the Republic of India for your statement. I now invite the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Türkiye to make their statement.

The Delegate of the Republic of Türkiye: Thank you, Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates. We agree with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in its general intent and most of its provisions that reflect the rules of international customary law. Our objection to some provisions of the Convention and our decision not to accede to it cannot be construed as an objection to all provisions of UNCLOS, particularly to those related to the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources. We are fully committed to the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources and attach great importance to regional cooperation to that end. We did not become party to UNCLOS due to its serious shortcomings, particularly with regard to delimitation matters in speciality areas, particularly with regard to enclosed and semi-enclosed seas where special circumstances prevail, such as the Aegean Sea.

First and foremost, our objection is related to those provisions of the convention concerning the delimitation and the breadth of territorial seas and their application in enclosed or semi-enclosed seas. Non-permissibility of reservations to UNCLOS is another element preventing Türkiye to accede to the convention. However, being a non-party to UNCLOS does not mean Türkiye is unaware of or irreverent towards international maritime law. If that was the case, it would not be possible to complete maritime delimitation in the Black Sea. Türkiye's all maritime boundaries in the Black Sea have been delimited via bilateral agreements as of 1997.

Mr. President, since we are not party to the Convention, it is not legally possible for Türkiye to accept a reference to UNCLOS, which identifies the Convention as the sole legal framework for conversation and sustainable use of oceans. In other words, while UNCLOS may be an

important element in Law of the Sea matters from a factual point of view, it is not universal nor exhaustive in that domain.

Therefore, with regard to Article 71 of the report of the Secretariat on the Law of the Sea, Türkiye wishes to state that UNCLOS is not the only legal framework regulating all activities in the oceans and seas. In this context, due consideration should also be given to the relevant *acquis*. Furthermore, in the context of article 82 and 84 of the aforementioned report, Türkiye would like to emphasise the fact that not all Members of AALCO are parties to UNCLOS and hence, conveys its expectation that the opinions and recommendations of the Secretariat to be more balanced and inclusive of all AALCO members.

Lastly, regarding Article 61 of the same report in which Operation IRINI is cited as an example under “Regional strategies and action plans”, Türkiye would like to also note that Operation IRINI was launched without consulting the legitimate Government of Libya, Türkiye or NATO at the time. After the unlawful boarding of a Turkish flag commercial vessel without flag State, Türkiye’s, consent in November 2020, Türkiye, as a matter of principle, rejects all similar requests. Thank you.

President: I thank the distinguished delegates from the Republic of Türkiye for your statement and now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The Delegate of the Kingdom of Bahrain:² Thank you, Mr. President.

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, the delegation of the Kingdom of Bahrain is pleased to participate in this important discussion on the Law of the Sea and contemporary maritime challenges, based on Bahrain’s position as a maritime nation that recognizes the importance of international cooperation in maintaining security and stability in the seas and waterways.

While the Kingdom of Bahrain affirms its commitment to the principles and provisions of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea as the comprehensive legal framework regulating the use of seas and oceans, we believe that this Convention represents the “Constitution of the Oceans” that balances the national sovereignty of coastal States with the common interests of the international community.

Our marine environment today faces multiple challenges, ranging from piracy and security threats to the illegal exploitation of marine resources, to environmental challenges that threaten biodiversity. Recognizing the seriousness of these challenges, the Kingdom of Bahrain would like to highlight the following key points:

1. Combating piracy and organized maritime crime: We emphasize the need to enhance regional and international cooperation in combating piracy and organized maritime crime, including human, drug, and arms smuggling, through active participation in the work of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and relevant regional bodies, and by exchanging information and expertise with the GCC states and the Member States of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization.
2. Protecting human rights in the marine environment: We emphasize the importance of preserving the fundamental rights of all workers in the maritime sector and ensuring their fair treatment, in accordance with relevant international standards.
3. Combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing: Given the threat it poses to the sustainability of fish stocks and food security, we support the development of effective

² Statement was delivered in Arabic. The Secretariat acknowledges with gratitude the official translation provided by the Delegation of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

monitoring mechanisms to curb these practices, while leveraging modern technologies such as satellites and artificial intelligence to enhance maritime surveillance systems.

4. Strengthening the position of Developing Countries in International Negotiations: We affirm active participation in the negotiations of the Convention on Biological Diversity of the High Seas (CBDJ), ensuring consideration of the interests of island States and small States, and ensuring a balance between economic development and the conservation of natural resources.

5. Freedom of Navigation and the Peaceful Settlement of Maritime Disputes: We would like to emphasize the importance of cooperation in managing shared maritime resources, securing international sea lanes and vital supply lines for global trade, based on the principle of freedom of navigation, and in accordance with international obligations to settle maritime disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter and international arbitration and judicial mechanisms.

6. Environmental Challenges and Sustainable Development: We reiterate our support for efforts to combat marine pollution and climate change, and to preserve fragile marine ecosystems, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 14 on “Life Below Water.”

Your Excellency, the Kingdom of Bahrain, by virtue of its strategic location in the Arabian Gulf region, is committed to continuing its active role in promoting maritime security and stability, and working with regional and international partners to address common challenges.

Bahrain also emphasizes the importance of strengthening Asian-African cooperation in this field, based on our firm belief that collective action is the best way to ensure the sustainability of our marine resources and protect our common interests.

In conclusion, we affirm our readiness to cooperate with all Member States to achieve these noble goals, leading to safer, more stable, and more sustainable seas for all. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate of the Kingdom of Bahrain. I will now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Kingdom of Thailand.

The Delegate of the Kingdom of Thailand: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, before proceeding to my statement proper, and as we are in the agenda item Law of the Sea, may I, with your kind permission, express the heartfelt condolences of the delegation of the Kingdom of Thailand on the passing of His Excellency Judge Shigeru Oda on 4th September 2025. Judge Oda was an eminent jurist of the International Court of Justice whose scholarship and judgments profoundly shaped the Law of the Sea and the broader field of international law. Thailand remembers him with particular gratitude, for in his earlier years, then-Professor Oda graciously served as Counsel to the Government of Thailand during the 1970s, providing invaluable advice in our engagement with maritime issues. His passing is therefore felt deftly among international lawyers in Thailand and, indeed, across the community of nations. His legacy will endure as a source of inspiration to international lawyers everywhere, and his friendship and contributions will long be remembered in Thailand and elsewhere in the world with respect and admiration.

Mr. President, I now turn to the statement of the Kingdom of Thailand on this substantive agenda. Allow me to begin by expressing my delegation’s appreciation to the AALCO Secretariat for its comprehensive paper on the Law of the Sea, and we welcome the Secretariat’s focus on marine environmental protection, maritime safety and security, and capacity-building.

These issues reflect our shared concerns and demand collective responses. Thailand attaches great importance to marine environment protection as part of the global response to climate

change. We commend the recent Advisory Opinion of the ITLOS in Case No. 31, which reaffirmed State parties' legal obligations and the UNCLOS obligations to prevent, reduce and control marine pollution from greenhouse gas emissions. Thailand also participated in the related Advisory proceedings on climate change and international law before the International Court of Justice, underscoring our support for multilateralism and the role of international judicial bodies in addressing global concerns.

We further welcome the adoption of the BBNJ Agreement under UNCLOS. As a signatory, we strongly support its early entry into force, especially its provisions on benefit sharing, capacity-building, marine technology transfer and environmental impact assessments, which will be critical in ensuring that developing countries and Small Island Developing States benefit equitably from the common heritage of mankind.

Thailand accords high priority to maritime safety and security. Our National Maritime Security Plan, 2023-2027, aims to address trade comprehensively while promoting sustainable use of marine resources. Efforts include developing a maritime situational awareness system, tackling IUU fishing and strengthening marine protected areas, and the establishment of a national marine knowledge management organisation to support evidence-based policymaking, research and innovation in the maritime domain.

Thailand also recognises the threats posed by piracy, armed robbery at sea and other illicit maritime activities. In response, our maritime safety policy includes the regulation and oversight of shipping activities, the security of ports and vessels, the prevention of marine pollution and the promotion of knowledge development in the field of maritime safety. We also welcome ongoing regional initiatives, including the Indian Ocean Rim Association and other cooperative frameworks to enhance maritime domain awareness and response capacity.

Mr. President, effective ocean governance requires sustained investment in capacity-building. In particular, technology transfer, marine scientific research and institutional strengthening are essential to enable developing states to fulfil their UNCLOS obligations while exploring opportunities offered by the blue economy. In July, Thailand, together with the High Seas Alliance, co-organised the national and regional consultations on the BBNJ Agreement to deepen understanding, foster inclusive dialogue and identify capacity-building needs for effective ratification and implementation. We hope these efforts will strengthen regional cooperation and underscore the importance of capacity-building as a foundation for informed decision-making and effective implementation of the BBNJ Agreement. These efforts reflect Thailand's belief in the centrality of uncrossed and indispensable role of the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea in ensuring its effective implementation.

In this spirit, Thailand is honoured to nominate Judge Kriangsak Kittichaisaree for re-election to ITLOS for the term 2026-2035. Throughout his tenure, Judge Kittichaisaree has consistently demonstrated independence, integrity and impartiality in his work. He is dedicated to applying his knowledge and experience to advance the rule of law at sea, including by addressing urgent and emerging issues such as climate change and sea-level rise for the benefit of both present and future generations. Thailand therefore seeks your support for the re-election of Judge Kittichaisaree. We are confident that his continued service will make a significant contribution to the fulfilment of ITLOS's important mandate.

Mr. President, as the world moves towards a future of expanding population needs and development demands, the oceans will be called upon more than ever. At the same time, they face unprecedented pressures from over-exploitation, pollution and the adverse effects of climate change. Achieving the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goal 14, Life Below Water, requires not only renewed commitment but also strengthened cooperation among all

stakeholders. Thailand firmly believes that through the active participation of AALCO Member States and the effective implementation of UNCLOS and related instruments, we can ensure that our oceans remain a source of shared prosperity, stability and sustainability for future generations. Thailand stands ready to work closely with all AALCO Member States to advance our common objectives and uphold the rule of law in the oceans. I thank you, Mr. President.

President: I thank the distinguished delegate from the Kingdom of Thailand. Thank you for your tribute to Judge Shigeru Oda, VP of the ICJ 1991 to 1994. I think I have the power to request that we all stand and observe a moment of silence. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

The plenary observed silence for two minutes.

President: Thank you. Thank you very much. I will now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from Malaysia.

The Delegate of Malaysia: Mr. President, Honourable Secretary-General, Excellencies and distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. Malaysia conveys its highest commendations to the Secretariat of AALCO for the comprehensive work undertaken on this agenda item and welcomes the detailed recommendations set out in the report on the Law of the Sea. Malaysia wishes to offer its comments on the sections concerning marine environment protection and maritime safety and security.

Mr. President, Malaysia recognises that marine pollution remains a grave threat to ocean health, biodiversity and the livelihoods of coastal communities. Therefore, Malaysia has in place a robust domestic legal and policy framework and actively participated in key international treaties including the MARPOL Convention, OPRC 1990 and relevant liability and compensation regimes. In Malaysia, the Environmental Quality Act 1974 read together with sectoral legislation such as the Fisheries Act 1985 and the Exclusive Economic Zone Act 1984 provide the foundation for regulating marine activities, deterring illegal discharges and enabling effective operational responses. Furthermore, Malaysia also underscores the importance of environmental impact assessments to ensure that development proceeds sustainably in line with conservation objectives and the national policy on biological diversity 2022 to 2030.

These assessments serve not only to identify, predict and evaluate the potential environmental consequences of proposed activities but also to integrate mitigation measures and alternative approaches at an early stage. On ocean acidification and deep-sea mining, Malaysia remains committed to building the necessary institutional readiness and is enhancing our capacity and expertise on the matter. On offshore renewable energy, Malaysia is in early stages of development guided by the Malaysian Renewable Energy Roadmap. Feasibility studies are underway for offshore wind, tidal and hybrid platforms with environmental safeguards forming an integral part of its approach. Malaysia extends its full support to the BBNJ Agreement and has signed on 4th September 2025. Malaysia is taking the necessary steps to ensure domestic legislation is harmonised with its obligations in preparation for ratification.

Mr. President, Malaysia values the International Law Commission's work on the Prevention and repression of piracy and armed robbery at sea. Malaysia's contributions to the Commission reflect a preference for definitions consistent with UNCLOS while highlighting interpretative ambiguities that warrant careful consideration before final commitments. Moreover, Malaysia's domestic framework has enabled effective prosecution through multiple legal instruments.

Malaysia remains firmly committed to structured treaty-based cooperation as a cornerstone of its maritime security and transnational crime response architecture, engaging through global

and regional instruments. This commitment extends to active participation in regional frameworks including the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP), Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (INDOMALPHI), and the ASEAN Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (AMLAT), which collectively strengthens intelligence sharing, operational coordination, and legal cooperation. Complementing these established frameworks, Malaysia continues to engage constructively in negotiations towards the ASEAN Extradition Treaty, recognising its value in closing procedural gaps, enhancing mutual accountability, and ensuring that offenders cannot evade justice through jurisdictional boundaries, thereby reinforcing the region's collective security and rule of law.

In closing, Malaysia remains committed to working closely with regional and international partners to protect the marine environment and ensure maritime security. Malaysia will also take part actively in multilateral efforts so that laws, policies, and operations stay fair, effective, and responsive to changing challenges at sea. Together with our AALCO Member States, Malaysia aims to turn these shared commitments into real actions that safeguard oceans for generations to come. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from Malaysia. I will now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from Japan followed by Syrian Arab Republic and the Republic of the Sudan. Thank you. Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegate of Japan: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Before commencing my statement, let me show our gratitude to the distinguished delegate from the Kingdom of Thailand, as well as Your Excellency, President, for the kind and heartfelt words of condolences extended to passing away of former Judge of ICJ, Mr. Oda Shigeru.

Japan is of the view that exploration and exploitation of mineral resources in the Area, the seabed and ocean floor and subsoil thereof beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, should be conducted in accordance with the rules, regulations and procedures to be established by the ISA, under UNCLOS, for the benefit of mankind as a whole.

While discussions on the development of exploitation regulations are underway at the ISA Council, Japan seriously notes that there is an emerging tendency to seek the possibility of exploitation outside the ISA framework. Japan considers the adoption of exploitation regulations a clear requirement under UNCLOS and believes it is important for the ISA to adopt exploitation regulations which strike a reasonable balance between preservation of the marine environment and use of resource in the Area at the soonest possible timing. Under UNCLOS, coastal States have sovereign rights over economic activities including wind energy production within their EEZ. On the other hand, when exercising these rights, they are obliged to have due regard to the rights and obligations of other States.

Based on these sovereign rights of coastal States, Japan amended the “Act on the Promoting of the Utilization of Sea Areas for the Development of Marine Renewable Energy Power Generation Facilities” in June of this year to enable the implementation of offshore wind power generation within Japan's EEZ. In implementing the amended law, it is necessary to comply with relevant international law including having due regard to the rights of other States and other provisions of the UNCLOS on the protection of marine environment. Japan is currently proceeding with the internal procedures, including steps to ensure compliance with international law.

Mr. President, the adoption of the BBNJ Agreement is a milestone for marine biodiversity. Following the approval by the Diet, the Japanese Parliament, in May to join the BBNJ

Agreement, the Government of Japan is now accelerating its final efforts to complete the remaining internal procedures to become a Party to the Agreement at the earliest possible timing. We call on more countries to join this Agreement to ensure its swift entry into force and effective implementation.

Regarding maritime security, Japan believes that further developing a free and open maritime order based on the rule of law is essential for regional development and prosperity. On this basis, Japan has been providing supports for the development of maritime law enforcement capabilities in coastal countries spanning Oceania, Asia, Indian Ocean and Africa. Piracy, the most classic threat to maritime safety, continues to occur frequently even today at choke points along important international shipping lanes such as the Strait of Malacca and Singapore, and off the coast of Somalia and the Gulf of Aden. In response to piracy incidents in the Malacca Strait and Singapore Strait, Japan took the lead in bringing into effect the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) in 2006, thereby effectively curbing piracy. In response to piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden, in 2009, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Japan formulated the Anti-Piracy Act, and based on this Act, began dispatching Self-Defence Forces anti-piracy units. In 2013, Japan joined the activities of the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), a multinational coalition, and continues to contribute to suppression of piracy.

Mr. President, let me refer to the next sub-topic capacity-building for developing States. Ocean Decade is a framework for promoting science-based international cooperation to build a sustainable ocean future. Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan (MEXT), in partnership with UNESCO, supports a global project aimed at promoting public participation and strengthening strategic ambition. Through the GenOcean campaign and Vision 2030 process, this project connects scientists, policymakers, civil society, and youth to promote the dissemination of marine science and its policy integration. This translates scientific knowledge into social action and contributes to the realization of sustainable ocean management. Notably, travel support was provided to the Ocean Decade Conference held in Barcelona in 2024 for early career ocean professionals (ECOPs) from each region, including Africa, ensuring inclusive participation. This initiative contributes to strengthening interregional knowledge sharing and human networks and is consistent with the Ocean Decade philosophy.

Furthermore, the white paper developed as part of the Vision 2030 process, aligned with the African Union's Agenda 2063, outlines a path forward to address the region's scientific and policy needs. This strengthens international ocean governance and promotes locally driven solutions.

These efforts also contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), demonstrating Japan's support playing an important role in promoting global capacity development and inclusive marine science. Japan will continue to support global capacity building, including in Asia and Africa, and work with the international community to realize the vision of the Ocean Decade.

Mr. President, referring to the capacity building effort, Japan hosted the Tokyo International Law Seminar for the third time this year, where administrative officials from Asia and Africa participated and gained insights into international law, including maritime law. Japan is also working to strengthen the capacity of maritime law enforcement agencies in Asia and Africa. Specifically, in addition to providing hardware support such as patrol vessels to ASEAN

countries, Japan also offers software support, including training and dispatching experts on international public law, countermeasures against IUU (illegal, unreported, and unregulated) fishing, and marine debris management.

In Africa, we provide, among others, training for maritime law enforcement and patrol vessels to combat illegal fishing in Tanzania. From 20 to 22 August this year, the 9th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9) was held in Yokohama. Under the theme of “Co-creating Innovative Solutions” discussions were held in the areas of economy, society, and peace and stability. As an outcome document, the “Yokohama Declaration of TICAD” was adopted. In the declaration, it has been reaffirmed that good governance, democracy, and the rule of law are foundational pillars for Africa’s sustainable development, peace, and stability. Furthermore, in the context of maintaining maritime order, countries emphasized the importance of promoting regional and international efforts related to maritime security, including the fight against illegal exploitation of natural marine resources, piracy and armed robbery, Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and other maritime crimes, and maintaining a maritime order based on international law in particular the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Participants also reaffirmed their determination to work with African countries to combat IUU fishing, a multifaceted problem which undermines not only maritime security but also sustainable development and stability of local economies. Through both software and hardware support, Japan aims to contribute to the free and open maritime order in Asian and African regions. Thank you very much.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from Japan. I now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Delegate of the Syrian Arab Republic³: In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Your Excellencies, Peace be upon you, and the mercy and blessings of God. The Syrian Arab Republic, blessed with a strategic coastline along the Mediterranean Sea, has historically served as a vital bridge between East and West. As a coastal State, Syria places great importance on the Law of the Sea, striving to safeguard its national interests and harness marine resources in accordance with relevant international laws.

In the dawn of a new Syria, liberated from the oppressive yoke of a bygone dictatorial regime, we aspire to transform our shores into havens of security, peace, and international cooperation. To this end, we underscore the paramount importance of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea as the cornerstone legal framework for regulating maritime affairs and protecting the marine environment.

While the Syrian Arab Republic has not yet formally ratified this convention, it has enacted national legislation aligned with its principles. Notable among these are Law No. 36 of 2003 on maritime disasters and Law No. 28 of 2003 on maritime jurisdiction, amended by Law No. 35 of 2018 to comply with international maritime law. These laws delineate Syria’s sovereignty over its continental shelf and its economic rights to explore and exploit natural resources within its territorial waters and exclusive economic zone. They also include provisions and penalties to combat maritime piracy, reflecting Syria’s commitment to international principles of maritime security and navigational safety.

We further emphasize the critical need to protect seas and oceans from overfishing, which poses a direct threat to the food security of coastal States. We call for enhanced international

³ Statement was delivered in Arabic. This is an unofficial translation done by the Secretariat.

cooperation to combat maritime piracy through resolute measures to counter this menace to global peace and security.

Ladies and gentlemen, over the past fourteen years, Syria has endured systematic and forced displacement, compelling millions of its people to undertake perilous, irregular migrations across the sea, fleeing bombardment, destruction, and arbitrary detention. Often resorting to unsafe vessels, these journeys have led to humanitarian catastrophes and profound tragedies.

We therefore stress the urgent need to protect these migrants rather than penalize them. We advocate against criminalizing those compelled to leave their homeland in search of safety, a better life, or mere survival. We urge measures to ensure the safety of their vessels and to prevent endangerment during interceptions by coastguards, striking a balance between border protection and the preservation of human rights.

Moreover, we reaffirm the importance of the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue and call for enhancing the capacities of developing nations in ocean sciences. We advocate for building international partnerships to support the sustainable use of marine resources.

In conclusion, we aspire to foster international cooperation to protect seas and oceans, ensuring the optimal and sustainable utilization of their resources for the benefit of all humanity.

Peace, mercy and blessings of God be upon you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Syrian Arab Republic. I now yield the floor to the Republic of the Sudan.

The Delegate of the Republic of the Sudan⁴: In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Thank you, Mr. President. The Republic of the Sudan attaches great importance to the Law of the Sea. Accordingly, it has ratified several relevant Conventions, including the 1948 Convention on the International Maritime Organization, the 1974 International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, the 1966 International Convention on Shipping Lines, the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the 1988 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation, and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships.

Sudan is a country bordering the Red Sea, one of the world's most important strategic maritime routes. It constitutes a vital economic artery due to its connection with international trade, fisheries, energy, and security. Therefore, maintaining a healthy marine environment is essential to preserving ecological balance and ensuring a safe environment for achieving economic benefits such as fisheries and marine tourism, as well as for ensuring safe maritime navigation. This also includes protecting all forms of marine life dependent on the sea, such as fish, coral reefs, seagrass beds, and seabirds. Moreover, it is important to ensure the safety of ships and cargo, prevent maritime accidents, and reduce marine pollution, all in accordance with international maritime laws.

Mr. President, there are several challenges facing the Red Sea region:

1. Insufficient financial resources to support research and the protection of the marine environment, particularly in the context of climate change.
2. Rising temperatures and their impact on marine life.

⁴ Statement was delivered in Arabic. This is an unofficial translation done by the Secretariat.

3. The scarcity of marine ecosystems.
4. Pollution.

We therefore propose the following solutions:

1. Regional and international cooperation through joint initiatives on environmental and maritime security.
2. Establishing marine protected areas to preserve coral reefs and rare marine species.
3. Combating piracy and reducing marine pollution and maritime accidents.
4. Investing in research and training.
5. Mitigating global warming.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of the Sudan. I now yield the floor to the Republic of South Africa.

The Delegate of the Republic of South Africa: Thank you very much, Mr. President. South Africa thanks the Secretariat for its comprehensive brief on this important topic. The Law of the Sea has always been a central topic within AALCO, enabling Africa and Asia's perspective to be integrated into evolving challenges of ocean governance. South Africa ratified the 1982 United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea in 1997. We consider ITLOS to be the legal backdrop for the peaceful, equitable and sustainable use of marine resources. It provides the normative framework for addressing traditional issues and emerging threats from biodiversity loss to climate change.

The protection of the marine environment is an obligation under ITLOS. We note the ITLOS Advisory Opinion, which confirms the greenhouse gas emission constitutes pollution of the marine environment. This is a significant affirmation of binding duties of States to prevent, reduce and control such harm, applying precaution and the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities.

South Africa welcomes the adoption of the BBNJ agreement in 2023 as the third implementing agreement under ITLOS, which it signed in June of this year. It fills critical gaps in governing areas beyond national jurisdiction through marine protected areas, environmental impact assessments and capacity building. We urge AALCO Member States to accelerate ratification to ensure early entry into force.

Mr. President, on deep seabed mining and the International Seabed Authority, the area and its resources are the common heritage of humankind. As a member of the ISA Council since its inception and re-elected in August 2024 for the period of 2025 to 2028 years, South Africa takes seriously its responsibility to ensure that activities in the area are conducted for the benefit for all nations. We attach importance to ISA's work to finalise a robust precautionary mining code before any commercial exploitation begins. Scientific uncertainty about the impacts of fragile economic systems requires that we err on the side of environmental protection. South Africa has consistently raised the need for simpler, effective mechanisms for environmental compensation and funding, as well as for meaningful recognition of socioeconomic impacts and rehabilitation costs. Cooperative, regional and international approaches are vital in addressing piracy, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and other unregulated maritime activities.

South Africa supports enhanced collaboration between coastal States and regional organisations to strengthen monitoring, surveillance and enforcement capabilities. The Law of the Sea embodies the principle that our oceans are a shared resource to be managed for the common good. South Africa remains committed to defending the ITLOS, advancing Afro-Asian priorities within the ESA and ensuring that environmental protection, equity and the rule of law remain central to global ocean governance. I thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of South Africa. Now, I yield the floor to the Republic of Kenya.

The Delegate of the Republic of Kenya: Thank you, Mr President. Mr President, distinguished delegates, it is my pleasure to present the submissions of Kenya on this important agenda item. Kenya is a strong proponent of a rule-based international order for the oceans. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea stands as a paramount legal framework that comprehensively governs all activities in the maritime domain. Its universality and integrity must be preserved and respected by all States. Kenya commends AALCO for its continued work in this area, which is of critical importance to both Asian and African nations, many of whom are coastal States with significant maritime interests.

Mr President, in line with this year's AALCO focus on the three interrelated sub-themes of marine environment protection, maritime security and safety, and capacity building for developing States, Kenya wishes to highlight several key priorities. The security at sea, particularly against threats such as piracy, armed robberies at sea, and illicit trafficking, is vital to ensure the freedom of navigation and the facilitation of international trade. Kenya has been at the forefront of regional efforts to combat piracy in the Western Indian Ocean.

It is also worth noting that Kenya is currently developing its national maritime security strategy in line with the resolutions of the IMO Maritime Security Committee. This strategy will enable Kenya to secure her maritime domain. We therefore stress the importance of enhanced regional cooperation, capacity building, and the full implementation of international instruments to ensure maritime safety and security.

Kenya warmly congratulates the international community on the historic adoption of the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Area Beyond National Jurisdiction, properly known as BBNJ. This landmark instrument is a testament to the power of multilateralism. Further, Kenya seeks to congratulate the numerous States in this conference hall that have signed and ratified the agreement. On the same breath, Kenya calls upon all States that have not done so to do so urgently. For developing States, the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from marine genetic resources and capacity building provisions are crucial components of this. We also take note of the threat posed by sea-level rise to the territorial integrity and maritime entitlement of low-lying coastal States and Small Island developing States, which is a grave concern.

Kenya supports the urgent need for the international community to address this challenge within the framework of international law. We must work together towards legal certainty and stability to protect the maritime zone and rights of affected States from being eroded. We also take note that to ensure effective implementation of UNCLOS and related instruments requires significant capacity. Many developing States, including those in Africa and Asia, face challenges in maritime domain awareness, scientific research, and sustainable resource management. Kenya therefore emphasises the need for enhanced international cooperation, including the transfer of marine technology and targeted capacity building initiatives to bridge this gap and ensure that all States can exercise their rights and fulfil their obligation under the convention.

Mr. President, in conclusion, Kenya believes that AALCO provides an invaluable platform for Asia and African States to consolidate our perspectives on the evolving law of the sea. We must continue to speak with a united voice to ensure that the international legal order for the oceans remains equitable, sustainable, and responsive to our common challenges and aspirations. Kenya assures this august body of its full and constructive engagement on matters ocean governance. *Asante*.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Kenya. *Asante Sana*. I now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Republic of the Philippines.

The Delegate of the Republic of the Philippines⁵: Mr. President, Honourable Secretary-General, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, the Philippines is honoured to share our perspectives on the Law of the Sea, a subject that is both foundational to the international rules-based order and central to the future of maritime and archipelagic nations like ours. In the interest of time, I have abbreviated my intervention, but the full statement will be submitted to the Secretariat for the record. For the Philippines, the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) remains the “constitution of the oceans.” It provides the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out.

In addressing ocean-related issues, – including the marine environment, marine resources, the blue economy, maritime transport, peaceful dispute resolution, maritime security – the Philippines maintains that the rights, freedoms and obligations of States under UNCLOS are paramount and must be implemented consistently. We must continue to champion compliance with decisions and rulings duly rendered through the compulsory dispute settlement mechanisms under UNCLOS, including the 2016 Arbitral Award on the South China Sea, as well as respect for the advisory opinions that provide authoritative clarity to its provisions.

Our maritime diplomacy, domestic laws, and international engagements are firmly anchored on this Convention and its implementing agreements. These agreements—the 1994 Agreement, the 1995 Fish Stocks Agreement, and the recently adopted BBNJ Agreement—are integral pillars of this constitution.

At the national level, the Philippines has taken deliberate steps to align our legal framework with UNCLOS. The Philippine Maritime Zones Act codifies our maritime zones in accordance with the Convention, while the Philippine Archipelagic Sea Lanes Act operationalizes our rights and duties as an archipelagic State. Together, these laws strengthen our ability to manage our maritime domain, protect our resources, and provide navigational clarity to the international community.

Beyond legislation, the Philippines has advanced its State practice through submissions to international bodies, including the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) and the International Hydrographic Organisation’s Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names. These efforts reflect our commitment to constructive multilateral engagement on ocean governance.

Regarding Article 194’s obligation to prevent, reduce, and control pollution “from any source,” the Philippines has enacted comprehensive national legislation including the Extended Producers’ Responsibility Act and National Plan of Action on Marine Litter. We advocate for a

⁵ The Delegate of the Republic of the Philippines while delivering the statement stated that they had abbreviated their oral intervention, but the full statement will be submitted to the Secretariat for the record. The above statement is the full text of the written statement kindly submitted by the Delegation of the Republic of the Philippines to the Secretariat.

full life-cycle approach to plastic pollution regulation, consistent with our positions at INC-5.2, supporting reduction of primary plastic polymers and phase out of problematic products.

The Philippines recognizes the synergies and interlinkages between UNCLOS and multilateral environmental agreements in addressing ocean-climate challenges, with the 2024 ITLOS Advisory Opinion providing timely legal guidance. Decarbonizing maritime activities is key to protecting the marine environment.

On the BBNJ Agreement, having signed in September 2024, the Philippines aims to be among the first to ratify this agreement. At the Second Preparatory Commission meeting, we advocated for legal consistency through transparent rules of procedure, equitable geographical representation including archipelagic states, and early operationalization of both the clearinghouse mechanism and special fund in accordance with the Agreement's provisions.

Addressing maritime security threats requires scaled-up marine technology transfer and capacity building under UNCLOS and its implementing agreements.

Mr. President, as an archipelagic State and a maritime nation, our concept of maritime security has always been broad encompassing not only transnational crimes, but also IUU fishing, marine pollution, climate change, inter-state disputes, and other emerging and developing threats.

For us, the Law of the Sea is not an abstraction. It is also about securing the livelihoods of our fisherfolk, the welfare of our coastal communities, and the safety of our seafarers and their dignity.

Our country supplies a significant portion of the world's seafarers, who play an indispensable role in keeping global trade and supply chains running. In this regard, the Philippines welcomes the adoption of the Human Rights Council Resolution on promoting and protecting the enjoyment of human rights by seafarers, initiated by the Philippines. This resolution affirms the need to uphold the human rights of seafarers, ensure safe and decent working conditions at sea, and strengthen international cooperation on maritime labour. For us, protecting seafarers' rights is integral to implementing UNCLOS, as this connects the human security dimension with the broader framework of maritime law.

Mr. President, we have strengthened our National Coast Watch System, enhanced cooperation between the Philippine Coast Guard and counterparts across Asia and beyond, and enhanced our maritime domain awareness through technology transfer and international cooperation. As a party to the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP), we actively contribute to regional legal frameworks.

The Philippines maintains 11 bilateral maritime dialogues, a trilateral dialogue, and numerous cooperative frameworks. We recognize the significance of the South China Sea in international trade, a major waterway for the world's maritime commerce, through which more than USD 3 Trillion worth of commerce passes every year – a strategic waterway valued by the major economies of the world. Undoubtedly, what happens in our seas ripples to other shores. Hence, maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea is of fundamental interest for the international community. We work closely with fellow claimants and partners, particularly in the negotiations for an ASEAN-China Code of Conduct in the South China Sea. The Philippines joins all Parties in the shared commitment to conclude, by next year, an effective and substantive Code that is consistent with UNCLOS.

Mr. President, The Philippines reaffirms that UNCLOS remains the constitution of the oceans, providing the legal framework within which all activities must be conducted. As President

Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr. has emphasized, the Philippines will always be a firm advocate of the rule of law and the peaceful settlement of disputes. We reject unilateral actions that undermine the legal order at sea, and we remain steadfast in promoting a rules-based maritime order. We stand ready to work with AALCO Member States to strengthen Asian-African solidarity in ocean governance, advance equitable access to marine resources and technologies, and ensure that our shared ocean heritage benefits all humanity while protecting marine ecosystems for future generations. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of the Philippines. I now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Uganda.

The Delegate of the Republic of Uganda: Thank you very much, Mr. President, distinguished delegates. The Government of Uganda is grateful to the Secretariat of AALCO for the comprehensive documentation prepared to facilitate our discussions on this item on the agenda. The Government commends the work of the International Law Commission on maritime safety and security, particularly piracy and armed robbery at sea. The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1992 remains the cornerstone of the international legal regime governing the oceans and the seas. The Convention defines and codifies the standards and principles of international maritime law. It provides the framework for the peaceful, equitable and sustainable use of marine resources and establishes the balance between the rights and obligations of States in the maritime domain.

Mr. President, the Republic of Uganda is a State party of the UN Law of the Sea, which our Government ratified on 9th November 1990. As a landlocked country, Uganda attaches great importance to the provisions of the law that guarantee the rights of similar landlocked States, particularly the right of access to and from the sea and freedom of transit to the territory of transit States. These provisions are vital for enabling landlocked developing countries to integrate into the global economy and to fully exercise their rights to participate in the exploration and exploitation of marine resources. It is on this basis that the Republic of Uganda, mindful of our obligations under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the need to balance economic opportunity with environmental stewardship, is considering the establishment of a legal and policy framework to participate as a sponsoring State in deep-sea bed mining. We are alive to the immense opportunities that deep-sea mining presents, ranging from advancement of national development to fostering technology transfer and ensuring strategic representation and sustainable use of global marine resources. The Republic of Uganda is conscious of the interconnection between the Law of the Sea and the sustainable use of our inland water resources, particularly Lake Victoria, which is the largest freshwater lake in Africa, and a vital lifeline for millions of our people, especially Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

For Uganda, regional cooperation in the governance of shared water resources is essential for ensuring food security through enabling safe and efficient inland water transport, safeguarding our environment against the stress of pollution, over-exploitation and climate change. Indeed, in 2021, we amended our Inland Water Transport Act to regulate the inland water transport by ensuring the registration of vessels requiring licences, ensuring safety and management of resources, and also the marine security and port regulation. In this regard, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea provides useful principles that reinforce our national and regional efforts to sustain and manage transboundary waters for the benefit of present and future generations.

Mr. President, the Government of Uganda follows with keen interest the ongoing discussion of the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, including the entry into force of the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, (BBNJ), adopted on 19th June

2023. I am pleased to inform you that the Government of Uganda is in advanced stages for ratification and signature of this third implementing agreement of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Uganda's decision to sign and ratify this agreement is shaped by the fact that the BBNJ Agreement is in tandem with the appropriate actions as reflected in our laws, policies and strategic plans.

In particular, Section 5 of the National Environment Act, CAP 181, espouses the principles of BBNJ, the National Guidelines for Biodiversity and Social Offsets 2022, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025, and implementing tools for the purpose of BBNJ.

In conclusion, Mr. President, the Republic of Uganda reaffirms our commitment to the principles and purpose of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and constructive engagement in multilateral forums such as this one. We remain steadfast in supporting the rule of law in the oceans, credible participation of all States in maritime affairs, and strengthening of international cooperation and the peaceful uses of the seas and oceans. Thank you very much, Mr. President and the audience.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Uganda. Distinguished delegates, I will take this opportunity to introduce the person holding the flag for Uganda today.

That is the Right Honourable Rebecca Alitwala-Kadaga. She is the First Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda and the Minister for East African Affairs in the Republic of Uganda. Thank you very much, Right Honourable. I will now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Korea. Republic of Korea, you have the floor.

The Delegate of the Republic of Korea: Thank you, Mr. President. First of all, since this is my first time to take the floor, I would like to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to the AALCO Secretariat and the Government of the Republic of Uganda for preparing and organising this Annual Session. My delegation would like to touch upon two crucial items in the field of the Law of the Sea-marine environment protection and capacity building.

First, with regard to maritime environment protection, we are facing escalating challenges in the ocean. They transcend national borders and no single nation can solve them alone. In this respect, I would like to take note of the Advisory Opinions issued by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), and the International Court of Justice (ICJ), on climate change, which set out obligations of States under the Law of the Sea, among others, in the context of climate change. Korea's efforts to work with the Pacific Island Forum on the sea-level rise was acknowledged in one of the separate opinions attached to the ICJ Advisory Opinion.

We look forward to continuing dialogues on the implication of these important opinions. Also, I should note that the Agreement on Marine Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction, BBNJ, is a critical achievement for the ocean governance. The Republic of Korea ratified the agreement in March this year. We urge all AALCO Member States to join this agreement for the benefit of both present and future generations.

Second, with regard to capacity-building, the Republic of Korea believes that it is vital to share technologies and enhance capacity among nations to ensure the effective implementation of the law of the sea. The Republic of Korea has continued to provide over 30 diverse programmes with focus on Southeast Asia and Africa, such as sustainable aquaculture development, climate change response, enhancement of maritime traffic operation capabilities, and others.

We also host or sponsor workshops and capacity-building programmes on the Law of the Sea for the developing countries, including ITLOS Workshops for Legal Advisors and Yeosu Academy of the Law of the Sea. We would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to supporting capacity-building efforts and working together closely with our Asian and African partners and friends. Let me add that the Republic of Korea is seeking to co-host the first United Nations Ocean Conference in 2028 and has proposed the APEC Ocean Resilience Enhancement Roadmap in May this year to reinforce regional cooperation.

We would like to continue to work together with AALCO Member States and learn from the insight of all the distinguished delegates here today for the purpose of creating a more sustainable and equitable future in the ocean. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Korea. I now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the People's Republic of China.

The Delegate of the People's Republic of China: Thank you, Mr. President. China appreciates the report on the Law of the Sea prepared by the Secretariat. China, as always, fully supports AALCO in playing a more significant role in the sphere of the international law of the sea. On this occasion, I would like to share with you China's position on the following three topics.

The first topic touches on the international seabed affairs. In recent years, the most important mission of the International Seabed Authority (ISA) has been the formulation of the regulations on the exploitation of mineral resources in the international seabed area. The negotiation of the said regulations has lasted for over a decade. One of the main challenges we face is the interplay between marine environmental protection and exploitation of mineral resources in the deep sea. China, as other Member States, attaches great importance to marine environmental protection. However, what we do not agree with is the overemphasis on marine environmental protection and not making any use of the marine mineral resources in due to us. From the legal perspective, both exploration and exploitation of marine mineral resources are mandates of the ISA enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The exploration of marine mineral resources has been adopted by the ISA more than two decades ago. As such, the absence and the lack of regulation on exploitation of marine mineral resources presents a loophole in the Law of the Sea. Actually, without the adoption of the exploitation regulations, the principles of common heritage of mankind as enshrined in the UNCLOS cannot be implemented. From a scientific perspective, the conduct of deep-sea activities enables us to gain a better understanding of the deep-sea environment. Without the data and samples, we collected from the scientific research and the mineral resources exploration in the deep sea, environmental protection would just be lip service. In view of the above, China calls upon Member States not to view marine exploitation and environmental protection as opposite, but as matters complementary to each other.

We fully support setting thresholds in environmental protection in the exploitation regulations, and we do need to formulate the set regulations as a matter of urgency. On this topic, we also need to be aware that the United States of America has issued an executive order in April this year, unilaterally authorising companies in conducting exploration and exploitation of mineral resources in the international sea area. Such unilateral action manifestly violates international law of the sea, undermines the international maritime order, and erodes the common heritage of mankind. The international community should neither recognise nor condone such acts. What the U.S. has done should awaken all of us and urge the need of the adoption of the exploitation regulations by the international civil authority.

Mr. President, my second point touches on the BBNJ agreement. The BBNJ agreement is a significant milestone in the development of international law of the sea and heralds a new era of global cooperation and marine biodiversity. It is of immense importance in the sphere of global ocean governance and the establishment of an environmentally sustainable world. The government of China has actively engaged in the negotiation process and signed the BBNJ agreement on the first day when the agreement was opened for signature, namely 20th of September of 2023, showing a proactive stance and tangible efforts towards the preservation and responsible utilisation of marine diversity.

The BBNJ agreement fully upholds and safeguards the maritime rights and interests of all nations. The BBNJ agreement by itself clearly specifies that it applies to the high seas and international seabed area only. It shall not apply to any areas within national jurisdiction. It shall not touch upon any claims by a State or any dispute between States on the sovereignty, sovereign rights, or jurisdiction. Within the framework of the BBNJ agreement, all parties should endeavour to achieve consensus-based decision-making to the fullest extent possible. Countries share common interests and concerns in the high seas and international seabed area.

Decisions based on consensus are essential for gaining broad recognition and ensuring effective implementation. The third topic touches upon piracy and armed robbery at sea. Piracy and armed robbery are security risks commonly faced by the international community. The codification and advancement of relevant international rules will help to combat crimes at sea, maintain the security of sea passages, and safeguard the safety of life and property. China supports the International Law Commission's continued in-depth study of this agenda item.

China would also like to emphasise that the Draft Articles from the ILC should be consistent with international law, including the UNCLOS, and shall not jeopardise the principle of the freedom of high seas established in the UNCLOS, shall not jeopardise the universal jurisdiction of States over the crimes in question and the exclusive jurisdiction of flag States, the sovereignty of the coastal States, its sovereign rights, and its jurisdiction, so as to preserve the balanced package established in the UNCLOS.

China looks forward to the Special Rapporteur's report in the year of 2026 to continue promoting the study of this topic. The ocean serves as a shared habitat for humanity. A healthy marine ecological environment represents the most just and inclusive public good, with all nations sharing responsibility for its preservation. China is committed to collaborating with all stakeholders to uphold the principles of consultation, cooperation, and mutual benefits, advancing marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable utilisation to new heights. Through these efforts, we aim to continuously enhance global ocean governance and jointly build a clean and beautiful world. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the People's Republic of China. As there are no further statements from Member States, Observer States, or Observer Organisations, this will conclude our deliberations on this topic. I will now advise that you take a coffee break for about 10 minutes, and after that, we shall take up the substantive topic on our agenda, which is Environment and Sustainable Development. I thank you.

The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

**X. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOURTH
GENERAL MEETING (CONTINUED) OF THE
AALCO MEMBER STATES**

**X. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOURTH GENERAL MEETING (CONTINUED)
OF THE AALCO MEMBER STATES HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER
2025, AT 11:45 AM**

Hon'ble Kiryowa Kiwanuka, the Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda and the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO in the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

President: Our next agenda today is “Environment and Sustainable Development.” And I would like to call upon the AALCO Secretariat to make the opening statements. Deputy Secretary-General, you have the floor.

Mr. Yong Zhu, Deputy Secretary-General of AALCO: Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is my honour to introduce the topic of “Environment and Sustainable Development” at this Annual Session.

AALCO's engagement with environmental law represents one of our Organization's most enduring commitments. Beginning with the Republic of India's proposal at the Fifteenth Annual Session in Tokyo in 1974, we have consistently championed the cause of environmental protection and sustainable development. Our sustained focus on this topic over the years has enabled Member States to actively shape international environmental law from an Asian-African perspective.

On 23rd July 2025, the International Court of Justice delivered a landmark Advisory Opinion on the Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change. This unprecedented proceeding drew the highest level of participation in ICJ history with 91 written statements and oral presentations from 96 States and 11 international organizations. Twenty-eight AALCO Member States participated in the oral hearings, demonstrating our collective commitment to climate justice.

The Court unanimously determined that States have binding legal obligations under international law to protect the climate system from greenhouse gas emissions. The Advisory Opinion reflects the long-held propositions and viewpoints of the vast majority of countries in the world, and is of positive significance for maintaining and advancing international climate cooperation.

Additionally, global discussions have advanced support for tackling plastic pollution and climate finance, yet divides over regulation and funding remain. With limited progress on targets and renewables, these challenges demand stronger cooperation and renewed political will.

The Secretariat's brief presents a thorough analysis of critical developments across three interconnected areas: first, the International Legally Binding Instrument on Plastic Pollution; second, the International Legal Regime on Climate Change, and third, select issues concerning the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

I invite all Member States to engage actively in these crucial deliberations, sharing insights, experiences, and successful strategies that can inform AALCO's continued leadership in international environmental law

Together, we can shape legal frameworks that are not only environmentally ambitious but also developmentally just, ensuring a sustainable and equitable future for present and future generations across Asia and Africa. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, Deputy Secretary-General. And now, on my list, I have the following Member States. We have the Republic of India, the United Republic of Tanzania, Kingdom of Bahrain, Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, the Republic of the Sudan, the Republic of South Africa, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Uganda, and the Kingdom of Thailand. First, I would like to invite the distinguished delegate from the Republic of India to make his statement.

The Delegate of the Republic of India: Thank you, Mr. President. We are thankful to the AALCO Secretariat and Member States for considering this agenda item for discussion at this Annual Session.

It may be recalled that the proposal to consider the topic of “Development of International Law relating to Human Environment” was placed on the Organization’s agenda by the Government of the Republic of India at the Fifteenth Annual Session of AALCO held in 1974 in Tokyo, Japan. Since then, it has been deliberated under various heads such as Environmental Law, Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes, Preparation for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), UNCED: Follow-up and Environment and Sustainable Development since 2003.

We also appreciate the last deliberations on the topic at the Sixty-Second Annual Session of AALCO held in Bangkok in Thailand in 2024.

As we discuss the negotiation process of an internationally legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, it may be noted that India has participated in the negotiations of the Global Plastic Treaty aiming at addressing plastic pollution throughout its life cycle, from production to disposal. The goal is to end plastic pollution by 2040 by establishing a circular economy for plastics including reducing production, improving recycling, and preventing plastic waste from entering ecosystems.

Mr. President, India remains committed to carrying forward this work, and suggests that a dedicated fund should be generated to provide financial and technical support, technology transfer and capacity-building to help developing countries address plastic pollution and such mechanisms should be integrated into the substantive provisions of the draft text. There should be no binding targets or production caps or trade restrictions on plastic products. We also suggest to focus on waste management concerns.

Mr. President, at the domestic level, India has put in place the Plastics Waste Management (Amendment) Rules 2024 notified by our Ministry of Environment and Forests which we believe is a significant step towards tackling plastic pollution.

Mr. President, on the topic of climate change, the current international legal regime consists of the three treaties namely the UNFCCC, its Kyoto Protocol of 1997 and the Paris Agreement of 2015. Some of the most challenging issues since the last COP that was held in Baku, remain the need for a new collective quantified goal namely NCQG on climate finance; the adoption of a Global Goal on Adaptation and implementation or operationalisation of the loss and damage fund.

Mr. President, the NCQG as is well known could not be agreed to the satisfaction of developing countries and a number of other LDCs and Small Island States at Baku and the 300 billion amount appears to be a pittance as compared to the demand of 1.3 trillion by developing and

less developed countries. This would be a major part of the COP 30 which would be held in Belém, Brazil towards the end of this year. Mr. President, the Baku to Belém roadmap we believe should assure this amount to developing countries and all of them should come together in a united voice.

Another important component is placement on the provisional agenda of the Belém COP related to “implementation of Article 9, Paragraph 1 of the Paris Agreement” which speaks about need for climate finance to be sourced from public resources of states and it is only after this that you know resources of finance can be brought in from private sector as well as multilateral developmental banks.

Mr. President, another important item in the field of climate change has been the global goal on adaptation which has been finalised and must be implemented in true letter and spirit with increasing contributions to be provided to this fund. At the domestic level in India, Mr. President, we have taken a number of initiatives to combat climate change. These include the hosting of the Secretariat of the International Solar Alliance, the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure also called as the CDRI, the establishment of the Global Biofuels Alliance and also creation of a special fund for LDCs in the form of a programme called as LED-IT.

Mr. President, as is well known in July of this year the ICJ gave its Advisory Opinion on the referral by the UN General Assembly on Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change and it has answered comprehensively these two questions. Mr. President, the International Court of Justice has provided in its Advisory Opinion that States have obligations both under customary law namely to prevent transboundary harm and also due diligence obligations along with their obligations under the existing climate change treaty regime namely the UNFCCC, Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement.

The opinion sets forth the obligations of the States both under customary norms of prevention of transboundary harm and due diligence and the existing climate change treaty regime of UNFCCC, Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement. It has emphatically stated the release of green house gases that impact climate change entails responsibility of States with remedies available under cessations, reparation, and others. It has also recognised these obligations on “*erga omnes partes*” meaning thereby that they owed to the entire international community as a whole.

However, what the court failed or did not give adequate attention was the developmental needs of developing countries. It did not highlight the close linkages of the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) and the mandatory financial obligations under Article 9 of the Paris Agreement. India has taken note of the Advisory Opinion and hopes that it has provided sufficient clarity on the principles of international law, governing impacts of climate change.

Mr. President, the Republic of India is committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and recognises sustained peace, security and human rights which are essential for the fundamental development of mankind. I thank you, Mr. President.

President: I thank the distinguished delegate from the Republic of India and I will give the floor to the distinguished delegate from the United Republic of Tanzania.

The Delegate of the United Republic of Tanzania: Thank you, Mr. President, Vice-President and the distinguished delegates. Mr. President, the United Republic of Tanzania reaffirms its unwavering commitment to environmental protection and sustainable development, recognising their critical importance in safeguarding the planet for current and future generation. As a nation endowed with rich biodiversity, including the 22 National Parks, rich

with different species of flora and fauna, Serengeti ecosystem, Mikumi National Park, Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Mount Kilimanjaro, the Roof of Africa and the Zanzibar Archipelago. Tanzania acknowledges the urgent need to balance economic growth with environmental preservation to achieve sustainable development goals.

Mr. President, Tanzania is a signatory to key international environmental agreement including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) of 1992; the Paris Agreement of 2015; the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) of 1992; and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) of 1994. Additionally, Tanzania aligns with United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 13, 14 and 15, which address climatic action, life below water and life on land, respectively.

At the regional level, Tanzania is a member of African Union (AU) and the East African Community (EAC), which promote environmental cooperation and sustainable development. The Africa Union's Agenda 2063 emphasises a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development while the EAC Treaty underscores regional cooperation in environmental management and resource conservation. These frameworks guide Tanzania's efforts to address transboundary environmental challenges in collaboration with neighboring States.

Mr. President, in compliance with its international and regional commitment, Tanzania has enacted a robust domestic legal framework to promote environmental protection and sustainable development. The Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, 1977, enshrines the right to a clean, safe and healthy environment. Key legislation includes the Environmental Management Act, which provides for the sustainable management of natural resource, environmental impact assessment and pollution control. Other relevant laws include the Forest Act; the Wildlife Conservation Act, and the Marine Parks and Reserves Act, which collectively ensure the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity.

Furthermore, the United Republic of Tanzania made the Environmental Management (Prohibition of Plastic Carrier Bags and Plastic Bottle Cap Seals) Regulations, 2022. The objective of this Regulation is to impose total ban on import, export, manufacturing, sell or offer for sale and use of plastic carrier bags regardless of their thickness and impose a total ban on the import, export, manufacturing, sale Beverages with plastic bottle cap seal. The only exceptions to the ban are plastic or plastic packaging for medical services, industrial products, the construction industry, the agricultural sector, foodstuffs, and sanitary and waste management whereby the condition is stipulated to ensure the waste generated are managed and disposed of in accordance with the Environmental Management (Solid Waste Management) Regulations, 2009 and the Environmental Management (Hazardous Waste Control and Management) Regulations, 2021.

Recently, Her Excellency Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, the President of United Republic of Tanzania, launched ten-years national clean cooking strategy 2024-2034, which aims to ensure that 80% of Tanzanians use clean cooking energy by 2034, in which a national fund will be established to support clean cooking.

Tanzania has also developed the National Environmental Policy, 2021 and the National Climatic Change Response Strategy 2021 by using various campaigns such as tree planting, protecting marine parks and the special award from the President of United Republic of Tanzania to encourage its citizens to care for the environment. Mr. President, in that regard, the United Republic of Tanzania commends AALCO's focus on environmental and sustainable development during the Sixty-Third Annual Session. We believe that this platform will

facilitate the exchange of best practises, enhance legal frameworks and address challenges in implementing environmental commitments. AALCO's efforts to bridge knowledge gaps and promote cooperation among Member States will strengthen the collective action to tackle global environmental challenge.

Mr. President, the aspects highlighted above reflect Tanzania dedication to achieving sustainable development while preserving its natural heritage. In conclusion, the United Republic of Tanzania welcomes AALCO's initiatives to advance environmental laws and sustainable development and look forward to constructive discussion at this Session to further this objective. Thank you Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the United Republic of Tanzania and I will give the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The Delegate of the Kingdom of Bahrain:¹ Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, Excellencies, heads of delegations, the delegation of the Kingdom of Bahrain is pleased to participate in this important discussion on the Environment and Sustainable Development, a topic that occupies a high priority on the Kingdom's national and international agenda.

Under the wise leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Kingdom of Bahrain attaches great importance to environmental and sustainable development issues, based on our firm belief that protecting the environment is not an option, but rather an absolute necessity to ensure a better future for future generations.

In embodying this commitment, the Kingdom has adopted ambitious strategies to address key environmental challenges, particularly the problem of plastic pollution, which poses a global threat that requires urgent solutions. In this context, the Kingdom has implemented a number of effective measures, including developing integrated systems for sustainable waste management, encouraging the adoption of the circular economy for plastics, that promotes reuse and recycling, supporting innovation to develop environmentally friendly alternative materials, and implementing awareness programmes aimed at rational use and reducing waste.

Mr. President, the Kingdom is also committed to achieving carbon neutrality by the year 2060 through investments in renewable energy, enhancing energy efficiency, and adopting modern green technologies as part of its comprehensive efforts to address the challenges of climate change.

As an island nation, the Kingdom of Bahrain faces significant climate challenges represented by changing weather patterns and rising sea levels, which threaten food security, infrastructure, and biodiversity. We emphasise the importance of enhancing international cooperation to address these challenges by supporting the efforts to develop early warning systems to help communities adapt to climate change, investing in sustainable, climate-resilient agriculture, protecting coastal areas and water sources, and promoting the transfer of green technology and climate finance.

The Kingdom of Bahrain also supports all international climate related initiatives and efforts and believes in the importance of collective action to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. We reiterate our determination to continue our active role in this field through constructive participation in international forums and effective negotiation of environmental agreements.

¹ The statement was delivered in Arabic. The Secretariat acknowledges with gratitude the official translation provided by the delegation of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

In conclusion, we affirm that environmental sustainability is a fundamental pillar of Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030, and we believe that innovative solutions and international partnerships are the way to address environmental challenges and achieve the desired sustainable development. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Kingdom of Bahrain, and I yield the floor to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Thank you, Mr. President.

The Delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran: In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Mr. President, at the outset, we thank the comprehensive report prepared by the Secretariat on "Environment and Sustainable Development". The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great significance to the topic and hopes that Member States' deliberations at AALCO will continue to a better understanding of its international legal aspects.

Mr. President, the adverse effects of extreme climate change can seriously hinder the sustainable development of all nations worldwide. The Islamic Republic of Iran, like other developing countries, has not been spared from the toll climate change has taken on the world. Therefore, it attaches great importance to combating severe climate change and its environmental ramifications.

The nature, scope, and consequences of climate change have a direct link with the nature, scope, and level of the commitments and undertakings by states. This is based on the well-established and long-standing recognition of the differentiation between developed and developing countries in terms of their specific needs, national circumstances, and different levels of capacities to undertake measures on mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer, and development, financing, and capacity-building.

The Islamic Republic of Iran considers efforts to combat the adverse effects of climate change to be of utmost importance and fully understands the relevance of international cooperation to respond there to. The same encouraged Iran to actively participate in the written and oral proceedings before the International Court of Justice to render an Advisory Opinion to the questions submitted by the UN General Assembly via resolution A/Res/77/776 of 30 December 2022 to request the ICJ to render an advisory opinion on the question submitted by the General Assembly.

As submitted to the court, we are of the conviction that the treaty framework specifically governing climate change efforts consists mainly of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement containing the obligations of States that are parties thereto to undertake mitigation efforts, reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, and take adaptation measures. In this context, three underlying principles, namely the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC), principle of equity, and the principle of cooperation govern all treaty relationships, based on which developed countries are committed *inter alia* to provide financial support and transfer technology to developing countries. The commitments of the latter have become as such conditional upon the fulfilment of the obligations of the former.

It is noteworthy that imposition of unilateral coercive measures by certain developed countries against developing countries hampers their climate change efforts thus undermining the right to a healthy and clean environment and sustainable environment. The ICJ in its Advisory Opinion rendered on 23rd July 2025 recognised the applicability of the CBDR-RC principle, the obligation to co-operate through financial assistance and technology development, transfer

and capacity-building to climate change efforts. Imposition of unilateral coercive measures is obviously incompatible with the above obligations.

Mr. President, the world today and its progress can be described to be indebted to plastics and the efforts made in the petrochemical industry. Without plastics, humanity would have no choice but to exploit natural resources more and cause more widespread environmental destruction. However, deeply concerning are plastic waste and pollution and the effects of their mismanagement on the environment and human health and well-being caused by the widespread consumption of plastics and the inefficiency of plastic products recycling.

All that said, despite nearly three years of international negotiations to conclude an international legally binding instrument in this regard, vastly differing views have prevented countries from reaching a common understanding, and the negotiations have failed thus far which were supposed to end in December 2024. In this regard, principles of CBDR-RC equity, just transition and respect for equal sovereignty of States and the right to fully and freely use and exploit their natural resources remain crucial and need to be duly included in the instrument in question.

In addition, for this exercise to be successful, the principle of non-discrimination should be fully observed, flexibility should be considered for developing countries in terms of implementation, their national circumstances and capabilities must be given due regard, and their right to development needs to be acknowledged.

In the context of implementing the treaty, access to financial resources in a predictable manner, along with technology transfer and technical assistance for the implementation of national programmes, need to be equally ensured.

To conclude, due to the significance of the sub-topics under this agenda item to AALCO Member States, we hope the Organisation can play an active role in terms of capacity-building as concerns effort to protect the environment and ensure sustainable development. I thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran. I now give the floor to the Republic of Malaysia.

The Delegate of Malaysia: Thank you, Mr. President. Malaysia recognises that plastic pollution poses a serious environmental threat. However, the second part of the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution (INC 5.2), that took place in Geneva, Switzerland from 5 to 15 August, 2025, witnessed the persisting major divergences amongst States on the core elements of the draft text of the global plastic treaty, particularly the scope and the core principles.

Malaysia strongly believes that the treaty can be concluded if the States find common ground based on national determination and capabilities. Malaysia maintains its view that the treaty should focus on tackling plastic pollution by establishing effective mechanisms to improve infrastructure, incentivise innovation, and drive circularity.

Malaysia is also of the view that the criticisms concerning the modalities of work of the contact groups and informal sessions employed during INC 5.2 should be given due consideration. It is important that these modalities be improved and addressed appropriately and effectively, so as to ensure that the positions and views of all States are fully taken into account and duly reflected in the draft text. Plastics have contributed significantly to modern life, from medical supplies such as masks and syringes to essential goods including electronics, clothing,

packaging, and infrastructure. At the same time, we acknowledge that plastics are often criticised despite their affordability, versatility, durability, and indispensability.

In this regard, Malaysia reiterates its intervention at the INC 5.2 that we need an honest and pragmatic treaty, one that promotes economic, socially inclusive, and environmentally sound solutions to plastic pollution. Having said this, Malaysia reaffirms its commitment to continue participating actively in future negotiations, with a view to contributing to the successful conclusion of the envisioned global plastics treaty.

Mr. President, as a state party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the Paris Agreement, Malaysia welcomes the unanimous Advisory Opinion delivered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), on Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change on 25 July 2025. Malaysia views the landmark Advisory Opinion as a valuable persuasive guidance for States to effectively implement the climate change treaties for achieving an intended environmental goals for us all, and also for our future generations.

Malaysia specifically notes with appreciation the clarification provided by the ICJ in the Advisory Opinion on the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC). The ICJ recognised that the CBDR-RC principle has been affirmed by States in light of scientific findings on climate change. The ICJ quoted the finding by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), as endorsed by the UNFCCC in 1992, that “the largest share of historical and current global emissions of greenhouse gases has originated in developed countries, that per capita emissions in developing countries are still relatively low, and that the share of global emissions originating in developing countries will grow to meet their social and development needs”.

The ICJ observed that the CBDR-RC principle “is a manifestation of the principle of equity and guides the interpretation of obligations under international environmental law beyond its express articulation in different treaties”. The ICJ further clarified that the CBDR-RC principle “does not establish new obligations but is relevant for the interpretation of treaties and the determination of rules of customary law relating to the environment.”

Despite its non-legally binding effect, the Advisory Opinion is pivotal as it would influence policy-making by governments in relation to climate change measures, particularly those undertaken by developing countries.

In this regard, considering that majority of AALCO Member States are developing countries and noting that the interventions made by Member States in the past AALCO Sessions gave a great emphasis on the CBDR-RC principle. Malaysia is therefore of the position that CBDR-RC principle as outlined in the UNFCCC, should continue to prioritise the needs and priorities of developing countries while ensuring transparency and accessibility without being dictated.

To conclude, Malaysia respectfully reiterates its call upon the esteemed AALCO Member States to reaffirm and intensify our collective efforts to honour and fulfil our commitments under the international climate change conventions in light of the urgent and rapidly escalating threats posed by climate change. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from Malaysia. I now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Republic of the Sudan.

The Delegate of the Republic of the Sudan:² Thank you very much Mr. President, for giving me the floor. I would like to firstly state the Sudan's Position on International Agreements Related to Climate Change and Plastic Pollution. Sudan is one of the first countries to sign and ratify the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1993, the Kyoto Protocol in 2005, and the Paris Agreement in 2017. Sudan chaired the African Group in the climate change negotiations from 2014 to 2015.

Mr. President, climate change represents a direct threat to Sudan's food security. This threat is manifested in the variability of rainfall patterns, recurrent droughts and floods, and the accelerating of desertification, which reduce cultivated areas, increase social and economic pressures, and increase poverty rates.

Mr. President, Sudan submitted its Initial National report in 2003, its Second National reports in 2013, and its Third National report in 2025. These reports include greenhouse gas inventories for the agriculture, forestry, energy, transport, and industry sectors. Sudan also identified its priorities under the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) in 2007 and 2016, and updated them in 2025.

Mr. President, in 2015, Sudan submitted its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), which includes adaptation and mitigation measures in the sectors of energy, forestry, waste, water, agriculture, health, and the Red Sea coast.

In September 2022, Sudan renewed its commitments through an ambitious plan, including:

- Reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by 38% in the energy sector, 45% in forestry, and 20% in waste management, compared to the business-as-usual scenario.
- An international financing requirement of USD 8.24 billion to implement the measures up to 2030.

Despite the economic blockade, political discrimination, and many years of sanctions imposed on Sudan, the country has remained actively engaged in implementing the UNFCCC at local, regional, and international levels. Mr. President, Sudan has mobilized significant human and material resources, implementing numerous projects to enhance the resilience of communities, farmers, herders, and women, as well as awareness, training, and education programs on climate change issues.

Mr. President, the war imposed on Sudan in April 2023 has exacerbated the impacts of climate change. Agricultural production declined, and cereal production dropped to 4.1 million tons in 2023 -40% below the pre-war annual average - before improving in 2024.

Mr. President, poverty rates increased from 67.4% in 2022 to 86.2% in 2024 due to economic contraction, displacement, and loss of income sources. The energy sector was damaged by more than 30%, and 70% of health services (including cancer, cardiac, kidney treatment, and diagnostics) were lost, contributing to the spread of epidemics.

Seventeen million children (90% of school-age children) were forced out of school, threatening the future of 50% of the country's human capital. Additionally, 5% of water infrastructure in Khartoum was destroyed, and the collapse of power plants resulted in the loss of half of the generation capacity, hindering progress on clean water and energy goals.

Mr. President, we remain hopeful and aspire to make integrated efforts aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, fulfil financial commitments under the Paris

² The statement was delivered in Arabic. The Secretariat acknowledges with gratitude the receipt of official translation in English provided by the Delegation of the Republic of the Sudan.

Agreement and the Loss and Damage Fund, and ensure facilitated access to financing without complex procedures, as well as to emphasize the importance of capacity-building and technology transfer from developed to under developing countries.

Mr. President, concerning Sudan's Position on the Plastics Pollution Treaty, I would like to inform that Sudan is a signatory and ratifying party to hazardous waste agreements, and the Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources is the focal point for the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

The level of plastic pollution in Sudan is high. The reason is that Sudan receives large quantities of plastic products from neighbouring countries, leading to an accumulation of plastic waste that Sudan is unable to manage and dispose of properly. Accordingly, the Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources, as the governmental entity responsible for environmental matters in Sudan, welcomed efforts to establish a legally binding international instrument on plastic pollution and expressed hope that such an instrument will be concluded as soon as possible.

Mr. President, in conclusion, we reaffirm Sudan's commitment to supporting all agreements aimed at protecting the climate and reducing environmental pollution. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you distinguished delegate of Sudan. I now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate of the Republic of South Africa.

The Delegate of the Republic of South Africa: Thank you very much, Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates. Under the theme of its G20 Presidency, "Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability", addressing environment and sustainable development cuts across all three of these pillars. South Africa is utilising its G20 Presidency to pursue global south perspectives and to create a more just, sustainable and equitable world.

In its recent Advisory Opinion on Climate Change, the International Court of Justice reaffirmed that obligations to address climate change stem not only from treaties but also from customary international law, including the duty to prevent significant harm. This resonates with our own commitment to a just transition, where economic development and environmental protection are pursued together.

We recall that the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) remains a cornerstone of international environmental law. As science and technology increases, so does the weight on the obligation and States to be guided by the precautionary principle. The Court noted that while developing States are not absolved of their duties, differentiation reflects both historical responsibility and varying capacities. For South Africa, CBDR-RC continues to provide a legal and ethical foundation for climate policies, including our nationally determined contribution.

We stress the urgent need to strengthen adaptation. For African states, adaptation is not a long-term aspiration but a pressing reality. The international legal framework remains weak in this regard, and we call for more concrete obligations on adaptation support. South Africa notes the outcome of recent Conferences of the Parties (COPs) to the UNFCCC, in particular the operationalisation of the Loss and Damage Fund and progress towards enhanced climate ambition. We underline the need for equitable financing, technology transfer, and capacity-building to support developing countries in meeting mitigation and adaptation goals. The Court's recognition of non-refoulement in the context of climate impact supports the emerging

concept of climate displaced persons. AALCO members are well placed to shape coherent approaches to this complex challenge.

Beyond climate, South Africa welcomed the adoption of the BBNJ Agreement. South Africa signed this historical instrument in June 2025 and is preparing for its ratification.

On the marine environment protection, South Africa is committed to advancing the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity, both within national jurisdiction and in areas beyond national jurisdiction. It is essential that the Agreement prioritises developing countries' needs, ensuring fair benefit-sharing, robust capacity-building, and equitable representation. Barriers to participation must also be reduced to make this a genuinely inclusive regime.

We emphasise the urgent need to address marine pollution, particularly from plastics as well as the protection of vulnerable ecosystems such as coral reefs and deep-sea inhabitants. South Africa strongly supports the ongoing process towards an international treaty addressing plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. We emphasise the importance of a legally binding framework that addresses the full life cycle of plastics, ensures accountability for transboundary pollution, and recognises the special circumstances of developing countries.

Finally, Mr. President, South Africa underlines the importance of legal policy coherence across regimes. Fragmentation between climate, biodiversity, and ocean governance could weaken our collective response. AALCO as a forum of the Global South, has a unique role to champion integrated and equitable approaches. I thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of South Africa. I now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Kenya.

The delegate of the Republic of Kenya: Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates. Thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to make this statement, and on behalf of my delegation, I wish to make the following statement on this agenda item.

The intertwined crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution represent the most significant challenges to sustainable development and the fulfilment of the 2030 agenda. For nations across Africa and Asia, these are not abstract concerns, but immediate threats to our economies, ecosystems, and the livelihoods of our people. Kenya believes that international environmental law must evolve from a framework of mere principles to one of actionable accountability and equitable burden sharing.

Mr. President, Kenya's commitment to environmental sustainability is enshrined in our Constitution and is the cornerstone of our national development planning, including our Vision 2030. However, national action, while necessary, is insufficient without commensurate global cooperation and support. We wish to emphasise several critical areas.

First, the imperative of climate justice and the loss and damage fund. The operationalisation of the Loss and Damage Fund at COP28 was a historic step towards acknowledging the profound injustice faced by climate-vulnerable nations. Kenya urges its swift and effective capitalisation. The Fund must be accessible and provide grant-based finance, not debt-inducing loans, to countries grappling with climate-induced disasters they did not create. We further call for accelerated operationalisation of the Global Goal on Adaptation framework to enhance resilience and support for our most vulnerable communities.

Second, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, GBF is a paradigm shift. Kenya, as a mega-biodiverse country, celebrates the adoption of the GBF. Its success hinges

on implementation. We call for the establishment of robust mechanisms for access and benefit sharing (ABS) from digital sequence information. The benefits derived from our rich genetic resources must flow back to support conservation and sustainable use in countries of origin. AALCO has a role in supporting the development of national legislation to implement the GBF and ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits.

Third, combating desertification and drought. Land degradation is a silent crisis devastating our continent. Kenya is at the forefront of ambitious restoration efforts, including our Nationally Determined Contribution to restore over 5 million hectares of degraded land. We need enhanced international support for the implementation of the UNCCD, particularly in technology transfer and finance for sustainable land management practises that support our communities and protect our ecosystems.

Fourth, on the right to clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, Kenya welcomes the historic recognition of this right by the UN General Assembly. This resolution must now be translated into tangible action. We support the development of principles to guide its implementation, emphasising the responsibilities of States and private actors to prevent transboundary environmental harm and ensure that those affected by environmental damage have access to effective remedies.

Fifth, ending plastic pollution. Kenya is a proud co-sponsor of the ambitious resolution to forge a legally binding international agreement on plastic pollution. We are deeply involved in the INC process and advocate for a comprehensive treaty that addresses the full lifecycle of plastics, from production and design to disposal. It must include controls on hazardous chemicals in plastics and support for a just transition for affected workers and industries in developing countries.

Mr. President, the principles of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) and equity must remain the bedrock of international environmental law. Developed countries must take the lead in providing new, additional, and predictable financial resources, capacity-building, and technology transfer to developing countries.

Kenya calls on AALCO to strengthen its focus on environmental law, perhaps through the establishment of a dedicated working group. This group could facilitate the exchange of best practises, support the harmonisation of environmental legislation across our regions, and enhance our collective capacity to negotiate and implement multilateral environmental agreements. Our nations in Asia and Africa are not merely victims of environmental degradation. We are innovators and custodians of a vast share of the planet's natural wealth. By forging a united front, we can ensure that the global legal architecture for environment and development is just, effective, and capable of securing a sustainable future for all. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Kenya. I now give the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Republic of the Philippines.

The Delegate from the Republic of the Philippines: Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, the Philippines is honoured to address this distinguished assembly on “Environment and Sustainable Development”, challenges that constitute both legal imperatives and existential necessities for vulnerable nations.

As one of the world's most climate-vulnerable countries, the Philippines approaches climate action through three fundamental principles rooted in international law. First, climate action must reflect climate justice and accountability, particularly for developing and climate

vulnerable States. Second, the principles of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) must guide the balance of obligations between developed and developing nations. Third, adaptation, mitigation, and just transition goals must align seamlessly with national development priorities, ensuring that climate ambition is consistent with inclusive growth.

In this context, the Philippines has submitted an ambitious nationally determined contribution targeting a 75 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. This reflects both the urgency we face and our unwavering commitment to global climate goals. Of this target, 2.71 per cent is unconditional, while 72.29 per cent is conditional on international support. These figures highlight both our determination to lead and the critical importance of climate finance, technology transfer, and capacity-building.

A cornerstone of Philippine climate diplomacy is enhancing access to international climate finance for adaptation, mitigation, and addressing loss and damage. As host of the Board of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage, and as a partner of the governing boards of key UNFCCC financial mechanisms, the Philippines continues to advocate for adequate, predictable, and accessible financing for climate-vulnerable states. Looking ahead to COP30 in Belém this November, we will champion a decisive shift from negotiations to implementation—emphasising adaptation resilience, and bridging the critical gap between pledges and action.

Mr. President, as an archipelagic state hosting over 60 per cent of the world’s marine biodiversity, the Philippines bears profound responsibilities both to our people and the international community. In line with Article 192 of UNCLOS, we consider the obligation to protect and preserve the marine environment as one owed by all States to the international community as a whole.

We welcome the recent Advisory Opinions of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the ICJ, which have provided landmark clarifications on States’ Obligations regarding Climate Change. Both judicial bodies recognise that anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions constitute “pollution of the marine environment” under UNCLOS, affirming that climate action is not a matter of political choice but of binding legal duty. These opinions further emphasise that obligations under Part XII of UNCLOS are differentiated according to States’ capacities and responsibilities, reinforcing the principle of equity.

On plastic pollution, the Philippines strongly supports ongoing negotiations towards a legally binding global treaty. The Philippines continues to advocate a comprehensive full life-cycle approach that covers production, consumption, and disposal of plastics, respects common but differentiated responsibilities, and ensures access to finance and technology for developing countries.

We are proud to be taking forward innovative solutions. On 25th November to 26th November, 2025, Manila will host the first IAEA International Conference on Nuclear Technology for Controlling Plastic Pollution (NUTEC). This gathering will bring together ministers, scientists, and stakeholders to showcase nuclear technologies for recycling and marine monitoring.

Having been one of the first signatories of the BBNJ Agreement, the Philippines is also working on its ratification. This agreement will enable us to establish conservation measures for ecologically connected areas beyond national jurisdiction. Our integrated national approach is guided by our 2023 to 2050 National Adaptation Plan, the Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, and new marine scientific research stations established under the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

At the global level, the Philippines implements a whole-of-nation approach to the UN SDGs. We remain committed to working with the international community to advance sustainable development that leaves no one behind.

Mr. President, in closing, the Philippines will continue working with fellow Asian and African States toward robust legal frameworks that safeguard our shared environment. The interconnected nature of the challenges we face—from climate change to pollution and biodiversity loss—demands equally interconnected solutions rooted in science, law, equity, and solidarity. Only through such comprehensive and collective action can we fulfil our obligations under international law and secure a sustainable future for all nations and peoples. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of the Philippines. I now give the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Uganda.

The Delegate of the Republic of Uganda: Thank you, Mr. President, distinguished delegates. The Republic of Uganda is privileged to address the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) on the critical issue of Environment and Sustainable Development.

Uganda attaches significant importance to a robust existing international legal framework that addresses environmental challenges and promotes sustainable development. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and its Aichi Targets (2011-2020) underscore the importance of protecting biodiversity for sustainable development. Therefore, Uganda calls for strengthened legal frameworks to combat illegal wildlife trade, habitat destruction, and invasive species.

The 1992 Rio Declaration and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Common But Differentiated Responsibilities, commonly known as CBDR principle, recognises that all nations share responsibility for environmental protection, but developed nations must bear greater obligations due to their historical contributions to environmental degradation. Uganda calls for AALCO to advocate for the implementation of CBDR in climate finance, technology transfer, and capacity-building to support developing nations in mitigation and adaptation efforts.

These issues are central to the aspirations of Asian and African nations, which bear the disproportionate impacts of climate change, resource degradation, and unsustainable practises, despite contributing least to global environmental crisis.

Mr. President, the global environmental crisis manifested through climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, pollution, and resource depletion threatens the livelihoods, security, and future of nations worldwide.

Mr. President, the transboundary pollution, including plastic waste and hazardous chemicals, poses significant threats to human health and ecosystems. The regulation of hazardous substances requires urgent attention in Africa and Asia. Waste management infrastructure in African and Asian countries, in compliance with international environmental standards, is a public health concern that requires our urgent attention.

It is in light of this that the Republic of Uganda wishes to register her appreciation of the efforts of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution, which is working towards developing an internationally legally binding instrument to address the impact of plastic pollution. The committee's deliberations carry immense significance in environmental protection and therefore require careful, focused, and urgent attention with a strong

commitment to solidarity and consensus. The government of Uganda, therefore, urges the AALCO to engage with the committee in constructive dialogue to further study the treaty text with a view to finalising it.

Mr. President, Africa and Asia, the two regions represented in AALCO, are disproportionately affected by climate change. Our peoples face increasing droughts, floods, food insecurity, sea level rise, and displacement, all of which directly threaten development gains and the enjoyment of fundamental human rights. Women, children, indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable groups continue to bear the heaviest burdens despite having contributed the least to global greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. President, climate change is not merely an environmental issue. It is a profound question of justice, equity, and fairness. The intersection of climate risks with governance arrangements is of immediate concern.

Climate justice requires us to address historical and structural inequalities that have left many developing nations with limited adaptive capacity. Without corrective action, the adverse effects of climate change will deepen poverty, entrench inequality, and undermine sustainable development. Climate justice is not optional. It is essential to an effective and sustainable global response.

Mr. President, AALCO has a unique role to play. We must deliberately advance a climate justice perspective in our work. Risk assessments and climate responses that fail to account for equity considerations risk reinforcing existing vulnerabilities. We therefore urge AALCO experts on the environment to support Member States in integrating climate justice into risk governance.

Mr. President, the exploitation of natural resources such as minerals, forests, and water often leads to environmental degradation and social inequities. This is a call to action for promotion of sustainable resource governance including equitable benefit-sharing and the protection of indigenous and local communities' rights.

In conclusion, Mr. President, Uganda is committed to the preservation of the natural heritage and stands ready to collaborate with AALCO Member States to advance environmental justice for sustainable development for the benefit of current and future generations. I thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much. The distinguished delegate from the Republic of Uganda. It's now one o'clock. We have a side event. That is ISDS Reform at the UNCITRAL. This is going to take place starting around about now. It is going to be in the Bunyonyi Hall on the ground, lower ground level. We, however, have a few other distinguished delegates who will make statements on this topic before we get into the topic after lunch break. So I will request that those who can attend the side event can step out now while we continue with this topic. So the side event ISDS Reform at UNCITRAL is going to take place at Bunyonyi Hall on the lower ground level. We will now proceed to the next delegate, the distinguished delegate from the Kingdom of Thailand. Kingdom of Thailand, you have the floor.

The Delegate of the Kingdom of Thailand: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, our common future is in crisis. Climate change poses an existential threat that spares no nation, regardless of size, geography, or economic power. Our Asian and African regions remain especially vulnerable to the impacts of pollution, even as we continue to strive for economic development alongside pressing

concerns for environmental protection. Convening this session on the topic of environment and sustainable development is therefore particularly timely and relevant.

In this regard, allow me to share Thailand's perspective on this year's three focussed issues. First, the negotiation for a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution. Second, the international legal regime on climate change and the International Court of Justice's Advisory Opinion on the Obligation of States in respect of Climate Change. And third, issues relating to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

First, Thailand takes note of the recent development of the resumed fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, or INC 5.2, held last month in Geneva. While the Committee has not yet reached an agreement on a treaty text, Thailand encourages Member States to continue working constructively towards its conclusion at the next round of negotiations. It is essential to ensure that the global plastic treaty contributes to the management of the full life-cycle of plastic for sustainable consumption and production, and leads to global actions to end plastic pollution.

Second, Thailand welcomes the International Court of Justice's Advisory Opinion on the Obligation of States in respect of Climate Change of 23rd July 2025 as well as the Advisory Opinion of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea on 21 May 2024. These landmark opinions contribute significantly to the clarification of international law on climate change and provide valuable guidance for States in the interpretation and implementation of their obligations under the relevant legal framework. Thailand concurs with the Court's view that principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and equity will inform the implementation of States' obligation including the duty to prevent significant harm and the duty to cooperate under the climate change framework. Moreover, building upon the outcome on the finance COP 29 in Baku, Thailand underscores the importance of strengthening synergies across the Rio Conventions and reaffirms its commitment to submit a more robust and ambitious NDC 3.0 this year.

Third, Thailand is guided by the principle of sustainable development and emphasises its role in shaping the interpretation of international law to address pressing environmental challenges. In practise, Thailand is advancing responsible consumption and production through waste reduction policy and promotion of the bio-circular economy which also informs Thailand position on the ongoing negotiations on the plastic pollution treaty. Furthermore, within the Mekong River Commission and related legal frameworks, Thailand is working to strengthen transboundary water cooperation, contributing directly to clean water and sanitation, disaster risk reduction and the protection of livelihoods.

Mr. President, Thailand believes that the recent advances in international law concerning the environment and sustainable development have created a clear foundation for our collective response. The guidance provided by international courts now stands as a point of reference for how States should act and turn those principles into effective practise. Thailand stands ready to work with Member States and all partners in Asia and Africa to ensure that international commitments are fully implemented in a fair, effective, and timely manner safeguarding the survival and well-being of present and future generations. Thank you, Mr. President.

[Alternate Head of Delegation of Republic of Uganda in Chair]³

President: Thank you, distinguished delegate from the Kingdom of Thailand. Distinguished delegates, you must have noticed that the President is not with us in this room. According to Rule 12, Sub-Rule 4 of the AALCO's Statutory Rules, 2024 in case both the President and the Vice President are not available, then the plenary meetings shall be presided over by the alternate head of the delegation of the Member State presiding over the Annual Session. By virtue of that rule, I am here representing the President. So thank you. Next, we are going to have the delegate from the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

The Delegate of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam: Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, the Vietnamese delegation would like to begin by commending the AALCO Secretariat for its effort in preparing a comprehensive report on Environment and Sustainable Development. As a developing country specially affected by climate change, Viet Nam places great emphasis on multilateral processes, firmly asserting its unwavering commitment to the development of a green and circular economy and its proactive stance in addressing the challenges of climate change.

On plastic pollution and circular economy: Plastic Waste is a pressing global environmental challenge, profoundly impacting all nations. Viet Nam, as one of the countries grappling with this issue, considers the fight against plastic pollution a top priority. We have undertaken a range of specific actions at multiple levels and actively engaged in international cooperation frameworks, including joining and ratifying treaties on marine environmental protection and participating in negotiation for a global agreement on plastic pollution.

We call upon States to advance the creation of global mechanisms for mobilising financial resources, transferring technology and sharing policy insights to drive the ship towards a circular economy for plastics. Additionally, we support the development of suitable mechanism to enhance active and effective involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the production and use of plastic products. Viet Nam also promotes the establishment of global and regional centres dedicated to monitoring, collecting information, conducting research and sharing practise in managing plastic pollution. Furthermore, we emphasise the importance of expanding community awareness initiatives on plastic waste, especially through integration into school education programmes.

On Climate Change and State Responsibility: Climate change is one of the top concerns of the international community and is highly relevant to Viet Nam as one of the most vulnerable coastal countries. We are resolute in fulfilling the commitments made at COP26, particularly the pledge to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. Concrete steps include the upcoming update on our Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in 2023 and the adoption of National Power Development Plan with a vision to 2050. We underline the pivotal role of green transition to sustainable energy sources and call upon the developed countries to meet their financial commitments and provide necessary resources for developing countries' climate action efforts.

Madam President, Viet Nam believes that the advisory opinions from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) could create profound impacts upon how environmental obligations under international law, specifically

³ Rule 12 of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization Statutory Rules, 2024 provides for the "Rules of Procedure for Annual Session". Sub-Rule 4 of Rule 12 lays down that: "In case both the President and Vice-President are not available then the plenary meetings shall be presided over by the Alternate Head of the Delegation of the Member State presiding over the Annual Session." Accordingly, a part of the meeting was chaired by Ms. Elizabeth Nakkungu, Commissioner Legal Advisory Services, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, the Republic of Uganda.

those related to the impacts of climate change, are interpreted. Viet Nam is one of the co-sponsors of the UN General Assembly Resolution requesting an advisory opinion from the ICJ on the responsibilities of States regarding climate change and has submitted its Written Statement and Written Comments to the ICJ.

While being currently carefully reviewing the ICJ Advisory Opinion delivered last July, we would like to reaffirm our position that the responsibilities of countries that have caused significant harm to the climate system should take into account their historical emissions based on the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities with Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC). Scientific evidence demonstrates that historical emissions are a driver of climate change, and the obligation of due diligence and prevention are longstanding, binding historical emitters. Non-compliance with these obligations constitutes an internationally lawful act leading to legal responsibility. The legal consequences for developed countries' breaches include the responsibility to transfer technology to developing nations with limited resources to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, taking into account the specific needs of individual countries. We reiterate Viet Nam's commitment to collaborating with the international community to build a sustainable future. I thank you, Madam President.

President: I thank the distinguished delegate from the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. I now give the floor to the delegate from Mauritius.

The Delegate of the Republic of Mauritius: Thank you. Madam President, allow me to congratulate you upon your assumption of the presidency. Madam President, we thank the Secretariat for the very comprehensive report prepared on this issue of Environment and Sustainable Development.

I must say that, Madam President, that this issue is very crucial matter for Mauritius, which is a Small Island Developing State, also known as we know by the acronym of SIDS. SIDS face unique challenges, Madam President, that demand tailored responses. Our geographic isolation creates structural vulnerabilities, namely limited land area, narrow resource base, dependency on costly imports for basic necessities and the disastrous environmental effects of climate change.

Madam President, climate change threatens our fresh water supplies, destroys our coastal infrastructure and jeopardises our marine ecosystem. That is why we say that SIDS are disproportionately affected and require differentiated support and enhanced partnership to unlock the potential for sustainable development.

Madam President, let me turn to the International Court of Justice. The Advisory Opinion provided by the ICJ on climate change represents a watershed moment that validates decades of principle advocacy by SIDS. This historic ruling affirms that climate harm violates international law and establishes binding obligations for climate action. We recall that all 15 judges agreed on this opinion. This is the only fifth unanimous ICJ decision in the Court's history and this provides a strong legal foundation for enhanced climate cooperation. And this is very important for SIDS as this represents a cornerstone upon which we can build more effective partnerships with the global community.

Complementing this landmark decision, Madam President, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and its unanimous Advisory Opinion fundamentally transform our understanding of state obligations under international law. By establishing that greenhouse gas emissions constitute marine pollution under UNCLOS, the ITLOS has created binding legal obligations for States to mitigate climate-induced marine impacts. These Advisory Opinions, Madam President, collectively affirm that the rule of law extends to climate protection,

providing powerful tools for accountability when voluntary commitments prove insufficient. We call upon, therefore, on all Member States to translate these legal obligations into concrete climate action and enhance support for the most vulnerable nations like SIDS and, of course, Mauritius. Madam President, if you allow me, I will also speak on the issue of BBNJ.

Madam President, sustainable development and protection of marine biodiversity as well as climate justice cannot happen without good ocean governance. The pending entry into force of the BBNJ creates opportunities for enhanced cooperation on high seas governance. May I recall here, Madam President, that Mauritius signed the BBNJ Agreement on 21st September 2023, the very day after the treaty was opened for signature at the United Nations, thus becoming one of the first countries to sign this historic agreement. We also became one of the very first countries to ratify this agreement, Madam President. Therefore, we are in a strong position to encourage all States, including AALCO Member States, to accelerate their ratification process to ensure that this important agreement can enter into force and deliver on its promise of sustainable ocean governance for all. I thank you, Madam President, for your kind attention and thank you for giving me the extra time.

President: I thank the distinguished delegate from Mauritius. Now I give the floor to the delegate from the People's Republic of China. Thank you.

The Delegate of the People's Republic of China: Thank you, Madam President. All humanity is an interdependent community with common interests and a shared future. We must stand together to be prepared for an increasing number of global challenges, and no single country can stay immune. I would like to share with you China's position on the following topics.

The first topic touches on the plastic pollution prevention and control of plastic pollution. China has always attached great importance to the prevention and control of plastic pollution. Since the launch of Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in 2022, China has continued to engage constructively in the process. We regret, however, that despite arduous efforts, the divergence between the parties proved difficult to bridge, and the negotiations ended without a result.

China believes that the underlying cause of plastic pollution is the discharge and leakage of plastic waste to the environment due to improper waste management, but plastics are not pollutants. Financial, technical, and other support from developed countries to developing countries is a prerequisite for the effective implementation of the instrument. All developing countries shall be eligible for funding so as to increasingly improve the capacity to prevent and control the plastic pollution.

My second point touches on the international legal systems for climate change. At the last year, COP29, a package of outcomes was adopted, setting a 10-year climate-finance target and related arrangements.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Paris Agreement. COP30 will be held in November in Brazil. Against this urgent backdrop, the Member States of the AALCO need to work together to inject greater certainty and positive energy into global climate governance. To this end, China wishes to share three observations:

First, we must adhere to multilateralism, uphold the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR), strengthen international cooperation, and resist the counter currents of unilateralism and protectionism. Second, we must keep our focus on resource-orientated actions. Third, we must resolve the climate-finance issue to support climate action in developing nations. As a responsible major developing country, China is actively and prudently

working towards its goals on carbon peak and carbon neutrality. In the meantime, China has also provided as much assistance as we can to fellow developing countries through the channel of South-South cooperation on climate change. We are committed to working with the rest of the world to protect Earth, our shared home. Together, we can build a community with a shared future for humankind.

The third topic touches on the Advisory Opinion on Climate Change made by ICJ. ICJ delivered its advisory opinion on 23rd July, pointed out that the UNFCCC system is the principal legal instrument regulating the international response to the global problem of climate change. It stressed that developed countries shall take the lead in combating climate change and that countries have the obligation to strengthen international cooperation. The advisory opinion reflects the long-standing stance and the proposition of the developing countries, including China.

At the same time, China has noted divergent views on the applicable law, on whether anthropogenic greenhouse gas-emissions constitute marine pollution, and on questions of state responsibility. China has fully elaborated its positions in its written and oral statements.

China wishes to emphasize that climate change is a global challenge for humankind, and international cooperation is the only way forward. Over the past three decades, we built a fairly mature international legal framework and global cooperation regime centred on the UNFCCC, its Kyoto Protocol and its Paris Agreement.

The international community should continue to use the UNFCCC system as the primary channel for global climate governance and, through its compliance mechanisms, press ahead with the implementation of the Convention and the Paris Agreement so that climate governance can be carried forward in a thorough and practical manner. China stands ready to maintain the communication with all countries on this advisory opinion. Thank you, Madam President.

Hon'ble Kiryowa Kiwanuka, the Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda and the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO in the Chair.

President: Thank you very much. The distinguished delegate from the People's Republic of China now I yield the floor to Japan.

The Delegate of Japan: Thank you, Mr. President. Firstly, I would like to mention about the sub-topic: An International Legally Binding Instrument on Plastic Pollution. At the INC 5.2 held in Geneva in August, Japanese delegation took the lead in coordination on core obligations where there are significant differences of positions among negotiating countries, but the consensus could not be reached to our regret. The timing of the further session has not yet been decided, nevertheless, Japan intends to continue to actively engage in negotiations with the aim of establishing an effective and progressive instrument involving countries, including major consumers and emitters of plastics.

Japan is not in the position to support the application of the concept of CBDR to plastic pollution. Plastic pollution, which occurs throughout the global supply chain, is not caused by developed countries alone. The responsibility for the leakage and emission of plastics into the environment is mainly due to inadequate and inappropriate waste management, and this responsibility applies regardless of country's stage of development. Plastic pollution is a problem that all countries should deal with, and if the term CBDR is used to stress the responsibility of developed countries for this issue, Japan does not endorse it.

Mr. President, in order to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degree above pre-industrial levels, it is important for all countries including major emitters to collectively take action. At

the COP29 to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held in November 2024, Japan welcomed decisions adopted on New Collective Quantitative Goals (NCQG) on climate finance and detailed rules to cooperate internationally for implementing greenhouse gas reductions.

Ahead of COP30, Japan would like to call for the submission of new round of NDCs and agree on a strong message regarding the implementation of global emissions reductions based on the NDC synthesis report.

Japan expects COP30 to achieve a balanced result in mitigation, adaptation and finance.

Mr. President, on February 18, 2025, Japan submitted its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the Secretariat of UNFCCC, which includes targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60% and 73% in fiscal year 2035 and fiscal year 2040, respectively from fiscal year 2013 levels, toward the achievement of net zero emissions by 2050. These targets are ambitious and aligned with the global 1.5 degrees goal.

Japan has consistently reduced emissions in pursuit of achieving net-zero by 2050 and the 2030 reduction target. We will continue to contribute to global emission reductions while advancing domestic emission reduction efforts.

On 23rd July, 2025, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) rendered its Advisory Opinion on Climate Change, addressing the obligations of States under relevant international agreements such as United Nations Charter and climate change-related treaties, as well as the obligations of each country under customary international law. This advisory opinion by the ICJ is understood to include content stating that countries violating these obligations may face State responsibility, although individual consideration is required.

Japan has constructively participated in the procedure, submitting statements and comments in march and August 2024, and participated in public sitting in December 2024. Japan will closely monitor the advisory opinion's impact on future international discussions on climate change actions.

Mr. President, we face multiple crises and increasing fragmentation. To overcome today's conflicts and division, Japan steadfastly commits to the multilateral system.

It is important to return to our fundamental principles. That is, we work together to maintain international peace and security, protect human life and dignity, and promote economic and social development. Indeed, Japan's support for human security contributes to the SDGs' vision of leave no one behind. Furthermore, overcoming setbacks to achieve the SDGs requires "everyone's contribution" for a sustainable future. Japan has worked to transform social issue resolution into an engine for growth towards achieving the SDGs.

This year, Japan conducted its third VNR. Japan's VNR focusses on difficult challenges such as declining birth rate and ageing population, regional revitalisation and disaster risk reduction. It has also highlight Japan's initiatives and achievement in addressing global issues. One of the highlights of Japan's SDGs promotion is an engagement of multi-stakeholders. Furthermore, under the concept of human security, Japan will continue to actively contribute to international discussions on sustainable development by 2030 and beyond. Thank you very much.

President: Thank you very much from the distinguished delegate from Japan. I now yield the floor to the Syrian Arab Republic. The distinguished delegate from the Syrian Arab Republic, you have the floor.

The Delegate of the Syrian Arab Republic:⁴ In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Your Excellencies, Peace and God's mercy and blessings be upon you. Today, the nations of the world confront unprecedented environmental challenges that imperil human health, food and water security, and economic and social stability. These challenges are no longer confined to local concerns; they have evolved into a global crisis demanding genuine collective action rooted in shared responsibility and international solidarity.

Plastic pollution stands as one of the gravest environmental threats of our time. Estimates indicate that annual plastic production exceeds 400 million tons, with over half used just once before finding its way into oceans, rivers, and coastlines. This immense accumulation of waste leads to:

- The destruction of marine and terrestrial ecosystems.
- Threats to marine life and natural resources.
- The infiltration of micro plastics into food chains, directly impacting human health.

In this context, the Syrian Arab Republic recently participated in the Geneva Conference held in August 2025, represented by a high-level official delegation led by the Minister of Local Administration and Environment, alongside representatives from the Ministry of Economy, Foreign Trade, and Industry. The conference aimed to draft the first legally binding international treaty to curb plastic pollution. Syria fully supports creating a binding international legal framework to tackle plastic pollution at every stage, considering developing nations' needs and capacities for effective waste management.

Ladies and gentlemen, climate change is no longer merely a scientific or environmental issue; it has become a global humanitarian and developmental challenge threatening the lives of millions across continents. Many nations are witnessing escalating phenomena, including:

1. Severe droughts, as experienced this year in the Syrian Arab Republic and neighboring countries, where an unprecedented drought—the worst in decades—has directly impacted water resources, agriculture, and food security.
2. Devastating floods in other nations, such as our friend Pakistan, resulting in significant human and economic losses.

These profound climate shifts impose an urgent responsibility on the international community to provide necessary support to the most affected nations through:

- Equitable and adequate financing.
- Transfer of modern technology.
- Strengthening national capacities to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

We reaffirm our commitment to the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities, which ensures consideration of disparities in economic and technical capacities among nations, fostering fairness in the distribution of burdens.

⁴ The statement was delivered in Arabic. The Secretariat acknowledges with gratitude the receipt of official translation in English provided by the Delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Sustainable development goals serve as the cornerstone of a unified global vision to balance economic growth with environmental protection. Achieving these goals requires:

- Investment in renewable energy and innovation in green technologies.
- Strengthening management of natural resources to ensure water and food security.
- Expanding international partnerships to support sustainable development programs, ensuring all nations benefit from shared expertise and modern technologies.

Ladies and gentlemen, building a secure future for coming generations can only be realized by integrating environmental considerations into economic and social policies, enhancing resilience to current and future crises.

Stemming from our international commitments, we emphasize the following:

1. Support for global efforts to formulate binding legal instruments to protect the environment and combat pollution.
2. Strengthening regional and international cooperation in waste management, recycling, and knowledge exchange.
3. Supporting nations affected by climate change.
4. Encouraging innovation and investment in eco-friendly alternatives and advanced technologies for sustainable resource management.
5. Commitment to sustainable development goals to ensure a healthy environment, a robust economy, and a sustainable society for future generations.

In conclusion, addressing global environmental challenges demands genuine collective action grounded in cooperation, partnership, and climate justice. At this conference, we renew our affirmation that protecting our planet is a shared responsibility, and international solidarity is the only path to a safer and more equitable future for ourselves and generations to come.

Peace, mercy and blessings of God be upon you all.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Syrian Arab Republic. I now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Türkiye.

The Delegate of the Republic of Türkiye: Thank you, Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates. The impact of climate crisis transcends borders, affecting welfare of our societies and sustainability of ecosystems. The AALCO as a platform uniting countries across Asia and Africa can contribute to the international efforts to combat climate change within its mandate.

In countries with fragile economies, securing funding for sustainable development projects remains a challenge. Continued legal and institutional support can play a vital role in helping them address the adverse impacts of climate change. Asia and Africa face unique challenges caused by climate change, with rising temperatures and unpredictable weather patterns threatening livelihoods and ecosystems.

Lack of sufficient financial resources, technological gaps, and the disparity between commitments and actions are the key problem on combating climate change. Many developing countries face difficulties in fulfilling their obligations due to insufficient support. In this regard, AALCO can raise the voice of developing countries with respect to these challenges.

Mr. President, Türkiye is fully committed to addressing climate change through ambitious policies and tangible actions. Guided by our vision for achieving net zero emissions by 2053, we are implementing transformative steps across all sectors with the aim of capacity-building.

With the ambition of combating climate change, as you know, we submitted our candidacy to host the 31st Conference of Parties, COP31, of the UN Climate Conference in 2026 as Western European and Others Group country. AALCO Members support to our COP31 host country bids will be highly appreciated. We announced our long-term climate strategy spanning mitigation, adaptation, and cross-cutting areas has been developed in line with the outcomes of the first global stock deal under the Paris Agreement. Climate law, including the emission trading system, was adopted by our Parliament on 3rd of July 2025. At the moment we are working on our National Determined Contribution (NDC) 3.0 to be more ambitious. Our updated NDC will be the economy-wide, covering all greenhouse gas emissions and will be formulated as ambitiously as possible considering our status as a developing country. Our Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan for 2024-2030 reflects the integrated holistic approach.

Mr. President, in paragraph 75 of the report of the Secretariat on “Environment and Sustainable Development”, the expression “... accelerating the phase out of fossil fuels” is stated. We believe that, in place of this expression, the wording “...and transitioning away from fossil fuels” should be used.

Mr. President, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals have become a blueprint for all of us. According to 2025 SDG Report, only 35% of SDG targets are on track or making moderate progress. Nearly half are moving too slowly and alarming. 18% are in reverse. The impacts of climate change, escalating conflicts, rising geopolitical tensions, and deteriorating humanitarian crisis further endanger development prospects. The current global challenges have underscored the importance of green transition for sustainable development. 2030 Agenda aims for resilient and sustainable economy which provides for both the humanity and the planets. Dialogue and cooperation are the two main drivers for green transition based on technology and digitalisation. It is imperative to accelerate the process of green transition while reducing dependency on traditional energy resources. Investing in technological infrastructure will surely accelerate green transition.

Türkiye is the host and biggest donor of UN Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries (UNTB-LDC) which aims to close digital technological gaps. As some members of AALCO also fall into the Least Developed Country (LDC) category, we encourage them to benefit from projects and services of the UN Technology Bank. Thank you all.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Türkiye. Now there being no other Member States to make statements, we shall now move to observers. I would like to yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Asian Academy of International Law.

The Delegate of the Asian Academy of International Law: Thank you, Mr. President. To respect the fundamental human rights for food, I will be very brief. First, congratulations for you and your Vice President. Second, thanks for the flawless organisation by Uganda. Third, our understanding of the Advisory Opinion of ICJ means that the principle of CBDR-RC goes beyond the three agreements under the UN. Therefore, it is the job of this Organisation to vehemently defend this principle on behalf of the global South. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Asian Academy of International Law, for your succinct submission. Now, members, there being no other members

who would like to make any statements, this will take us to the end of this session. We shall break for lunch and reconvene at 2.30. We shall take up the next substantive topic on the agenda, which is “Violations of International Law in Palestine and Other Occupied Territories by Israel and Other International Legal Issues related to the Question of Palestine.” The first speaker from the floor will be the distinguished delegate from the State of Palestine. All members are requested to be back in their seats by exactly 2.30. We already made the administrative announcement on the side event, which is ongoing. I wish you a great lunch. See you back here at 2.30 P.M. I thank you.

The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

**XI. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOURTH
GENERAL MEETING (CONTINUED) OF THE
AALCO MEMBER STATES**

**XI. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOURTH GENERAL MEETING (CONTINUED)
OF THE AALCO MEMBER STATES HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER
2025, AT 2:30 PM**

Hon'ble Kiryowa Kiwanuka, Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda and President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO in the Chair.

**AGENDA ITEM: VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW IN PALESTINE AND
OTHER OCCUPIED TERRITORIES BY ISRAEL AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL
LEGAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE**

President: Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, welcome back from your lunch break. We shall now take up consideration of our next substantive item, which is “Violations of International Law in Palestine and Other Occupied Territories by Israel and International Issues Related to the Question of Palestine”. So I'll invite the AALCO Deputy Secretary-General to make introductory remarks.

Dr. Ali Hasankhani, Deputy Secretary-General of AALCO: Thank you, Mr. President. Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. I have the honour to introduce the topic, “Violations of International Law in Palestine and Other Occupied Territories by Israel and Other International Legal Issues related to the Question of Palestine”, contained in Secretariat Document, AALCO/63/KAMPALA/2025/S D/S4. The item “Deportation of Palestinians in Violation of International Law particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the Massive Immigration and Settlement of Jews in Occupied Territories” was placed on the agenda of the Organization at the Twenty-Seventh Annual Session in Singapore in 1988 and brought international law issues arising out of the Occupied Palestinian Territories to the attention of AALCO.

The Secretariat has closely monitored the developments pertaining to this matter since then. Over these 37 years, the reports prepared by the AALCO Secretariat have recorded and reflected on the numerous legal issues concerning Palestine, touching upon various legal aspects including the law of armed conflict, international human rights law, refugee law and the law relating to diplomatic and consular relations as well as international criminal law.

Over successive Annual Sessions where this issue has been considered, AALCO Member States have consistently expressed strong support for the rights of the Palestinian people and underscored the need to uphold international law. The discussions reflect the importance attached by Member States to this agenda item, which continues to highlight AALCO's role in reaffirming respect for fundamental principles of international law.

This year the Secretariat's report on the topic provides an overview of the report of various UN bodies including the reports of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights, and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry that have largely focussed in the situation in Gaza over the past one year on the topic. The report also covers the proceedings before the International Court of Justice in the advisory proceedings on the “Obligations of Israel in relation to the Presence and Activities of the United Nations, Other International Organizations and Third States in and in relation to the Occupied Palestinian Territory” and offers some comments and observations.

As the international community looks ahead with hope to the full implementation of a ceasefire in Gaza, AALCO Member States are invited to share their statements on the issues identified

in the document and to present their respective views and positions on this agenda item, which remains of great contemporary importance. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, Deputy Secretary-General. Like I stated earlier, I think we're going to have the first intervention from the State of Palestine. Distinguished delegate from the State of Palestine, you have the floor.

The Delegate of the State of Palestine:¹ Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, representatives of the Member States in the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization:

Allow me, on behalf of the State of Palestine, to express our strong condemnation of the treacherous Israeli attack targeting the sister State of Qatar, in a blatant violation of the sovereignty of a United Nations Member State, and a direct aggression against regional and international security. This attack occurred within the ongoing war against the Palestinian people, reaffirming that the Israeli policies based on aggression and expansion are not limited to Palestinian territory alone, but threaten peace and security in the entire region.

Ladies and gentlemen, at this juncture, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to AALCO for its efforts to ensure respect for international law in the occupied Palestinian territory, and for dedicating this standing item within the substantive issues placed on the agenda of this annual conference, as well as to the studies, documents, and legal reports prepared by AALCO experts, and their role in supporting Palestine's efforts on the international stage.

First: Legal Background. Since 1948, the Palestinian people have been subjected to serious violations of their inalienable fundamental rights, including the right to self-determination, the prohibition of colonial settlement, and the protection of civilians under occupation. These violations represent a direct challenge to the principles of the United Nations Charter, particularly the principle prohibiting the acquisition of territory by force, which necessitates urgent legal action by the international community. Based on this background, allow me to present to you the main forms of Israeli violations in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Second: Israeli Violations Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity: The number of martyrs until August 2025 reached approximately 63,746, with more than 161,245 injured, most of whom were women and children, according to United Nations reports. These acts clearly fall within the definition of the crime of genocide and crimes against humanity.

Starvation as a Weapon of War: Another form of violation employed by the occupation is starvation as a weapon of war. Since October 2023, a comprehensive siege was imposed on Gaza, blocking food, medicine, and fuel, and targeting agricultural lands and warehouses, resulting in child deaths due to hunger. Approximately two hours ago, around 20 citizens were martyred while attempting to obtain humanitarian aid in southern Gaza Strip, and the number continues to rise, exceeding 2,500 martyrs among aid recipients.

Illegal Settlements and Occupation: In the West Bank and East Jerusalem, settlement activity continues at an unprecedented pace, with the number of settlers exceeding 750,000. The occupation authorities and settlers continue their systematic attacks against the Palestinian people, including armed assaults on villages, land levelling, tree uprooting, and property destruction. This settlement expansion is fully protected by the Israeli army, in flagrant

¹Statement was delivered in Arabic. The Secretariat acknowledges with gratitude the official translation provided by the Delegation of the State of Palestine.

violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, as confirmed by the International Court of Justice in its Advisory Opinion issued in 2024.

Mass Arrests and Torture: Israel continues the policy of mass detention, with over 9,000 Palestinian prisoners held in its prisons, including hundreds of children and women, amidst documented reports of torture, sexual assaults, and other forms of inhumane treatment, as well as administrative detention, in violation of the Convention against Torture.

Protection of Civilian Properties and Cultural Assets: Media and humanitarian personnel have not been spared from targeting. Since October 2023, no fewer than 185 Palestinian journalists were martyred, while UNRWA facilities and other humanitarian agencies were bombed and destroyed, killing staff and severely impeding relief efforts.

Thousands of homes, schools, and hospitals were destroyed, more than 1,411 medical staff were martyred, over 1,312 others were injured, and approximately 362 were detained. More than 115 civil defence personnel wearing protected insignia were martyred, in full view of the world, in a direct violation of international humanitarian law.

Third: Legal Implications, Ladies and Gentlemen, These crimes are not merely local incidents but are international in character, resulting in:

- Individual criminal responsibility of occupation leaders before the International Criminal Court.
- Collective international responsibility of all States Parties to the Geneva Conventions, pursuant to the first common article obliging them to “respect and ensure respect for the Conventions in all circumstances.”

Fourth: Recommendations. Based on all of the above, the State of Palestine calls upon this conference to:

- Condemn the Israeli violations as amounting to war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.
- Support ongoing investigations before the International Criminal Court, including arrest warrants issued against Israeli officials.
- Endorse and implement the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (2024), and exert pressure to end occupation and settlement.
- Take immediate action to lift the siege, halt the policy of starvation, and ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid.
- Impose a ban on arms exports to Israel to prevent their use in committing crimes.
- Refuse dealings with settlement products, in implementation of the UN Security Council resolution.
- Recognize the State of Palestine as fully sovereign over the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.
- Support the outcomes of the New York Conference on the Two-State Solution (initiated by Saudi Arabia and France) as a comprehensive framework to revive a political process based on international legitimacy.
- Support international legal initiatives, such as the lawsuit filed by the Republic of South Africa against Israel, to enhance accountability of the occupation for its violations of international law and Palestinian rights.

In conclusion, the crimes committed in the occupied Palestinian territory do not constitute isolated violations but a direct threat to the entire international legal order. The international community's failure to hold the occupation accountable encourages further aggression and undermines the foundations of international justice. From this podium, we affirm that ending the Israeli occupation and establishing an independent State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital is not merely a political demand but a legal obligation and an international entitlement that cannot be postponed, and the only way to achieve just and lasting peace based on international law. Thank you for your attention.

President: We have a couple of speakers. We have statements from the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mauritius, the Republic of Uganda, Kingdom of Thailand, Japan, Arab Republic of Egypt, Republic of India, Republic of Türkiye, South Africa, Malaysia, Republic of the Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, and Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. So I now yield the floor to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Thank you, Mr. President. *Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim*. In the beginning, we expressed our appreciation for the continued inclusion of this topic on the agenda of AALCO. Mr. President, the Islamic Republic of Iran has consistently voiced the illegitimacy of the formation of the Israeli regime as a subject under international law. The very membership of the Israeli regime to the UN is a manifest disregard for the purposes and principles of the UN Charter due to its illegitimate establishment from inception.

Mr. President, it is a shame for the international community that despite decades of atrocities against the Palestinian people, violation of their inalienable right to self-determination, and illegal occupation by the Israeli regime, the crimes persist. And the Israeli regime is more brazenly committing aggression, genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity with the support of certain countries, the latest of which was yesterday's aggression. On 29th August 2025, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), declared that, and I quote, "We are on a descent into a massive famine. 500,000 people are in the worst possible situation today, with another 160,000 expected to be added to that number in the coming weeks."

On 28th August 2025, regarding the two strikes on Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunus, earlier that week, the UN Secretary-General stated that, and I quote, "These attacks are part of an endless catalogue of horrors. Gaza is piled with rubble, piled with bodies, and piled with examples of what may be serious violations of international law. Famine is no longer a looming possibility. It is a present-day catastrophe."

This is just a fraction of the decades-long Israeli regime's crimes in Palestine. Dozens of UN Resolutions, reports, and decisions alongside the dicta of the ICJ have affirmed the illegality of occupation and the imperative of unimpeded humanitarian access. Yet these rulings and appeals have gone unheeded as inhuman acts persist with devastating consequences. This totality of actions has in our view created a *sui generis* situation demanding an equally *sui generis* response specifically tailored to end the prolonged occupation, stop the genocide, save lives, secure the right to self-determination of Palestinians, and bring criminals to justice.

In her report of 1st October 2024 titled "Genocide as Colonial Erasure", the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Palestine, Ms. Francesca Albanese, provided ample evidence of the genocidal intent of the Israeli regime and its strategy of forced displacement and replacement of Palestinians calling for the immediate intervention by the UN member States to prevent further atrocities. What is more pressing and came as a clear

reflection of the ongoing support for the Génocidaires at the present time was the reaction of the United States. Instead of calling for an end to the occupation and the ongoing genocide in Gaza, the US targeted the UN Special Rapporteur for having unveiled only a fraction of the truth about what is going on in Gaza.

This is an attack against the integrity of the United Nations and a deliberate act of obstruction of justice reflective of the US aid and assistance to the Génocidaires in violation of the 1949 Convention on Genocide. Mr. President, in its Advisory Opinion of 19th July 2024, besides confirming the apartheid practises of the Israeli regime, the ICJ stated that and I quote, “All States are under an obligation not to recognise as legal the situation arising from the unlawful presence of the Israeli occupying regime in Palestine and not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by the continued presence of the Israeli occupying regime in Palestine.”

The court also opined that, and I quote, “The UN and especially the General Assembly as well as the Security Council should consider the precise modalities and further action to bring to an end as rapidly as possible the unlawful presence of the Israeli occupying regime in Palestine.” In addition, the persistent catastrophe in Gaza and the Palestinian occupied territories at large caused the UNGA to once again request the ICJ to address the right to urgently needed supplies essential to their survival.

While we await the Advisory Opinion of the Court, the rights of the Palestinian people and the ongoing tragedy should not be diminished to humanitarian access. The evidence points conclusively to the crime of genocide. The window, if any, to stop the ongoing genocide is rapidly closing and the prolonged occupation and inaction of the international community, including the Security Council constitutes an absolute moral and legal failure.

Mr. President, the question arises whether there is a State that has not learned of the existence of a serious risk that genocide is being committed in Gaza. What have those States that are in a position to prevent genocide done to fulfil their duty under the Convention? We regard the obstruction of humanitarian aid by the Israeli occupying regime as, among others, evidence of genocidal intent and call upon all Member States to stop this, consistent with the duty of prevention of genocide under the Convention as reaffirmed by the ICJ in its ruling of 26th February, 2007.

In conclusion, Mr. President, we hope that the continued deliberation on this agenda item by the AALCO Member States, aligned with performing their obligations, would contribute to the realisation of the rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination. I thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran. Now I yield the floor to Mauritius.

The Delegate of the Republic of Mauritius: Thank you, Mr. President. The Republic of Mauritius reiterates its deep concern over the ongoing conflict in Gaza and the resulting dire humanitarian situation, which continues to deprive Palestinians of basic human needs. The right to life and the dignity of the Palestinian people must be restored, Mr. President.

Mauritius views with serious concern the Israeli plan to fully occupy the Gaza Strip. This will further weaken the already precarious humanitarian condition of the Palestinian people and seriously jeopardise any prospect of the Two-State solution. Mauritius, Mr. President, condemns all acts of violence and the killing of innocent civilians, particularly women and

children. We also call on all parties involved to cease all hostilities immediately and agree on a permanent ceasefire without any further delay, with a view to creating the necessary conditions for dialogue.

Mr. President, Mauritius will continue to advocate for the urgent need for an early resumption of meaningful negotiations aimed at achieving a fair, equitable, lasting and peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian situation in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions. We reaffirm our steadfast support for the Two-State solution as the only viable path towards sustainable peace and security in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Mr. President, the establishment of an independent, sovereign Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel remains central to the realisation of stability and prosperity in the region. Mauritius will continue to engage in all initiatives at the level of the United Nations aimed at fostering peace and ensuring full respect for international law, including international humanitarian law. To conclude, Mr. President, we propose that AALCO can support the Palestinian people in the International Law Committee at the United Nations in New York. We also propose that AALCO submit reports to the United Nations on what is happening to the Palestinian people. I thank you for your kind attention, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, distinguished delegate from the Republic of Mauritius. I now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Uganda.

The Delegate of the Republic of Uganda: Mr. President, distinguished delegates, the Republic of Uganda is honoured to address this esteemed gathering of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization on the critical issue of the legal implications of the Palestine-Israel conflict. We express deep concern regarding the protracted conflict between the State of Israel and Palestine, which has escalated into recurrent cycles of violence with devastating loss of lives and humanitarian consequences, especially following the 7th October 2023 attack on Israel by Hamas and the subsequent counter-attack by Israel on Gaza since then until now. Uganda reiterates its commitment to peace, sovereignty, right to self-determination, the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law as the foundation for resolving disputes between nations.

Mr. President, Uganda firmly believes that a Two-State solution with the State of Israel and an independent State of Palestine living side-by-side in peace and security based on the pre-1967 borders is the only durable way of resolving this long-standing conflict. His Excellency President Yoweri Museveni has repeatedly advised that negotiations for a long-lasting solution should aim for a viable Palestinian State and a State of Israel based on the 1967 borders with mutually agreed land swaps. This solution must be pursued through dialogue, negotiation and respect for international law.

Indeed, the UN Security Council Resolutions 242 of 1967, 2334 of 2016 and UN General Assembly Resolution 79/81 of 2024 have consistently advocated for a Two-State solution. The Palestine-Israel conflict raises profound legal questions that demand the attention of the international community, particularly within the framework of international law, including the United Nations Charter, the Geneva Conventions and relevant UN resolutions.

Distinguished delegates, the background to this matter is well-known and I will not belabour the same. Uganda wishes to highlight the following key legal implications. The Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination as enshrined in Article 1 of the UN Charter and reaffirmed in numerous UN General Assembly and Security Council Resolutions remain central to resolving the conflict.

The continued occupation of Palestinian territories contravenes this fundamental principle and undermines the prospects for a sovereign Palestinian State. The ongoing conflict has resulted in significant violations of international humanitarian law, including the disproportionate use of force, targeting of civilian infrastructure and restrictions on the movements of peoples and goods. Uganda calls for strict adherence to the Geneva Conventions, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, which mandates the protection of civilians in times of conflict and occupation.

This obligation is not limited to stopping ongoing violations but includes an obligation to prevent violations when there is a foreseeable risk that they will be committed and to prevent further violations in case they have already occurred. The expansion of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories violates Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and UN Security Council Resolution 2334 of 2016, which declares such settlements as having no legal validity. These actions obstruct the path to peace and undermine the territorial integrity of a future Palestinian State.

Mr. President, needless to say, is that the conflict has led to widespread human rights abuses, including arbitrary detentions, restrictions on freedom of movement, and violations of the right to life and security. Uganda urges all parties to uphold their obligations under international human rights law, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. As a Member of AALCO and the Nonaligned Movement, Uganda underscores the importance of solidarity among African and Asian nations in advocating for the rights of the Palestinian people while promoting a balanced approach with a view to attaining peace, security, dignity, and prosperity of all parties involved. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Uganda. I now yield the floor to the Kingdom of Thailand. Kingdom of Thailand, you have the floor.

The Delegate of the Kingdom of Thailand: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. Secretary-General, Excellency, distinguished delegates, Thailand reaffirms its support for the peace process in the Middle East and urges all parties concerned to exert their utmost efforts in seeking a just, comprehensive, and sustainable solution.

We call on all sides to demonstrate general commitment and actively foster an environment conducive to dialogue and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Respect for human rights and the dignity and well-being of these persons must be upheld at all times. Thailand also supports the peaceful negotiation between Israel and Palestine, aimed at achieving a lasting resolution through peaceful means, based on the internationally recognised Two-State solution.

In this regard, we urge all parties to respect relevant international laws and instruments, and to refrain from any acts of provocation or violence that may undermine ongoing efforts to revive the peace process in the region. Thailand, as a responsible member of the international community, is firmly committed to peace, international law, and universally recognised principles. Thailand strongly believes that armed conflicts must be resolved through good-faith negotiations and a general commitment to ceasefire.

Thailand's own experience in Southeast Asia, particularly in managing neighbouring conflicts through dialogue and ASEAN mechanisms, has strengthened our conviction that lasting peace is to be achieved not on the battlefield, but at the negotiation table. Thailand stands ready to contribute constructively to international efforts in promoting peace, stability, and humanitarian principles in the Middle East. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from Thailand, Kingdom of Thailand. Now I will yield the floor to Japan.

The Delegate of Japan: Mr. President, a grave humanitarian crisis marked by hunger and malnutrition continues to affect the people of Gaza. Under these circumstances, we are seriously concerned that the decision by Israel on its plan to take control of Gaza City will further exacerbate the already dire humanitarian situation in Gaza. The Japanese Government has been calling on Israel to take substantive measures to end the serious humanitarian crisis, including starvation, and reiterating our strong demand for its full compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law. I would like to shed light on the fact that ICJ's Advisory Opinion in July 2024 has clearly confirmed the principles of the prohibition of territorial acquisition resulting from the threat or use of force as a corollary of the prohibition of the threat or use of force.

As Japan stated during the Advisory Opinion procedure on this case, the Article 2, Paragraph 4 of the Charter of the United Nations is the foundation of the rule of law. In particular, the prohibition of the acquisition of territory resulting from the threat or use of force, reaffirmed in the Friendly Relations Declaration of 1970 and highlighted in the advisory opinion of the ICJ this time, provides a safeguard for the international community in seeking to uphold and strengthen the international community in the rule of law without stumbling into the world under the rule of force. I am confident that the Member States of AALCO share the same notion.

Mr. President, today the international community is witnessing attempts to unilaterally change the *status quo* by force in various forms. Japan believes that it could be considered as acquisition of territory by force, which is prohibited under the Article 2, Paragraph 4 of the UN Charter, to attempt to acquire territory through creating *fait accompli* by acquiring a strengthening control over territory through cohesion on the ground, such as sending regular or irregular forces to a territory which is within another State's internationally recognised border. On a territory under another State's peacefully established control, even if those acts do not cause death, injury or destruction.

Lastly, Japan has consistently supported the Two-State solution regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict. Acknowledging the Palestinian people's aspirations for the establishment of an independent State, Japan has long been supporting Palestinians as a major donor. Japan will continue its way to play a role towards the realisation of the Two-State solution through diplomatic efforts and the delivery of assistance.

The Government of Japan will continue to review comprehensively, including the appropriate timing and manner regarding the possible recognition of Palestine as a State from the perspective of promoting the progress in the peace process, and will make necessary decisions. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from Japan. I now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Arab Republic of Egypt.

The Delegate of the Arab Republic of Egypt:² Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Ministers, and Heads of Delegations, ladies and gentlemen, today, we address one of the oldest international issues of our modern era, dating back to the early twentieth century. For over ninety years, the Palestinian cause and the Israeli occupation, with its ongoing transgressions,

² Statement was delivered in Arabic. This is an unofficial translation done by the Secretariat.

have remained on the agendas of international and regional organizations. Yet, they pass with little more than fleeting attention, without a genuine commitment from the international community to hold the Israeli occupation accountable or to uphold the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the reclamation of their occupied territories.

Mr. President, yesterday, we witnessed yet another chapter in the audacity of the Israeli occupation and its reckless actions in the Middle East. We observed a blatant assault on the sovereignty of our sisterly nation, the State of Qatar.

The Arab Republic of Egypt expresses its vehement condemnation and profound disapproval of the aggressive act perpetrated by Israeli occupation forces yesterday against the State of Qatar, targeting a meeting of Palestinian leaders in the Qatari capital, Doha, that was negotiating a ceasefire. This act constitutes a flagrant violation of the principles and provisions of international law, as well as the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

Egypt asserts that this assault represents a dangerous precedent and an unacceptable escalation, directly undermining Qatar's sovereignty—a nation that plays a pivotal role in mediating efforts to achieve a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. This escalation jeopardizes international endeavors for de-escalation, threatens regional security and stability, and erodes respect for the principles and provisions of international law.

Egypt declares its full solidarity with the State of Qatar, its leadership, and its people. We call upon the international community to uphold its legal and moral responsibilities in response to this egregious violation by the Israeli occupation. Immediate action is needed to halt the recurring aggressions against the sovereignty of Middle Eastern states, hold those responsible accountable, and put a clear and definitive end to the Israeli occupation's impunity.

Honourable Heads of Delegations, Egypt reaffirms that the Palestinian cause is grounded in well-established principles of international law, which form the governing legal framework for this conflict. These include the United Nations Charter, international treaties, and various UN resolutions. Egypt emphasizes the importance of respecting the principle that the acquisition of territory by force is illegitimate. Consequently, no Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories can be legitimized by any measures taken by the occupying authority. This was affirmed by the International Court of Justice in its Advisory Opinion last year regarding the consequences of the Israeli occupation's systematic policies and practices within Palestinian territories.

We underscore in this forum that the Palestinian people's right to self-determination is inalienable, a fundamental right enshrined in the UN Charter, the International Covenants on Human Rights, and UN Resolutions. This includes the establishment of an independent Palestinian State on its full-occupied territories, with Jerusalem as its capital.

The systematic practices of the Israeli occupation against the Palestinian people for over six decades—most recently the policies of displacement, starvation, collective punishment, and siege used as weapons of war against Palestinians in Gaza—are considered ethnic cleansing and war crimes under international law and international humanitarian law. These actions violate several provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, notably Article 49.

While we discuss strengthening the role of international law and the Organization in supporting Member States' policies and legislation to combat climate change and achieve sustainable development, the State of Palestine is prevented by the Israeli occupation from all forms of development and the utilization of its natural resources. This entrenches economic and political

dependency on the occupation, in violation of the Palestinian people's right to development and the Fourth Geneva Convention's stipulations regarding the occupying authority's responsibilities to protect and provide the fundamental rights of the population in occupied territories.

From this standpoint, Egypt urges the Organization's members to take effective steps and tangible measures beyond mere condemnation and denunciation, to demonstrate solidarity with the State of Palestine and its people, and to end the historic injustice inflicted upon them. Egypt reminds this assembly that this Organization was established in the mid-twentieth century fundamentally to support liberation efforts from occupation and colonialism and to coordinate Member States' positions on international legal issues.

Respect for international law is not merely a moral or humanitarian choice but a legal obligation to ensure international peace and security. Egypt warns today that normalizing grave violations of international law and international humanitarian law will have repercussions not limited to a single region but will affect all members of the international community. Turning a blind eye to the crimes of the Israeli occupation and allowing them to pass without accountability sets a precedent that others may rely upon in future conflicts. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Arab Republic of Egypt, I now yield the floor to India.

The Delegate of the Republic of India: Thank you, Mr. President. We thank the AALCO Secretariat for its comprehensive introduction to this important agenda item. India remains deeply concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza. It is imperative that humanitarian assistance reaches affected populations in a safe, sustained and unhindered manner in accordance with international humanitarian law. India has consistently extended developmental assistance to improving the lives of Palestinian people and would continue to do so.

Mr. President, we note that there are ongoing discussions around the need for a ceasefire and the release of hostages. While progress on this issue remains elusive, India reiterates its unequivocal condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including hostage-taking, which we believe is incompatible with the principles of international law and human rights. India supports the Palestinian cause and this is rooted in our principled commitment to international law and multilateral consensus.

We were among the first countries to recognise the State of Palestine in 1988 and have consistently supported Palestine's full membership in the United Nations. Our position is anchored in the belief that a just, lasting and comprehensive resolution of the Palestinian question must be based on a negotiated Two-Nation solution consistent with relevant UN resolutions and international legal norms. This includes the establishment of a sovereign, independent and viable State of Palestine, living side-by-side in peace and security with Israel within secure and mutually recognised borders.

We underscore the importance of upholding international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law in the situation of armed conflict. Mr. President, India believes that dialogue and diplomacy remain the only viable path forward. We call upon all the parties to respect international legal obligations and to engage constructively in efforts aimed at achieving durable peace. I thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of India. I now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Türkiye.

The Delegate of the Republic of Türkiye: Thank you Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, the humanitarian situation remains catastrophic in Gaza and calls for urgent intervention. The tragic scenes at US-based Gaza Humanitarian Foundation's aid distribution stations where Palestinians in need are targeted by Israeli forces demonstrate that the current mechanism has failed to uphold basic human dignity.

Humanitarian aid distribution should be handed over to UN agencies and local/international NGO's. At the same time, Israeli Government approved the plan for full occupation of Gaza. They just announced its initial stage is implemented. It will only worsen the current situation on the ground. We firmly support ongoing negotiations for a permanent ceasefire, exchange of hostages and detainees, and unhindered humanitarian access to Gaza. The Israeli politicians call for displacement of Palestinians to third countries and annexation of the West Bank. Ongoing violations in the West Bank, including recent decision to expand illegal settlements in the E1 area, stormings in Al Aqsa Mosque by extremist Israeli Ministers cannot be acceptable. These actions are only fuelling the tension.

Israeli aggression and expansionism have spilled over into Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Iran and lately as of yesterday into Qatar, and have become the foremost threat to regional security and stability in the Middle East. Israel needs to make peace with its neighbours. Israel's peaceful coexistence with its neighbours will not be achieved by weakening them. We need to raise our voice against Israel's crimes. We actively participate in, and at times lead, initiatives such as the OIC-Arab League Contact Group and the Global Alliance for the Two-State Solution.

We have implemented a range of diplomatic, legal, and economic measures against Israel. We are the only country that has completely halted trade with Israel, which was worth 9 billion Dollars. We initiated an effort at the UN, with a letter signed by 52 countries and two international organizations, to halt transfer of arms and ammunition to Israel. We do not permit transit and transportation of weapons and ammunition to Israel through our borders.

On 7th August 2024, we submitted our declaration of intervention before the ICJ in the *South Africa v. Israel case*. We also submitted written and oral statements to the International Court of Justice, underlining the illegality of Israel's occupation of Palestinian Territory (OPT) and violation of its international obligations against the United Nations, international organizations and third states in the OPT.

Türkiye is also one of the top two providers of humanitarian aid to Gaza. To date, we have delivered more than 100,000 tons of humanitarian aid through our disaster response and coordination agency AFAD and the Turkish Red Crescent. In the coming days, we will conduct a humanitarian aid airdrop to Gaza via Jordan. Türkiye will continue to support Palestine and remains open to cooperation with our counterparts.

It would be a crucial step a total of more than 10 countries to announce their recognition of Palestine at the UN General Assembly. During this period when the Israeli government increases its efforts to undermine the state of Palestine, steps to support Palestine are even more important. Türkiye remains firmly committed to the Two-State solution which is the only viable path toward a lasting peace.

To that end, we believe it is high time for the realization of a sovereign, independent and contiguous Palestinian State based on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. President, Türkiye, being aware of AALCO's long standing engagement with the topic regarding Palestine since its first introduction on the agenda of the Organization in 1988, appreciates the commitment of AALCO to this issue. As we have already expressed at the Sixty-Second Annual Session, Türkiye has been closely following the case filed by the Republic of South Africa against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) regarding the violation of Israel's obligations under the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Genocide Case). We sincerely hope that the Court will render its decision in the right direction under international law. So far, 13 States including Türkiye, have submitted their Declaration of Intervention to the Genocide Case. We would like to see more Member States of AALCO would seize this opportunity to file declarations of intervention.

As noted in the report, 18 Member States submitted written contributions to the Advisory Opinion delivered on 19 July 2024, whereas 15 Member States have contributed to the Advisory Opinion proceedings still ongoing before the Court during the written phase. As Member States, including Türkiye, have also contributed to the proceedings at the oral part, we would encourage the Secretariat to reflect also the number of participating Member States in the report. Thank you all.

President: Thank you very much, distinguished delegate from the Republic of Türkiye. I now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Republic of South Africa.

The Delegate of the Republic of South Africa: Thank you, Mr. President, distinguished delegates. South Africa appreciates the Secretariat's effort for continued attention to the question of Palestine, which remains one of the most urgent legal and moral tests for the world during our times. In this regard, we would like to join the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, in condemning the Israel-Qatar strike as a violation of Qatar's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The plight of the Palestinian people is no longer only a question of occupation, it is a question of survival in the face of Israeli conduct that amounts to genocide.

The deliberate destruction of Gaza, the widespread killing of civilians, the targeted bombardment of hospitals, schools and homes, and the intentional use of starvation as a method of warfare demonstrate a pattern of conduct calculated to destroy the Palestinian population, in whole or in part. The International Court of Justice, in its Advisory Opinion of July 2024, and its legally binding provision measures in the case of *South Africa versus Israel*, has found that Israel's continued presence in the occupied Palestinian territory is unlawful and that the Palestinian people face a real and imminent risk of irreparable prejudice under the Genocide Convention. Despite these clear rulings, Israel continues its campaign of destruction with full impunity, shielded in action by the majority of States and in the selective application of international law as it concerns Israel's actions.

The reports of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur, and the Independent International Commission of Enquiry have exposed systematic atrocities, forced displacement of over 90% of Gaza's population, deliberate starvation of civilians, destruction of essential infrastructure, arbitrary detention, gender-based violence, and targeted attacks on humanitarian workers and journalists. These acts, Mr. President and distinguished delegates, are unconscionable and strike at the core of the international legal order. South Africa is equally alarmed by the situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

The Palestinians face daily raids, mass arrests, settler violence, and the expansion of illegal settlements. The ICJ has confirmed that Israel's policies amount to annexation and apartheid. The pattern is clear. Israel's stated and ultimate objective is to make Palestinian life so unsustainable that Palestinians are either displaced permanently or reduced to fragmented enclaves without sovereignty. This is not a situation that States can accept. South Africa stresses that all States have a clear obligation under international law, including those reaffirmed in General Assembly and Human Rights Council resolutions, as well as binding Security Council resolutions.

This obligation includes to bring the occupation to an immediate end. Countries, big and small, need to work together to find a lasting, peaceful solution to the situation in Gaza. The credibility of the international legal system rests on our collective willingness to enforce it without fear or favour.

The continued impunity granted to Israel undermines the very foundation of the UN Charter and international law. It is imperative that our core Member States lead in implementing the resolutions of the General Assembly and Human Rights Council, taking national measures to halt trade and cooperation that sustain the unlawful Israel occupation of the State of Palestine.

Mr. President, accountability must also be extended to individuals who perpetrate international crimes. The International Criminal Court has an indispensable role in prosecuting individuals responsible for atrocity crimes, including genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Where these mechanisms are blocked or ignored, States must exercise universal jurisdiction to ensure that perpetrators of these atrocity crimes are held accountable under the national law. The Palestinian people have a right to their right to self-determination and the full recognition of the independent, sovereign, contiguous State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

AALCO and all States have a duty not only to condemn but to act decisively to end this prolonged atrocity and restore justice and human dignity to the people of Palestine. I thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of South Africa. I now yield the floor to Malaysia.

The Delegate of Malaysia: Mr. President, let me begin by expressing our condemnation towards the Israeli strike on Qatar. This assault demonstrates Israel's contempt for peace and diplomacy.

I would like to begin by extending our profound appreciation to the distinguished AALCO Secretariat for presenting a report on this issue of utmost global significance. Malaysia recognises and values the critical efforts undertaken by the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories under occupation since 1967. We further note the findings presented in the two reports of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights submitted to the Human Rights Council Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

First, on the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the obligation to ensure accountability and justice and second, on Israeli settlement in the occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and in the occupied Syrian Golan. Malaysia also records its appreciation to the efforts undertaken by the Independent International Commission of Enquiry on the occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and Israel, and notes its findings on the subject of Israel's systematic use of sexual, reproductive and other forms of gender-based violence and attacks on

educational facilities and religious and cultural sites in the occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel.

Mr. President, the principles of rule of law and accountability and respect for international law are crucial for the achievement of peace, just and equitable outcomes in this long-standing conflict. Thus, any efforts taken in this endeavour must be anchored on and guided by international law, the UN Charter and relevant UN resolutions, as well as rulings and opinions of the ICJ. The international community must take all necessary steps to end Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands, which has been deemed illegal by the ICJ Advisory Opinion of 2024.

It is with this belief that Malaysia recently, along with a number of States, including among AALCO Members, participated in the written and oral proceedings on the request for an advisory opinion of the ICJ on the obligations of Israel in relation to the presence and activities of the United Nations, other international organisations and third States. Malaysia views that States' participation at the ICJ proceedings is pivotal in demonstrating common understanding of the laws and their application in the context of the Israel-Palestine issue, in an endeavour to compel respect and full adherence of Israel to the rule of law and the principles of international humanitarian law and human rights, particularly those enshrined in the Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Further, Malaysia believes that AALCO can be a good platform to galvanise coordinated efforts to realise the inalienable right to self-determination of the Palestinian people.

This can be realised through a fully sovereign State of Palestine, based on pre-1697 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. Malaysia commends countries that have made the decision to recognise the State of Palestine and urge others that have not to do so urgently.

Mr. President, the role of organisations providing humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians are vital to the survival of the Palestinian people. Any attempt to discredit and intimidate such organisations should not be supported. Israel must be pressured to fully cooperate with these organisations, particularly the UN-led mechanisms such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). By allowing unimpeded access for humanitarian missions, UNRWA's role as the principal agency that provides essential services to Palestinian refugees remains irreplaceable and thus must continue to receive support from all States. In support of UNRWA's role, Malaysia has pledged additional funds to UNRWA, supplementing our annual contributions.

In conclusion, Malaysia remains steadfast in its commitment to the Palestinian cause and will persist in its efforts towards the establishment of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Malaysia welcomes any cooperative measures that AALCO's Member State and the international community may take to find ways and means to end atrocities in Palestine. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from Malaysia. I now yield the floor to the Republic of the Sudan.

The Delegate of the Republic of the Sudan:³ *Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim*. On behalf of the Government of Sudan, we firmly condemn the brutal aggression perpetrated by the Zionist entity against the State of Qatar, in continuing to violate the sovereignty of the country, its

³ The Statement was delivered in Arabic. The Secretariat acknowledges with gratitude the official translation provided by the Delegation of the Republic of the Sudan.

persistent violations of international law, and its repeated act of aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Yemen violating the UN Charter and international law.

Mr. President, I wish to express our appreciation to the Secretariat for the valuable insights it has provided on the Palestinian issue. We also commend the vital role played by our Organization on the Palestinian issue. It is noteworthy that this issue continues to appear on the agenda of its sessions for the thirty-ninth time, a testament to our Organization's unwavering commitment to upholding the rule of law, and reinforcing the principles of international law and international humanitarian law.

Mr. President, the Palestinian issue remains a matter of profound concern for the Government of the Sudan, due to the suffering of the Palestinian people resulting from the grave and systematic violations of the international law and international humanitarian law by the Israeli entity. We are deeply saddened by the ongoing siege, the deliberate starvation, the systematic killing of civilians, the forced displacement, the destruction of buildings and civilian homes, including hospital. These acts constitute crimes of war and crimes against humanity. These are criminal acts under all international conventions related to international law, international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Convention and its protocols, which are related to the protection of civilians.

In Gaza, we are witnessing a systematic destruction of civilian infrastructures, and the forced displacement of civilians, compelling them to leave their homes or face the destruction of those homes on their heads within a short period of time. This represents a deliberate and systematic policy aimed at to evacuate Gaza from its people. This is a mockery of the human conscience and all the recognised cultural values.

The Palestinian people have the right to self-determination. The establishment of a Palestinian State, based on 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as their capital, is a legitimate right of the Palestinian people

Mr. President, the inability of the international community to protect the Palestinian people constitutes a stain on our humanity. Therefore, from this platform, we call upon our esteemed Organisation to condemn the crimes committed by the Israeli entity and its ongoing violations of international law and humanitarian law, and to ensure unhindered access to humanitarian aid, as well as to support the Two-States solution through the establishment of a Palestinian State based on 1967 border, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. President, the actions of the Israeli entity represent a flagrant violation of the principles of international law and humanitarian law. They stand in direct opposition to the morals of the international community and to values upheld by our esteemed Organization.

What the Israeli entity is doing is a violation of all the principles of international law and the UN Charter, and the resolutions of the UN, as well as all norms of human decency. Therefore, we once again call upon our esteemed Organisation to denounce these crimes committed by the Israeli entity and to reaffirm its support for the Two-States solution, ensuring establishment of a Palestinian State based on 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very the distinguished delegate from the Republic of the Sudan. I now yield the floor to the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Delegate of the Syrian Arab Republic:⁴ In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Ladies and gentlemen, Your Excellencies, Peace be upon you, and the mercy and blessings of God. The Palestinian cause has always been, and remains, at the heart of our concerns, not merely for its political significance, but because it stands as a true test of the efficacy and credibility of international law.

In recent months, we have all witnessed an unprecedented escalation of Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip, resulting in thousands of civilian casualties, widespread destruction of essential infrastructure, and systematic forced displacement affecting hundreds of thousands of Gazans. These individuals have been compelled to abandon their homes and neighbourhoods under relentless bombardment and suffocating siege.

Reports from the United Nations and the International Court of Justice indicate that these policies constitute flagrant violations of the 4th Geneva Conventions, particularly those safeguarding civilians during armed conflicts and prohibiting the forced transfer of populations from their lands. This forced displacement is not only a humanitarian catastrophe but also a direct assault on the Palestinian people's national identity and their inalienable right to return to their homes, as enshrined in United Nations General Assembly resolutions.

Israeli aggression extends further to the occupied Syrian Golan, where Israel persists in imposing illegal settlement activities and altering the region's demographic composition, in clear violation of international resolutions, notably Resolutions 242 and 497, which affirm the nullity of all Israeli measures aimed at changing the legal status of the Golan.

In another alarming development, recent months have seen an escalation of Israeli attacks on Syrian territory, targeting civilian and military infrastructure as well as residential areas. These actions blatantly violate the United Nations Charter, the principles of respect for State sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the 1974 Disengagement Agreement. Moreover, Israel seeks to undermine Syria's unity by supporting separatist movements and outlawed groups involved in violations and drug trafficking.

Ladies and gentlemen, these rapidly unfolding developments place international law under severe scrutiny, as its foundational principles face an unprecedented challenge. The continuation of indiscriminate bombings, forced displacement, sieges, and the denial of humanitarian aid to civilians threatens the credibility of the international legal system and entrenches a culture of impunity. From this standpoint, we assert that addressing these violations requires a collective legal response based on the following pillars:

1. Strengthening the role of the International Court of Justice by endorsing its recent Advisory Opinions on the illegality of the Israeli occupation, recognizing them as a legal reference for the international community.
2. Activating international accountability mechanisms to investigate grave violations against civilians in Gaza and Syrian territories.
3. Forced displacement is addressed by international humanitarian law and UN Resolutions, which provide support for displaced people to return to their homes.

⁴ Statement was delivered in Arabic. This is an unofficial translation done by the Secretariat.

4. Unifying the legal positions of member states to reject attempts to alter the legal and demographic status of occupied territories.

5. Strengthening the role of international humanitarian organizations to secure the urgent delivery of aid and ensure that humanitarian relief efforts in Gaza and Syria are not obstructed.

Ladies and gentlemen, the events unfolding in Gaza, the Golan, and the aggression against Syrian territory pose a genuine threat to regional and international peace and security. The failure of the international community to halt these violations places the principles of international law at grave risk, endangering the entire framework of global justice.

We firmly believe that respect for international law and accountability for its violators is not optional but an essential prerequisite for ensuring security, stability, and the protection of peoples' rights. Thus, we call upon all Member States to unite their legal, humanitarian, and political efforts to work collectively toward ending the occupation, halting aggression, and alleviating the suffering of civilians.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our commitment to the principles of international law and support efforts aimed at ending the occupation, protecting the Palestinian people, and safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic. Peace, mercy and blessings of God be upon you.

President: Thank you very much. Now I yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

The Delegate of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam: Mr. President, Excellencies, the Palestinian question remains one of the most enduring and urgent challenges on the international agenda. Despite sustained diplomatic efforts, despite rulings of the International Court of Justice, and despite many UN resolutions, the Two-State solution has yet to be realized, and today seems even further from reach.

Viet Nam maintains a consistent policy of endorsing a Two-State solution based on pre-1967 borders and international law, ensuring a sovereign, viable State of Palestine coexisting peacefully and securely with Israel, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

We strongly call upon all parties involved to adhere to the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, particularly Resolution 2573, which safeguards objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, and Resolution 2286, which strictly prohibits attacks against hospitals, medical facilities, and personnel in conflict situations. The implementation of these resolutions is crucial for mitigating the humanitarian impact of the conflict and protecting the lives of innocent civilians.

With a strong belief that peace will prevail and reconciliation is possible, we urge all parties to return to genuine negotiations, in accordance with international law, the UN Charter, and relevant UN resolutions. This will address the root causes of the conflict and pave the way for a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace for the people of Palestine, the people of Israel, for the region, and the world. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, distinguished delegate. I will now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the People's Republic of China.

The Delegate of the People's Republic of China: Thank you, Mr. President. China appreciates the Secretariat for the preparation of the report on this agenda item, and supports the AALCO in continuing deliberation on the topic.

The new round of Palestinian-Israeli conflict has lasted for nearly two years, resulting in the death of more than 60,000 civilians in Gaza, and yet the suffering continues. The humanitarian situation has been deteriorating. At the same time, humanitarian and media personnel have continued to be targeted. According to the United Nations, more than 500 humanitarian personnel and 200 journalists have been killed in this round of the conflict. Certain countries have even proposed plans to “clean out” or “take over” Gaza, blatantly trampling on regional peace and human dignity. China calls for an immediate and lasting ceasefire to alleviate humanitarian crisis. Two million innocent civilians in Gaza should no longer be victims of the war, nor should they be tortured by man-made disasters.

Meanwhile, the international community widely expects the International Court of Justice to play its due role in maintaining international peace and security, safeguarding the authority of international law. In recent years, a number of cases concerning the Palestinian question have been submitted to the Court. In July last year, the ICJ issued the milestone Advisory Opinion on the case of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which makes it clear that Israel's continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is a violation of international law, and that Israel is under the obligation to bring an end to its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible. During the written and oral proceedings of the case, China comprehensively elaborated its legal positions regarding the law on the use of force, international humanitarian law, international human rights law and the law of State responsibility. These positions have been fully reflected in the advisory opinion.

In December 2024, against the backdrop of the continuously severe humanitarian situation in Gaza, the UN General Assembly once again adopted the resolution requesting for an advisory opinion of the ICJ on Israel's obligations in relation to the presence and activities, including humanitarian and development assistance, of third parties. The ICJ prioritized the case as a matter of utmost urgency. China submitted its written statement on time and made an oral statement before the court, comprehensively and objectively elaborating that Israel bears the primary responsibility for meeting the basic survival needs of the Palestinian people in the occupied territory, and has the obligation to agree to, allow and facilitate humanitarian assistance by third parties. We hope that the Court will issue the advisory opinion as soon as possible, taking into account the level of urgency of the current humanitarian crisis in Palestine.

Mr. President, China actively participated in the written and oral proceedings of the two advisory cases, aiming to safeguard international fairness and justice and human conscience, support Palestinian people in restoring their legitimate national rights, and play a constructive role in the solution of the Palestinian question. China firmly believes that the implementation of the “Two-State solution” is the only viable way to resolve the Palestinian question and achieve peaceful co-existence between Palestine and Israel, and resolutely opposes any unilateral actions that undermine the foundation of the “Two-State solution”. China urges Israel to comply with international law, fulfil its humanitarian obligations as the occupying power, refrain from impeding third-party humanitarian assistance, and respect, protect and fulfil the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Palestinian people.

China will continue to work with the international community, guided by the ICJ Advisory Opinion, to promote the cessation of the conflicts in Gaza, the alleviation of the humanitarian crisis, and advance the implementation of the “Two-State solution”, so as to ultimately achieve

a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, distinguished delegate from the Republic of China. I now yield the floor to the Republic of Korea.

The Delegate of the Republic of Korea: Thank you, Mr. President. We would like to begin by expressing our grave concern of the dire humanitarian situation in Palestine.

The armed conflict between Israel and Hamas continues, claiming many lives and causing numerous civilian casualties. We are dismayed by the recent IPC report confirming the famine already happening in Gaza. The urgent need to protect innocent civilians as well as to ensure the unimpeded flow of humanitarian assistance is paramount.

In this regard, we urge all parties to exercise restraint, ensure an immediate ceasefire and the release of all hostages, and fulfil their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law. Recognising the need for a comprehensive and peaceful resolution and taking note of the ICJ's Advisory Opinion on the legality of Israel's policies and practises in the occupied Palestinian territories, we call upon all parties to resume constructive dialogue and to refrain from any actions that could further escalate the conflict or undermine the prospect for a permanent peace settlement based on the Two-State solution. The extension of military operations will only exacerbate the humanitarian crisis in the region.

On a related note, I would like to mention that the Korean Government expressed today that the attack by Israel, which happened yesterday in Doha, is an unacceptable act infringing on the territorial sovereignty of the State of Qatar. We hope that through our collective efforts and adherence to the rule of law, we can pave the way for a future of stability and coexistence in the region. Thank you very much.

President: Thank you very much, our distinguished delegate from the Republic of Korea. I now invite the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Djibouti to make their statement.

The Delegate of the Republic of Djibouti: Thank you Mr. President, the Republic of Djibouti follows with deep concern and sorrow the suffering endured by our brothers and sisters in Palestine, both in the West Bank and in the besieged Gaza Strip, and wishes to express its full solidarity and resolute support for the full recognition and realisation of the rights of the Palestinian people. Djibouti strongly condemns the ongoing violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in the occupied Palestinian territories. Israel's egregious actions, including assassinations, famine, torture, intentional inflexion of conditions of life calculated to bring about the destruction of the Palestinian people, constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity, trampling on all international norms and laws, defying fundamental human rights and universal conscience.

The grave and escalating violations of international law against the Palestinian people are a direct result of the prolonged illegal occupation of Palestinian territory and the imposition of an apartheid regime, as evidenced by the ICJ 2024 advisory opinion on the legal consequences arising from Israel's prolonged occupation, settlement policies and discriminatory practises in which we took part in. Israel's decision to ethnically cleanse and expand their occupation of the Gaza Strip is null and void, devoid of any legitimacy, and constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and relevant UN resolutions. Djibouti reiterates the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and support for the establishment of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as capital.

Djibouti has, in November 2023, in accordance with the Rome Statute, referred alongside Bangladesh, Bolivia, Comoros and South Africa the situation of the State of Palestine to the ICC prosecutor to bring all responsible people to justice, starting with Israeli leadership. As genocide unfolds before our very eyes, we must continue to stand to safeguard international law and our humanity. Djibouti calls on all our co-member States to ensure the full implementation of their international legal obligations and translate their statements of condemnation into concrete, collective and coordinated political and legal actions to secure justice for the Palestinian people. I thank you.

President: Thank you very much, our distinguished delegate from the Republic of Djibouti. I now invite the distinguished delegate from the Kingdom of Bahrain to make their statement.

The Delegate of the Kingdom of Bahrain:⁵ Your Excellency the President, Excellences and Heads of delegations. The Kingdom of Bahrain would like at the beginning of its statement to confirm its fixed adherence to the principles and provisions of public international law and the Charter of the United Nations, foremost of which is respecting the sovereignty of States, and the inadmissibility of seizing the lands of others by force, protecting human rights and preserving the dignity of peoples, according to what was settled by the rules of international legitimacy and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The grave and systematic violations witnessed by the occupied Palestinian territories, in the forefront of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, represents a clear violation of the obligations of the existing power of power, a blatant challenge to the international legal system, and a direct threat to international peace and security, in an explicit violation of the principles of the inadmissibility of annexation or settlement, and the duty to protect civilians under occupation.

The Kingdom of Bahrain renews its strong condemnation of these violations, stressing the right of the Palestinian people in determining their fate, and establishing an independent State on the borders of 4th June, 1967 with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with international legitimacy resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Bahrain also emphasizes the importance of the international community for its legal and moral responsibilities to put an end to these violations, and to ensure respect for international law, including facing illegal practices of settlement, forced displacement, siege, and excessive use of force against innocent civilians.

As Bahrain calls on the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization to continue to discuss this important item, it considers that strengthening the collective positions of the countries of the Organization towards these violations would devote respect for international law, and enhance the Organization's position as an active platform for legal and diplomatic consultation between Asia and Africa.

Your Excellency Mr. President, the Kingdom of Bahrain, as it renews its initial commitment to standing by the brotherly Palestinian people, to confirm at the same time that commitment to the principles of international law and international legitimacy, and the activation of its mechanisms, represents the best way to achieve justice, preserving international peace and security, and ensuring the legitimate rights of all peoples. Thank you.

⁵ The delegate of the Kingdom of Bahrain did not make oral statement at the Plenary. A copy of the written statement was provided to the Secretariat for inclusion in the Verbatim Record.

President: So thank you very much, distinguished delegates and delegations. We have now completed the interventions from all the Member States. We have not had any interventions from observers and therefore we shall close this subject there. I think, like everyone has noted, this is one of the oldest subjects on our agenda and hopefully sometime in our lifetime it will get off our agenda.

Maybe in our lifetime it will get off our agenda and it will be a resolved matter someday. But we shall continue to advise and make our interventions on this subject as long as it remains on our agenda. Now, it is not yet break time so I think it is a good time for us to move along to the next item on our agenda which is the item on outer space, the legal issues in outer space.

The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

**XII. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOURTH
GENERAL MEETING (CONTINUED) OF THE
AALCO MEMBER STATES**

**XII. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOURTH GENERAL MEETING (CONTINUED)
OF THE AALCO MEMBER STATES HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER
2025, AT 04:45 PM**

Hon'ble Kiryowa Kiwanuka, the Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda and the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO in the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM: LEGAL ISSUES IN OUTER SPACE

President: Now, it is not yet break time, so I think it is a good time for us to move along to the next item on our agenda. Which is the item on Outer Space, the Legal Issues in Outer Space. I want to request the Deputy Secretary-General, Dr. Ali Hasankhani, to introduce the subject on Outer Space. Thank you.

Dr. Ali Hasankhani, Deputy Secretary-General of AALCO: Thank you. Excellency, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is my privilege to introduce the topic of Legal Issues in Outer Space. This subject places on AALCO's agenda at the Sixty-First Annual Session in Bali in 2023 at the proposal of the Republic of India. It reflects the growing importance of addressing the complex legal questions arising from the rapid expansion of outer space activities.

The existing legal framework grounded in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and related instruments provide a solid basis. Yet, the acceleration of pace of technological advancement, the growing involvement of private actors, and potential competition over celestial resources have revealed gaps and ambiguities. These developments raise urgent concerns over sustainability, militarisation, and equitable access which challenge the principle that outer space is the province of all humankind.

Excellency, I would like to recall that last year, AALCO organised a webinar on Space Law for Emerging Space Actors as a part of capacity-building efforts for Member States. That event provided a platform for experts and Member States to engage on the foundational aspects of Space Law while also highlighting the need for training, awareness, and shared expertise in this evolving domain. Building on that initiative, our deliberations today aim to deepen our collective engagement with outer space law. Our deliberations at this Session will focus primarily on the issue of orbital debris and recent developments identified as a topic of interest for all Member States by the Secretariat as follows.

First, the foundational international treaty and orbital debris liability with special reference to the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, the 1972 Liability Convention, and voluntary international frameworks for debris mitigations.

Second, contemporary deliberations and evolution of norm within the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, or COPUOS, including the recent work of the Legal Subcommittee on Debris Mitigation, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the Long-Term Sustainability (LTS), and the Outcome as a COPUOS Working Group on LTS.

Third, developments at the Sixty-Eight Session of COPUOS which shed further light on the evolving priorities and emerging consensus on orbital debris within international community.

The Secretariat outlined recent development and provided a framework for discussions. It is my hope that these deliberations will enable AALCO to contribute constructively to the progressive development of Space Law, ensuring that outer space remains safe, sustainable, and accessible for all. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much, Deputy Secretary-General. So now I am going to open the floor for deliberations on the Legal Issues in Outer Space. On my list of interventions, I have an intervention from Japan, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the Republic of Türkiye, Malaysia, and the Republic of South Africa.

So I will now open the floor and now invite the distinguished delegate from Japan to make their statement on this topic. Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegate of Japan: Thank you, Mr. President. Distinguished delegates, Japan acknowledges the importance of upholding the rule of law in outer space, a principle essential to ensure the safety, security, sustainability, and stability of outer space activities.

It is crucial that all States act in accordance with international law to ensure that the exploration and the utilisation of space is done in a safe and sustainable manner. Full compliance with existing legal frameworks, especially the Outer Space Treaty, is a duty that the international community shares. The formation of international norms and capacity-building, as well as upholding the rule of law in outer space, requires cooperation among the States. The role of COPUOS and UNOOSA is pivotal in this regard.

Space debris is a pressing issue that needs our immediate attention. The problem of space debris is serious and poses significant risks to our current and future space activities. Japan strongly encourages all States to carry out their space activities in a cooperative and sustainable manner to prevent the creation and dissemination of long-lived orbital debris. Specifically, the destruction of a satellite that generates a significant amount of space debris indiscriminately heightens the risk of a collision of in-orbit space objects. To ensure sustainable and stable uses of outer space, Japan announces in September 2022 its commitment to refrain from conducting destructive direct ascent anti-satellite missile testing.

Japan also welcomes the adoption of the UN General Assembly Resolution submitted by several countries, including Japan, in 2022, which calls upon all countries to abstain from such tests for the collective benefit of all. In addressing the problem of space debris, the immediate approach of non-legally binding instruments of the high value to turn the non-legally binding instruments into tangible, enforceable frameworks of national legislation is crucial.

Japan adheres to the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines and the Long-Term Sustainability Guidelines by incorporating them into Japanese national guidelines and space activities. Japan encourages all States to duly implement these two sets of guidelines, which are adopted in COPUOS.

Mr. President, Japan also acknowledges the importance of international cooperation, including capacity-building in space law and in ensuring the safety, security, sustainability, and stability of outer space. Japan is committed to this effort through capacity-building initiatives such as the Space Law for New Space Actors programmes, wherein Japan supports emerging space-faring nations in crafting their own space laws and policies.

For example, following the regional technical advisory mission hosted in Tokyo in January 2024, Japan and UNOOSA have held two technical advisory missions over the past two years, one in the Philippines in November last year with tremendous support from the Philippine Space Agency, PhilSA, and the other in Thailand in January of this year with support from the Geoinformatics and Space Technology Development Agency, GISTODA. In addition, the National Space Registration Initiative, NSRI, under the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum, continues to foster regional cooperation and enhance capacity since 2019, helping Asia-Pacific States draft and implement their national space registration and policies in line with international law. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from Japan. We now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Kenya.

The Delegate of the Republic of Kenya: Thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to make this statement. And on behalf of my delegation, I wish to make the following statement on this agenda item.

The exploration and use of outer space presents unparalleled opportunities for the advancement of all humanity, from climate monitoring and disaster management to telecommunications and navigation. Space technologies are critical for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. However, as the domain becomes more accessible, congested and contested, a robust and equitable international legal framework is essential to ensure it remains peaceful, secure and sustainable for future generations.

Mr. President, Kenya's interest in outer space is both historic and forward-looking. As the host nation to the Luigi Broglio Space Centre in Malindi, a cornerstone of international space cooperation for decades, and with our own nascent Kenya Space Agency, established in 2017, we have a direct and vested interest in the peaceful and lawful use of this domain. Our perspective is therefore that of both a facilitator of global space activities and an emerging actor in its own right.

The core international space law treaties, particularly the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, provide the indispensable foundation for all activities in outer space. Their principles, including that outer space is the province of all mankind, free for exploration and use by all States without discrimination and not subject to national appropriation, are non-negotiable. Our collective task is to ensure these principles are upheld and adapted to new challenges and not eroded.

Kenya notes that proliferation of space debris poses a critical threat to the long-term sustainability of space operations. Therefore, Kenya calls for the development of universally acceptable, accepted and legally binding instruments and the strengthening of existing guidelines to mandate debris mitigation. States and private operators must bear international responsibility and liability for the environmental cleanliness of outer space. The benefits of space must be shared equitably by all countries, not just the few with advanced space capabilities. Kenya emphasises the critical need for capacity-building, technology transfer and international cooperation to enable developing nations to participate fully in space science, technology and applications.

We support mechanisms that ensure equitable access to orbital slots, the radio frequency spectrum and the data derived from space-based assets, which are vital for our national development. The rapid increase in commercial space activities, including lunar resource

exploration, large satellite constellations and on-orbit servicing, presents novel legal questions that existing treaties do not fully address.

Kenya advocates for the progressive development of international law to regulate these activities before conflicts arise. This includes space resource utilisation, thus clarifying the legal status of resources extracted from celestial bodies in a manner that aligns with the Outer Space Treaty's principle of non-appropriation and promotes the common interest of all nations, traffic management, developing frameworks for space traffic coordination and management to prevent collisions and ensure safe and sustainable operations.

Kenya also believes AALCO has a crucial role to play in building a common Asian-African perspective on these issues. We must enhance our coordination with COPUOS, the primary multilateral forum for developing space law, by speaking with a united voice, our continents can ensure that the future governance of outer space reflects our interests and values and is not shaped solely by a handful of space-faring nations.

In conclusion, Mr. President, outer space is the common heritage of humanity. Its governance must be guided by the principles of multilateralism, equity and peace. Kenya stands ready to work with all AALCO Member States to strengthen the legal order for outer space, ensuring it remains a domain of cooperation and boundless opportunity for all our people. *Asante*.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from Kenya, for your intervention. I now yield the floor to the Republic of India.

The Delegate of the Republic of India: Mr. President, we thank the Secretariat and the Member States for continuing the discussion on the topic, Legal Issues in Outer Space. The primary objective of space activities in India is to promote development and application of space science and technology to assist in all-round development of the nation. Space is vital for the social and economic development of nations, and space activities must be carried out in accordance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations in the interest of maintaining international peace and security. India reiterates the importance of developing dedicated space situational awareness, capabilities and enhancing these through data sharing and collaborations.

Mr. President, India has enabled private sector participation through the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre in Space. That is a single window independent nodal agency that functions as an autonomous agency in the Department of Space, ensuring proper authorisation and monitoring of space activities.

The Outer Space Treaty 1967 lays down fundamental principles for carrying out space activities and the Liability Convention of 1972 particularly deals with the liability for the in-space incidences. It is important for each State party that launches or procures the launching of an object into outer space and each State party from whose territory or facility an object is launched to be more cautious and have continuous supervision.

Mr. President, the Space Debris Mitigation Guideline 2007 of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space results in the work within its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee were subsequently endorsed by the UN General Assembly in Resolution 62/217 of 22nd December 2007 are no longer just soft law principles but are influencing national policies and operational procedures. The UNCOPUOS Guidelines consist of seven core measures aimed at covering

the full life cycle of a space mission. These guidelines are technical and policy consensus on prudent practises for mitigating the space debris.

India adheres to the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines to avoid collisions and ensure safe post-mission disposal of spacecraft. India actively participates in international discussions, participates in the working groups, technical and scientific groups of UNOOSA.

We are pleased to inform that India's Network for Space Object Tracking and Analysis that is NETRA project involves establishing radar and optical telescope facilities for tracking and analysing the space objects.

Mr. President, the Indian delegation takes the opportunity to reiterate its commitment to cooperate with AALCO and AALCO Member States and exploring support for capacity-building in space law activities. I thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from India. We are three minutes shy of our break, but I think we will take it. We will take our break now, return at 4.45 P.M. for continuation on this.

On our return, the Speakers will be in this order, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the Republic of Türkiye, Malaysia, and the Republic of South Africa. In that order. I thank you. We will resume at 4.45 P.M. to the dot. I thank you.

The Meeting was thereafter adjourned for a Coffee Break.

The Meeting was thereafter resumed.

President: Islamic Republic of Iran, you have the floor.

The Delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Thank you very much, Mr. President. At the outset, I would like to thank once again the Secretariat for its report on the topic, which has appeared to be very useful for the ongoing deliberations.

The United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, COPUOS, and its Subcommittees should serve as a platform for Member States to reaffirm their collective commitment to leveraging space technology for the benefit of humanity, ensuring that space remains a domain of peace, innovation, and shared progress. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, STSC, plays a vital role in promoting the exchange of scientific and technical knowledge and fostering collaboration among Member States. The importance of enhancing the long-term sustainability of space activities to ensure safe and equitable access to outer space for present and future generations cannot be overstated. Successful implementation of sustainability principles requires a common understanding of the guiding framework shaped by experiences gained through voluntary application. Therefore, States must be given adequate time to implement these principles, assess their challenges and opportunities, and work towards a shared vision. We stress the significance of international cooperation and capacity-building efforts in promoting space sustainability through knowledge sharing, best practises, and technological advancements.

The growing accumulation of space debris is an issue of critical concern. While according to estimates, over 34,000 objects larger than 10 centimetres are orbiting the Earth, these pose significant risks to operational satellites. If this trend continues, parts of low-Earth orbit may become unusable within the next one to two decades. Some projections suggest that space debris is doubling every 10 years. In this context, mitigating and addressing space debris remains a collective effort. It is undeniable that a few nations have contributed to the vast majority of this debris. These States must bear primary responsibility and take proactive measures to enhance international cooperation by sharing scientific and operational expertise, data, and relevant technologies. Collaboration is essential, particularly with developing countries, to ensure that all space actors can contribute to debris mitigation and removal. In this regard, the STSC has an important role to play in examining the scientific and technical aspects of this issue and facilitating meaningful dialogue.

The rapid deployment of large satellite constellations necessitates an urgent examination of their technical and scientific implications. Considering the legal, policy, and technical challenges that these constellations can pose to the sovereignty of States, we emphasise that any assessments of such constellations must be based on respect for State sovereignty. The deployment of satellite constellations must be subject to authorisation and consent from the States over whose territories they operate. In this regard, we reaffirm our sovereign right to approve any satellite constellation operating over our territory and reserve the right to take appropriate steps in addressing the issue of any unauthorised satellite constellation operation over the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Now I would like to present a few instances of Iran's key recent space activities.

The Chamran-1 small satellite was successfully placed in a 550-kilometre orbit by the Qaem-100 launch vehicle, marking a milestone in Iran's space industry by enabling precise and repeated orbital manoeuvres for the first time. In addition to deploying a CubeSat, the Simorgh launch vehicle was used to demonstrate the Saman-1 orbital transfer stage (upper stage) and for the first time, a private Iranian company successfully launched two indigenous CubeSats, Hodhod and Kowsar, into sun-synchronous orbit through international cooperation, marking a significant step towards private sector involvement in Iran's space industry.

Here we have to address once again the impact of unilateral coercive measures whose permeative character affect every aspect of development. An ecosystem with limited actors such as the outer space, any progress or regression in a space programme inevitably affects the global space community. The consequences of these measures extend beyond individual nations and have broader implications. For example, they increase risks of space collisions due to the inability to assess precise and up-to-date space situational awareness, SSA, data and limited orbital manoeuvring capabilities, potentially worsening the problem of space debris.

Mr. President, in closing, the Islamic Republic of Iran reaffirms its commitment to international cooperation and the peaceful use and sustainable development of outer space. We urge all Member States to uphold the principles of fairness, inclusivity, and non-discrimination in space governance, ensuring that space remains a shared resource for the benefit of all humankind. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran. I now yield the floor to the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

The Delegate of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam: Mr. President, distinguished delegates, Viet Nam acknowledges the AALCO's contribution in promoting legal dialogue and cooperation among Asian and African nations on this important matter. My delegation would like to reiterate that access to outer space is an inalienable right of all States and that the use of outer space should exclusively be for the peaceful purposes only and for the collective benefit of humanity. All activities in outer space must adhere to the United Nations Charter and relevant international law, including principles of sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, refraining from the threat or use of force, settlement of international disputes by peaceful means, and non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States.

We would like to highlight the role of the five founding United Nations Space Conventions, which together form the legal framework for international space governance. These Conventions include the prohibition of placement of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in space, the requirement that States be internationally responsible for public and private space activities and the applicability of international law, including the United Nations Charter in outer space.

Mr. President, Viet Nam commits to uphold and implement its international obligations under United Nations space treaties to which Viet Nam is party to, including the 1967 Outer Space Treaty.

Over the past decades, Viet Nam has made steady progress in building a national legal and policy framework to support the development of its space activities. Our National Strategy for Space Technology Development 2030 emphasises the peaceful use of outer space for socioeconomic development, technological innovation, and environmental monitoring. Viet Nam recognises the importance of innovation and the importance of a strong legal foundation to regulate and facilitate these growing activities. We are currently taking steps toward drafting a comprehensive national space law that reflects our international commitment and best practise.

Mr. President, Viet Nam actively engages in international cooperation in space law and policy, particularly through its participation in initiatives under the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, UNOOSA. We are grateful for the opportunity to attend and contribute to regional capacity-building efforts, including the Regional Space Law Technical Advisory Mission. This mission allows our delegates to exchange views and experiences with experts and peers in the region, enhancing our understanding of legal principles governing outer space activities.

In conclusion, Viet Nam reaffirms its commitment to the peaceful use of outer space and stands ready to work constructively with all Member States toward a sustainable and inclusive space future. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. I will now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Türkiye.

The Delegate of the Republic of Türkiye: Thank you, Mr. President. Excellencies, distinguished delegations. At the outset, let me underline that Türkiye remains strongly committed to international cooperation in the field of space. Therefore, we thank Secretariat and the Member States for continuing the discussion on the topic, Legal Issues in Outer Space, introduced at the Sixty-Second Annual Session. Türkiye, as one of the few countries that have ratified all five UN treaties on outer space, believes in and is a firm supporter of the peaceful

use of outer space. This is in line with our commitment to maintaining a safe, secure and sustainable outer space environment for the benefit of all.

In this regard, we value the Space 2030 Agenda within the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and remain dedicated to supporting its implementation. We believe that, as the main platforms, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, its Subcommittees and working groups play a pivotal role in regulating and managing outer space activities. We consider COPUOS as the authorised body with respect to discussions on potential legal models for activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilisation of space resources.

Türkiye is of the opinion that technical mandate of COPUOS and its Subcommittees should be strictly preserved, also with respect to the work on potential legal models for space resource-related activities. Maritime law, airspace law and outer space law have different dynamics and are regulated by different regimes, bodies and instruments. And the regimes or instruments that are not on outer space fall out of the scope and mandate of COPUOS and as such should be precluded in outer space documents.

Mr. President, the Turkish Space Agency was established in 2018 to regulate the space-related activities in a unified manner and Türkiye has been significantly expanding its space activities in recent years under its National Space Programme. As a landmark achievement in our National Space Programme, the first Turkish astronaut Alper Gezeravci returned from ISS on Ax-3 mission in February 2024. Together with our second astronaut Tuva Cihangir Atasever who completed a suborbital flight in June 2024, he spearheads awareness-raising activities, especially among the youth.

With the launch of TURKSAT 6A in April 2025, which we developed with a domestic production rate of over 80%, Türkiye has become one of the 11 countries capable of producing its own communications satellite.

I am pleased to share with you that Türkiye will have the honour of hosting the seventy-seventh International Astronautical Congress in Antalya in October 2026. With more than 70 years of sharing back-through ideas in space science and technology, this event provides a platform that will further strengthen Türkiye's role in the space ecosystem. The event will bring together the most respected scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs and policymakers in the space sector in Antalya to share information and experiences and will serve as a platform to foster global collaboration in space exploration. We also continue to organise TEKNOFEST Aerospace Festival which inspires the next generation of aerospace professionals and encourages international participation.

We support discussions on long-term sustainability of outer space activities, space debris mitigation, space traffic management and the efforts for cooperation on space resources and sustainable lunar activities.

In closing, we would like to reaffirm Türkiye's commitment to international cooperation in all aspects of the space sector from regulatory frameworks to technical operations with COPUOS playing the leading role. We stand ready to work collectively with Member States to address shared challenges and ensure that outer space remains a domain of peace, innovation and opportunity for all humankind. Thank you all.

President: I thank the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Türkiye for their statement. The next statement is from the distinguished delegate from Malaysia followed by the Republic of South Africa, followed by the Republic of Uganda, the Republic of the Philippines and the Republic of Korea. Republic of Malaysia, you have the floor.

The Delegate of Malaysia: Mr. President, in respect of the issues proposed by the AALCO Secretariat to be considered by AALCO Member States under this agenda item, Malaysia observes that those issues are similar to the issues that have been discussed at the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, LSC COPUOS. Nevertheless, Malaysia is of the view that AALCO may serve as an additional platform to deliberate on issues pertaining to international law including international space law. In addition to our general comments on the inclusion of this agenda item for discussion at the Annual Session, Malaysia would also like to share its views on methods pertaining to space objects, space debris and measures for space debris mitigation. Malaysia upholds the view that the comprehensive registration of space objects is essential as it enables launching States to effectively monitor their respective space objects.

Malaysia further advocates for enhanced transparency among Member States particularly through the sharing of information on space activities that may have implications for the security and safety of other States. Mutual cooperation in sharing accurate data, knowledge, experiences and enhancing capabilities including the development of technical resources, modified prediction methods and advanced facilities are essential. We hope such collaborative efforts can be facilitated under the auspices of COPUOS.

Furthermore, Malaysia emphasises the importance for launching States to take proactive measures to prevent accidents and incidents resulting from uncontrolled re-entry of space debris. Additionally, concerted efforts are needed to mitigate pollution in Earth's orbit and avert accidental collisions between debris and other space objects. With reference to Space Debris Management, SDM, Malaysia is cognisant that as the population of space debris continues to grow, space debris management is significant to mitigate any possible damage to the space environment and the environment on Earth. Malaysia is of the view that the Space Debris Management Guidelines of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the SDM Guidelines, which are non-legally binding and voluntary in nature is a good example of a global effort in addressing space debris management. Thus, implementation of the SDM Guidelines by State parties to the OST Treaty should be a vital step in tackling issues relating to SDM.

Underscoring the importance of enhancing the legal capacity of emerging space-faring nations, Malaysia would like to encourage other Member States to adopt and implement the above-mentioned guidelines on a voluntary basis. In support of the implementation of these guidelines, Malaysia has incorporated them into our national legislation by way of the Malaysian Space Board Act 2022 and its related regulations.

Malaysia reiterates our statement made at the Sixty-Fourth Session of the LSC COPUOS that proactive and responsible measures must be taken to prevent accidents and incidences resulting from space activities. Recognising the number of space objects is increasing over time, Malaysia emphasises the need for continuous efforts to mitigate orbital pollution in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of outer space for the benefit of future generations. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you, the distinguished delegate from Malaysia, for your statement. The next statement is from the distinguished delegate from the Republic of South Africa.

The Delegate of the Republic of South Africa: Thank you very much, Mr. President. South Africa welcomes AALCO's continued consideration of the Legal Issues in Outer Space. This is both timely and essential as outer space activities are expanding at an unprecedented pace, raising legal, environmental and security challenges.

The principle that outer space is the province of all humankind, not subject to national appropriation or unilateral exploitation remains a cornerstone of the outer space legal framework. Any emerging legal framework, including on space resources utilisation, must be based on equity and principles of non-appropriation.

South Africa remains deeply concerned by the proliferation of space debris. This poses grave risks to astronauts, satellites and the sustainability of outer space, including equitable access to outer space by developing countries. We support the further development of both binding and non-binding frameworks, building on UNCOPUOS and IADC guidelines, but stress that voluntary measures alone are insufficient, grounded in principles such as the common but differentiated responsibilities and the polluter pays principles.

We also raise concerns about the impact of mega constellations and dark and quiet skies on astronomical observation, including the square kilometre array hosted in South Africa. Protection of scientific research must remain a priority. South Africa strongly opposes any move towards the weaponization of outer space. We caution that the placement of weapons on the initiation of an arms race in space would undermine international peace and security.

South Africa further urges greater participation and coordination by African and Asian States in COPUOS, particularly in its Legal Subcommittee, where the shaping of norms and frameworks must reflect the voices of the Global South, especially in the Space Resources Working Group.

Finally, South Africa supports AALCO's proposals to advance dialogue through regional workshops and capacity-building programmes, ensuring that developing countries can shape the evolving legal architecture of outer space. Honourable President, South Africa stands ready to work with AALCO's Member States to ensure that outer space remains a peaceful, sustainable and inclusive domain for the benefit of all humankind and the future generations. I thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of South Africa. I now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Uganda.

The Delegate of the Republic of Uganda: Mr. President, distinguished delegates, the Republic of Uganda is privileged to address this esteemed assembly of the African-Asian Legal Consultative Organization on the critical topic of outer space and its legal implications as humanity expands its presence in outer space.

Uganda underscores the importance of a robust and equitable international legal framework to govern space activities, ensuring they serve the collective interests of all nations, particularly those in the African and Asian regions.

Mr. President, the exploration and use of outer space have evolved dramatically since the dawn of the space age marked by the launch of Sputnik in 1957. To date, outer space is a domain of scientific discovery, technological innovation and economic opportunity with activities ranging from satellite communications to space exploration and resource extraction.

Mr. President, the increasing involvement of State and non-State actors coupled with emerging challenges such as space debris, militarisation and resource exploitation necessitates a clear and inclusive legal framework. As a developing nation, Uganda recognises the potential of space technologies to address terrestrial challenges like climate change, agriculture and connectivity, but also the need to ensure equitable access and prevent the monopolisation of space benefits.

Mr. President, the 1967 Outer Space Treaty to which Uganda is a party establishes that outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, is the province of all mankind and shall be used for peaceful purposes. Uganda reaffirms that space exploration and utilisation must benefit all nations irrespective of their technological or economic capacity and calls for equitable access to space-derived benefits such as satellite data and technology transfer.

Mr. President, Article II of the Outer Space Treaty prohibits national appropriation of outer space or celestial bodies. However, emerging discussions on space resource extraction such as lunar mining raise legal questions about property rights and benefit sharing. Uganda urges AALCO to facilitate dialogue on interpreting the non-appropriation principle in light of new commercial activities ensuring that developing nations are not excluded from potential economic benefits.

Mr. President, the proliferation of space debris poses significant risks to operational satellites and future missions, including the sustainability of outer space activities. Uganda calls for the implementation of the 2007 Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines and the development of binding international norms to address debris removal and prevention.

The principle of environmental protection as outlined in Article IX of the Outer Space Treaty must extend to preserving the outer space environment for future generations. The militarisation of outer space, including the development of anti-satellite weapons and other offensive capabilities, undermines the principle of peaceful use enshrined in the Outer Space Treaty. Uganda advocates for strengthened international agreements to prevent an arms race in space and promote confidence-building measures among space-faring nations.

Mr. President, the 1972 Liability Convention establishes that States bear responsibility for damage caused by their space objects. With the rise of private space actors, Uganda emphasises the need for clear legal mechanisms to hold both States and non-State entities accountable for damages, whether on Earth or in space, and to ensure fair compensation for affected parties, particularly in developing nations.

Mr. President, developing nations, including Uganda, face barriers to participating in space activities. Due to technological and financial constraints, Uganda calls for international cooperation as mandated by Article I of the Outer Space Treaty to promote capacity-building, technology transfer, and access to space-based services for African and Asian nations. This is critical for leveraging space technologies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, such as improving agriculture, disaster management, and telecommunications.

Uganda firmly believes that outer space must remain a domain for peaceful, inclusive, and sustainable activities. AALCO is well positioned to play a pivotal role in developing legal norms to address emerging issues such as space mining, debris mitigation, and the regulation of private space actors, ensuring alignment with existing treaties and the interests of the developing nations. Uganda urges AALCO to advocate for mechanisms that ensure equitable access to space technologies and benefits, including through regional cooperation and partnership.

As I conclude, Mr. President, I commend AALCO for its continuous endeavour to serve as a platform for African and Asian nations to articulate their perspectives on space law, fostering dialogue and coordination to influence global space governance. As humanity ventures further into outer space, Uganda reaffirms her commitment to a legal framework that upholds the principle of equity, peace, and sustainability. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Uganda. I now yield the floor to the Republic of the Philippines.

The Delegate of the Republic of the Philippines: Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, the Philippines is honoured to address this Session on the important agenda item of Legal Issues in Outer Space.

We reaffirm our commitment to the peaceful uses and exploration of outer space guided by the principles enshrined in the United Nations treaties and supported by non-legally binding instruments that promote responsible behaviour and international cooperation.

Mr. President, under the Philippine Space Act of 2019, we align our national space activities with international space law. In May 2024, the Philippines acceded to the Convention and Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space. To advance this implementation, the Philippine Space Agency, or PhilSA, convened a national multi-stakeholder forum to deepen dialogue and enhance understanding of the convention's implications. We are also working toward the ratification of the Outer Space Treaty, the Liability Convention, and the Rescue Agreement, reflecting our strong commitment to international cooperation in outer space. Notably, the Philippines ratified the Moon Agreement as early as 1981.

We also recognise the value of non-binding instruments as effective mechanisms for advancing confidence-building measures, transparency, and responsible conduct in outer space. In this regard, the Philippines submits formal communications to the UN to update the Registry of Philippine Space Objects, actively participates in the Open-Ended Working Group on reducing space threats through norms, rules, and principles of responsible behaviour, and upholds the principles of due regard articulated in Article IX of the Outer Space Treaty underscoring mutual respect and accountability in space activities.

Equally important is cultivating a culture of responsibility among future generations. To support space education and public awareness, PhilSA has launched a bilingual children's book entitled *Si Tala at ang Kanyang Lakbay Kalawakan*, or Tala and Her Journey Through Space. This initiative introduces young readers in the Philippines to the core principles of the UN Space Treaties in an engaging and accessible format, ensuring that our youth understand that space is a shared domain for all of humankind.

Mr. President, the Philippines is constructively engaging in discussion on space resource utilisation. We have nominated representatives to the Action Team on Lunar Activities

Consultation, or ATLAC, contributing to expert-level exchanges on recommendations for consultations related to lunar activities and on the possible establishment of an international mechanism in this area.

Mr. President, our ability to participate meaningfully in these processes has been strengthened through the collaboration with the UNOOSA and with the generous support of the Government of Japan through the Space Law Technical Advisory Mission conducted in 2022 and again in 2024, the Philippines has benefited from tailored workshops that advance our key understanding of some legal issues, from the fundamental principles of the UN treaties to the development of national legislation to governance, licencing, and authorisation of space activities, including liability and insurance.

Mr. President, regional cooperation is central to the Philippines' approach to space law and governance. I am pleased to announce two forthcoming events hosted by the Philippines. First, the 31st Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum, which will be held on 18 to 21 November this year in Cebu, the Philippines, with the theme Empowering the Region through Space Ecosystems in Action. This forum will highlight the role of government and non-governmental stakeholders in building a robust regional space industry. We warmly invite the participation of partners.

Second, in December 2025, the Philippines, in collaboration with the International Astronautical Federation, will host the next International Space Forum. While details are still being finalised, we take this opportunity to extend an early invitation to AALCO Members to join us in this important dialogue.

Mr. President, the Philippines firmly believes that outer space must remain a realm of peace, cooperation, and shared benefit. International law, both binding treaties and non-binding mechanisms, provide a framework to safeguard this vision.

As we look ahead, the Philippines stands ready to work with all AALCO members in strengthening the legal foundations for the peaceful uses of outer space, in promoting equitable access to its benefits, and in ensuring that the exploration of space advances the aspirations of all humanity. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of the Philippines. Next, we will have the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Korea followed by the People's Republic of China. The Republic of Korea, you have the floor.

The Delegate of the Republic of Korea: Thank you, Mr. President. We would like to begin by expressing our gratitude to the AALCO Secretariat for their dedication to preparing for this agenda. The UN Space Treaties, including the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, have long been a cornerstone of the international legal framework for outer space. My delegation also wishes to emphasise the importance of non-legally binding norms, such as the Long-Term Sustainability Guideline and the Space Debris Mitigation Guideline, which can serve as effective tools for managing the rapidly evolving space domain.

One of the most pressing legal issues in outer space today is the question of space debris. In recent years, human space activities have grown at an unprecedented rate, leading to an increase in space objects. This, in turn, has resulted in a significant rise of space debris, which now poses a considerable threat to the space environment. Given this situation, it is crucial that we

address the issue of space debris to ensure safety and sustainability of outer space exploration and utilisation.

To minimise the generation of space debris, the Korean Government introduced domestic guidelines for space debris mitigation in July 2020 based on the COPUOS Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines. And in October 2024, we also developed a second basic plan for space hazard preparedness, which outlines our mid-to-long-term strategy to systemically manage and mitigate the risks posed by space orbital debris. Key elements of this plan include the development of technologies to counter space debris, such as advanced space systems for the active control of space objects, as well as the localisation of space hazard response technologies.

The Republic of Korea will continue to try to make active contributions to discussions on the development of universal norms in this area. Through our collective effort, we hope to ensure that exploration and use of outer space may benefit all of humanity and contribute to a more peaceful and prosperous world. Thank you very much.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Korea. I now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the People's Republic of China.

The Delegate of the People's Republic of China: Mr. President, for many decades, the developments of space science and technology have greatly facilitated the exploration of outer space and improved the life of mankind. At present, multiple stakeholders are participating in new types of outer space activities. The technology gap continues to be widened.

Unilateralism is on the rise. To address these challenges, we need to promote the rule of law and improve global governance in outer space. In this regard, the Chinese delegation welcomes the discussion of this issue and would like to share the following views.

China believes that in order to promote international rule of law in outer space, the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which is the cornerstone of existing international space law, shall be strictly adhered to. The fundamental principles provided in the Outer Space Treaty, such as the peaceful use of outer space, the exploration and use of outer space for the benefit and interest of all mankind, non-appropriation, and international cooperation shall be applicable to all outer space activities. Among these principles, the principle of peaceful use is of vital importance in ensuring the long-term sustainability of outer space activities.

Since 1981, the UN General Assembly has adopted resolutions annually with an overwhelming majority reaffirming the principles of the peaceful use and prevention of arms race in outer space. This fully demonstrates that the peaceful use of outer space is a shared aspiration and goal of the international community. In recent years, a certain country has placed its absolute security above all else and all others and has attempted to turn the outer space into a war zone, which clearly violates the principle of peaceful use.

As a responsible country, China is committed to the peaceful use of outer space and opposes any arms race in outer space or weaponizing it. China has no intention to engage in an arms race in outer space.

Mr. President, for years, while China has made steady progress in space exploration, it has also actively cooperated with other States, especially Asian and African States, to share the achievements of space exploration. We have signed nearly 200 intergovernmental space

cooperation agreements with over 15 countries and international organizations. We initiated multilateral cooperation programmes, including the BRICS Remote Sensing Satellite Constellation and the Belt and Road Space Information Corridor. China has carried out broad cooperation with Asian and African States in the field such as space station, scientific research, lunar exploration, satellite development. China has also provided assistance to global south countries in training their own astronauts and promoted technology sharing.

Mr. President, in conclusion, China looks forward to working with Asian and African countries to strengthen exchange and cooperation in outer space, maintain the international space order based on international law, and improving global space governance so as to build a community with a shared future for mankind in outer space. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the People's Republic of China. As there are no further statements from Member States, I will now open the floor to our observer States and Organisations. I will now yield the floor to the Asian Academy of International Law to make their statement.

The Delegate of the Asian Academy of International Law: Honourable Mr. President, distinguished delegates, first of all, the Asian Academy of International Law would like to report to you that in response to the inclusion of this item in the agenda of AALCO, we have together with the University of Thammasat in Thailand and Wuhan University of China organised Air and Space Law Symposium in Thailand. This is one of the few symposia in Air and Space Law organised by two Asian States attended by Asian experts only and taking place in Asia. Moreover, we also include the topic of Air and Space Law into the Exchange and Research programme of AALCO.

During the last Session, I have emphasised the need to increase the voice of AALCO in the field of space law. Today, I will underline the further need for the space cooperation among the global south. Space activities mostly have been the privileges of the “have countries” rather than the “have not countries”.

Such a reality was also reflected in the formulation of space law. Namely, the “have countries” would have more say than the “have not countries”. To change this situation, not only do we need to make the voice of the global south heard, but it's also space capacity increased and space ventures seen by the world.

Due to the capital and technology-intensive nature of space ventures, the most practical way for the global south to develop space capacity-building is through the international cooperation. Many delegates have shared the experience of their cooperation in this area. International cooperation either bilateral, regional or global indeed should be the driving force for the global south to enter into space arena.

In this area, of course, we already have the example of Asia Pacific Space Cooperation Organization and African Space Agency. This should be the framework of cooperation that should be intensified. Of course, space cooperation requires the input of different sectors, not just the legal sector. It requires particularly science and technological experts. However, AALCO as a body of legal experts may assist in the design of the legal framework for space cooperation and offer guidelines for the forms of cooperation and resolve any possible differences during the cooperation. I hope this is the way that we move forward.

I recall in the opening ceremony, our delegation of the host, Uganda, has made the following statement. We are a small country, but we are not afraid to take a stand. Okay, let us take the stand in the universe. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Asian Academy of International Law. You are always provoking in your statements and very interesting.

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, we have come to the end of our day. We have concluded the proceedings of this third day and successfully at that. I thank you all, distinguished delegations, for your contribution.

I think you need to clap for yourselves.

{Applause}

President: I would like to inform all our distinguished delegations that we will start tomorrow with International Trade and Investment Law under the Fifth General Meeting on 11 September at 10 A.M. on the dot. I kindly request that we assemble in the plenary well in time so we can start the proceedings promptly.

I wish to inform the Drafting Committee that you will meet shortly in Bunyonyi Hall on the lower ground floor. I am sure you are now familiar with its location. And I will now give the floor to the Master of Ceremonies or Mistress of Ceremonies to make their announcements. Thank you.

The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

**XIII. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTH
GENERAL MEETING OF THE AALCO MEMBER
STATES**

XIII. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTH GENERAL MEETING OF THE AALCO MEMBER STATES HELD ON THURSDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 2025 AT 10:00 AM

H.E. Ms. Marie Charlotte G. Tang, Ambassador Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Philippines to the Republic of Uganda, with residence in the Republic of Kenya in the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM: INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT LAW

Vice-President: May we please take our seats so that we can start the Session. So a very good morning to all the delegations. I thank you for your support and your invaluable contributions to our Session here.

I would like to call the meeting to order. We have quite a lot on the agenda for today so I hope we can all be efficient. We will start today's proceedings with the Fifth General Meeting.

The first item on the agenda for today is "International Trade and Investment Law". Member States wishing to make statements should register themselves with the AALCO Secretariat. I may also kindly recall to all delegations that in line with AALCO's established practise any conflict or bilateral matters particularly between Member States as well as issues relating to the internal affairs of a Member State should not be raised whether directly or indirectly during the Session.

Now may I invite the AALCO Secretariat to make the introductory remarks for this agenda item. Sir, you have the floor please.

Secretary-General: Madam Vice-President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, the agenda item on International Trade and Investment Law brings together two important regimes of international law that have long been central to AALCO's deliberations. The international law relating to trade was first considered under the item "The World Trade Organization (WTO) as a Framework Agreement and Code of Conduct for World Trade," while issues concerning investment were taken up under agenda items such as "The Treatment of Aliens," "Regional Cooperation in the Context of the New International Economic Order" and "The Work of UNCITRAL and Other International Organizations in the Field of International Trade Law."

It is pertinent to note that, since the Fifty-Seventh Annual Session held in Tokyo in 2018, these topics have been considered jointly under the consolidated title "International Trade and Investment Law." This consolidation reflects the increasing interrelationship and close correlation between trade and investment regimes and their significance for our Member States.

Since then, our deliberations have focused on developments at the WTO, as well as current developments in international investment law, particularly the reforms to the ISDS or Investor-State Dispute Settlement Mechanism being advanced by UNCTAD and UNCITRAL. In subsequent years, the scope was further broadened to encompass the work of other international organizations, including UNIDROIT and the Hague Conference on Private International Law, both of which play an important role in shaping the rules that govern international trade and commerce.

This year, the Secretariat has prepared document AALCO/63/KAMPALA/2025/SD/S4, which, in addition to reporting on recent developments in trade and investment law, also contains the Proposal for the Development of a Model Investment Treaty.

Excellences, it is important to recall that discussions on investment promotion and protection within AALCO go back more than four decades. They began in 1980, at the Sessions held in Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur, and soon led to the preparation of a tentative draft model agreement. This draft was considered in Colombo and Istanbul in 1981, and was later refined into three alternative approaches - Models A, B, and C - to reflect diverse State practices and developmental needs.

More recently, at the Sixty-First Annual Session in Bali in 2023, the United Republic of Tanzania proposed that AALCO revisit this issue. In follow-up, the Secretariat has engaged with Tanzania and, in this year's document, has annexed the Proposal for the Development of a Model Investment Treaty by AALCO Member States from Tanzania for the information of all Member States.

In light of these observations, the Secretariat notes that it may be timely for Member States to reflect on the possible scope, form, and core elements of a prospective AALCO Model Investment Agreement, so as to ensure its relevance to the contemporary context of investment promotion and protection. Member States may also wish to exchange views on potential modalities for its preparation, including, if they so decide, the establishment of an Open-Ended Working Group under AALCO to review substantive and procedural aspects and to make recommendations, providing Member States with an open platform to discuss and guide the development of the future Model Investment Agreement.

With these brief remarks, I conclude my introduction and invite the distinguished delegates to share their statements on this agenda item, with particular attention to the issues highlighted in the Secretariat's report. Thank you, Madam Vice-President.

Vice-President: Thank you. I thank the Secretary-General for the introductory remarks. Now I will open the floor for the statements of the delegations. The list I have right now is Philippines, followed by India, then the Islamic Republic of Iran, United Republic of Tanzania, then Kingdom of Thailand, followed by Japan, and then Malaysia, and then Sudan. So I give the floor to the distinguished delegate of the Philippines.

The Delegate of the Republic of the Philippines: Madam Vice-President, Honourable Secretary-General, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, the Philippines is honoured to contribute its perspectives on international trade and investment law, an area of growing importance to the prosperity and resilience of our nations. Trade is not only about the exchange of goods and services; it is about ensuring fairness, inclusivity, and stability in the global economy through the rule of law.

At the national level, the Philippines has pursued comprehensive reforms to create a transparent, competitive, and investor-friendly environment. The foundation of market entry in the Philippines is enshrined in our 1987 Constitution and strengthened by legislation such as the Amended Foreign Investments Act, the Amended Public Service Act, and the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act. To attract and sustain investment, we have introduced the Create More Act and the Strategic Investment Priority Plan, which align incentives with development priorities. Investor confidence is also reinforced by laws that guarantee transparency and competition, including the Ease of Doing Business Act, the Philippine Competition Act, and the Data Privacy Act. In terms of dispute resolution, the Philippines has long adopted the UNCITRAL Model Law through our Alternative Dispute Resolution Act and has been a party to the New York Convention since 1967, making our jurisdiction credible for arbitration and mediation.

Modern commercial reforms further align our legal system with global best practices. The E-Commerce Act provides the legal basis for digital transactions, while the Personal Property Security Act—drawing on UNCITRAL principles—facilitates secured transactions. The Financial Rehabilitation and Insolvency Act incorporates international standards for business recovery and insolvency. Together, these reforms enhance legal certainty and ensure that Philippine trade law evolves with global norms, including in the emerging digital economy.

At the multilateral level, the Philippines reaffirms its commitment to the World Trade Organization as the cornerstone of the rules-based trading system. We emphasize that trade rules must promote inclusivity and avoid disadvantaging developing economies. In parallel, the Philippines continues to engage in UNCITRAL's work to harmonize and modernize international trade law. With our renewed election to UNCITRAL membership in June 2025, we are committed to contributing meaningfully to the Commission's mandate of reducing transaction costs and ensuring fair treatment in cross-border transactions.

Madam Vice-President, the Philippines actively participated in the fifty-eighth session of UNCITRAL held in Vienna this July. Our delegation engaged in discussions on Investor-State Dispute Settlement Reform, supporting the adoption of the Toolkit on the Prevention and Mitigation of International Investment Disputes. We also expressed support in principle for the establishment of an Advisory Centre on international investment dispute resolution, a mechanism that would strengthen the capacity of developing countries to navigate complex disputes. The Philippines stands ready to contribute constructively to the intergovernmental process toward its operationalization.

These initiatives reflect the Philippines' belief that inclusive participation in shaping trade law standards is crucial to ensuring equitable outcomes. Our approach is anchored on the One-Country-Team-Approach, bringing together government agencies including the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Justice, Office of the Solicitor General, Department of Finance, *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas*, and the Department of Trade and Industry–Board of Investments. This ensures coherence between our national priorities and international engagements.

Madam Vice-President, international trade law must continue to evolve in response to rapid technological, financial, and environmental change. The Philippines believes that harmonization of rules on e-commerce, secured transactions, and dispute settlement is vital to enabling micro, small, and medium enterprises to integrate into the global economy. Legal certainty in these areas is essential not only for business but also for development, especially in regions where inclusive growth remains a pressing challenge.

In closing, the Philippines reaffirms its strong support for AALCO's continued engagement with UNCITRAL and the WTO. We see AALCO as a critical forum for Asia and Africa to shape the rules that govern global commerce, ensuring that international trade law reflects the priorities of developing and trade-dependent economies. Guided by our national reforms and our renewed UNCITRAL membership, the Philippines will remain a committed advocate of a fair, inclusive, and predictable rules-based multilateral trading system. Thank you, Mr. President.

Vice-President: I thank the distinguished delegate from the Republic of the Philippines. Now I give the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Republic of India, followed by Iran. Madam, from the Republic of India, you have the floor, please.

The Delegate of the Republic of India: Thank you, Madam Vice-President. India recognises the importance of coherent and transparent investment laws as a cornerstone of national legal frameworks.

In regulating foreign direct investments, FDI, our approach is rooted in legal clarity, ensuring predictable rules for investor entry, treatment, and protection, while safeguarding regulatory space for public interest. We believe that legal certainty and equitable treatment are essential to fostering sustainable investment involvement across the global south. Madam Vice-President, India supports the reform agenda of UNCITRAL Working Group III on Investor-State Dispute Settlement.

We advocate for institutional mechanisms that enhance procedural fairness, including standing dispute resolution bodies, appellate review, and safeguards against frivolous claims. The adoption of the Statute of the Advisory Centre on International Investment Dispute Resolution is a welcome step, and we commend the Thailand's leadership in conveying its operational meetings. Madam Vice-President, at the World Trade Organisation, India continues to champion the interests of the developing and least developed countries.

We reiterate our call for a permanent solution on public stake-holding for food security, which remains central to our developmental priorities. India supports the extension of the TRIPS non-violation complaint moratorium and urges members to ratify the fisheries subsidies agreement to meet the enforcement threshold.

Madam Vice-President, India welcomes progress on WTO dispute settlement reform and looks forward to meaningful outcomes. At the 14th Ministerial Conference, we believe restoration of the appellate body is critical to ensuring access to impartial adjudication and preserving the rule of law in global trading relations.

Madam Vice-President, we remain committed to working with Asian and African countries in advancing legal frameworks that are fair, development-oriented, and responsive to evolving global challenges. I thank you, Madam Vice-President.

Vice-President: I thank the distinguished representative of the Republic of India for her statement. Now I give the floor to the distinguished delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran, followed by Tanzania. Iran, you have the floor, please.

The Delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Thank you very much, Madam Vice-President. My delegation attaches great importance to the topic and takes note of the report of the Secretariat. Due to the paucity of time, we limit our statement to the work of the UNCITRAL and in particular the ongoing work on Working Group III concerning ISDS reform efforts which we follow closely and with great interest.

With respect to the Statute of the Advisory Centre on International Investment Dispute Resolution, we acknowledge UNCITRAL's progress in advancing the international investment dispute settlement framework, particularly in a manner that benefits developing and least developing countries. The draft Statute incorporates key provisions designed to support these countries, including capacity building, legal assistance, and technical support. These elements aim to establish an independent, effective, and accessible resource to help developing and least developed countries better manage international investment disputes while fostering capacity building and knowledge sharing.

We commend this important initiative and recognise the valuable potentials it holds for these nations. That said, we would like to underscore that although the Statute of the Advisory Centre was adopted in principle by the UNCITRAL Commission during its fifty-seventh session in 2024, its full operationalization remains a work in progress. This requires further preparatory efforts which will be addressed through informal consultations, including the upcoming meeting in Paris from 1st to 3rd December 2025, as well as any future ACOP meetings.

Given the complexity and importance of the preparatory discussions covering a range of issues, from privileges and immunities of the Advisory Centre and its staff through to the anticipated mandate and functions of the interim secretariat, it is essential that they be addressed thoroughly and thoughtfully. We believe it will be premature and potentially counterproductive to rush to close or finalise decisions before completing this operationalization process. Furthermore, to ensure full and meaningful participation of all Member States, the ACOP meetings should be regarded as platforms for discussion and deliberation rather than venues for making final decisions.

Ultimately, decisions related to the Advisory Centre's operationalization should rest with the UNCITRAL Commission. Regarding the establishment of a standing mechanism, including an appellate mechanism for the resolution of international investment disputes currently under consideration by UNCITRAL Working Group III, it is acknowledged that the objective of enhancing the efficiency, predictability, and independence of Investor State Dispute Settlement is important. At the same time, it seems to us that the creation of such an independent organisation with the capacity to operate regional offices could have implications that should be carefully taken into account before a final decision is made.

Among these is the need for equitable representation and meaningful participation of developing countries, which historically have been disproportionately affected by ISDS claims initiated by investors from developed countries. It is also important to balance investor protection with the preservation of States' regulatory authority in areas such as environmental protection, public health, social policies, and economic development. Concerns regarding the financial sustainability and affordability of the mechanism are relevant as they may impact developing countries' ability to access fair dispute resolution.

The potential administrative costs for members, especially those from underdeveloped and developing countries, should also be considered carefully to avoid undue burdens. Greater transparency and accountability measures must be incorporated, allowing effective communities and public interest groups to have access to information and participate in the process where relevant. Moreover, it is important to assess how this proposed mechanism may interact with existing bilateral and multilateral investment dispute settlement frameworks, some of which currently provide particular advantages to certain countries.

As regards to draft provisions on procedural and cross-cutting issues as part of the broader efforts to reform ISDS, we appreciate the work undertaken by UNCITRAL Working Group III to enhance fairness, transparency, and consistency in its processes, particularly in ways that could contribute to a more balanced system for both investors and States, including developing and least developed countries. Additionally, we emphasise the need for reforms that ensure equitable access, procedural balance and preservation of policy space for developing countries. Provisions should not create new barriers for States with less capacity or restrict their ability to regulate in the public interest.

We support a reform process that remains focused on legal and procedural improvements, avoids politicisation and meaningfully considers the concerns of developing States. To conclude, I would like to underline the importance of the continuation of the Commission's support in facilitating and participation of delegations from developing countries in its work, which needs to be encouraged by the AALCO as well. Thank you, Madam Vice-President.

Vice-President: Thank you. I thank the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the United Republic of Tanzania. Madam, you have the floor, please.

The Delegate of the United Republic of Tanzania: Madam Vice-President, Honourable Secretary-General, and distinguished delegates, the United Republic of Tanzania reaffirms its commitment to fostering a fair, equitable, and inclusive international trade and investment framework that supports sustainable economic development and promotes mutual benefit for all nations. As a developing country rich in natural resources, Tanzania recognises the critical role of international trade and investment in driving economic growth, reducing poverty, and achieving the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Madam Vice-President, Tanzania is a signatory to key international agreements that govern trade and investment, including the World Trade Organisation Agreement of 1994 and the agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area of 2018. These frameworks promote open rules-based trade systems and facilitate market access for developing nations. Tanzania also adheres to the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, UNCITRAL principles, which provide a foundation for harmonised trade and investment practises. Tanzania is also a party to several bilateral investment treaties and regional trade agreements under the East African Community and the Southern African Development Community, (SADC), which enhance regional integration and cross-border investment.

Madam Vice-President, in compliance with international and regional obligations, Tanzania has domestic legal framework that supports international trade and investment, including the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, 1977, which provides the foundation for economic policies that promote private sector growth and foreign investment. Key legislation includes the Tanzania Investment and the Special Economic Zones Act of 2025, which establishes the Tanzania Investment and the Special Economic Zones Authority with the roles of facilitating, protecting, and providing incentives for trade and investment.

We have the Fair Competition Act, Chapter 285, which protects consumer rights and regulates anti-competitive practises. The Public-Private Partnership Act, which establishes the Public-Private Partnership Centre with a major role in attracting and facilitating public-private investments, particularly in key sectors such as the infrastructure sector. Tanzania has also undertaken reforms to streamline trade processes by establishing the Tanzania Single Window System, which aims at facilitating trade by reducing trade barriers, enhancing transparency, and reducing time and cost of conducting business.

Madam Vice-President, recognising the challenges in the global trade and investment landscape, including professionalism and economic access, and Investor-State Dispute Settlement, Tanzania supports AALCO's role in promoting dialogue and cooperation among Member States. Tanzania recommends for reforms in international investments agreements to ensure a balance between investors, protections, and the sovereign right of States, strengthening support for local investors, commitments of Member States to legal cooperation, and the shared challenges on trade and investment, combating illicit trade by Member States, facilitating

regulatory reforms, and strengthening regional and bilateral trade between Member States. Tanzania also wishes to remind AALCO Member States to consider and accept its proposal regarding preparation of a model investment treaty to act as a guide for AALCO Member States during negotiation and during drafting of bilateral and multilateral treaties. We believe that the discussions at this Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO will facilitate the exchange of best practises, address challenges in trade and investment governance, and promote equitable solutions that benefit the developing nations.

Madam Vice-President, the aspects highlighted above underscore Tanzania's dedication to leveraging international trade and investment for sustainable development. In conclusion, the United Republic of Tanzania welcomes AALCO's initiatives in this field and it looks forward to constructive engagements at this Session to further these objectives.

Vice-President: Thank you. I thank the distinguished delegate from the United Republic of Tanzania. I now give the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Kingdom of Thailand followed by Japan. Thailand, you have the floor, please.

The Delegate of the Kingdom of Thailand: Thank you, Madam Vice-President, Mr. Secretary-General, Excellency, distinguished delegates. International trade law and international investment law are two distinct yet interconnected areas of international law.

Both are indispensable to the prosperity and stability of States and both require continual adaptation to ensure they remain responsive to the needs of developing countries, especially those of Asia and Africa. Thailand attaches great importance to the evolution of this field and welcomes the opportunity to reflect on them in this Annual Session. In this spirit, I will offer three guiding Cs, choice, cooperation, and coherence.

First, choice. By choice, I mean the need to provide States with fair, accessible, and effective options for the resolution of disputes. Investors' dispute settlement, ISDS, reform is the central question here.

Too often, developing States face complex claims without the resources or expertise to defend themselves. It is in this context that Thailand has been active in the deliberations of Working Group III. Where reform has advanced steadily, States have advanced a menu of reform elements, including a standing mechanism, an appellate review option, a code of conduct, mediation, and dispute prevention tools.

One of the more promising outcomes of those deliberations has been the establishment of an Advisory Centre for International Investment Dispute Resolution, an initiative by developing countries. Thailand has proud offer to host this advisory centre in Bangkok. In December last year, we convened a preparatory meeting to operationalize the centre where we were deeply encouraged by the active participation of both Asian and African Member States. I wish to extend my gratitude to all who joined us on that occasion. Thailand seeks AALCO Member States' support for our bid. Bangkok is well-positioned to serve this role.

It offers modern convenience at a reasonable cost, world-class infrastructure, and excellent regional connectivity. We are confident that this centre will provide immediate legal assistance to States facing ISDS claims and equally important, build long-term capacity for our own legal officers.

Second, cooperation, trade and investment are not merely economic matters. They touch upon sovereignty, development, and the daily welfare for our people. Thailand firmly believes that

rules in this area must reflect our priorities and remain free from politicisation and distortion. In this regard, AALCO as the only intergovernmental legal forum bridging Asia and Africa plays a distinct role in convening our shared perspectives to the multilateral system.

Whether in the WTO, UNCTRAL, or UNCTAD, our voices must not be marginal but integral to shaping our come. By working through AALCO, we can speak with clarity and unity, advancing reform in trade and investment law that are equitable, inclusive, and development-orientated. In this context, Thailand also welcomes the growing trend toward alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

In the spirit of the United Nations Charter, cooperation choice such as mediation and conciliation offers path work that are less confrontational, more cost-effective, and ultimately more conducive to maintain amicable relations between State and investors alike. We are studying with interest initiatives such as the Singapore Convention on Mediation and the Convention on the Establishment of the International Organisation for Mediation or IOMED Convention and are positively considering participation.

Third, coherent. The landscape of international economic law is crowded. UNCITRAL, UNCTAD, UNIDROIT, and the Hague Conference on Private International Law each carry important mandates. It has a valuable role to play but for developing States, overlapping obligations can lead to uncertainty and imbalance.

Fragmentation is a real risk for capacity constant administration. We therefore support initiatives such as the Tripartite Legal Guide to Uniform Instruments in the Area of International Commercial Contracts (with a Focus on Sales) prepared jointly by UNCITRAL, UNIDROIT, and the HCCH, which clarifies how cornerstone texts fit together and promotes consistent interpretation in domestic practice. In this regard, we welcome the Coordination Guidelines for the Secretariats of HCCH, UNCITRAL, and UNIDROIT adopted this July at the UNCITRAL Commission.

We also commend the first jointly developed UNCITRAL/UNIDROIT Model Law on Warehouse Receipts, adopted just last year by the Commission. These are tangible steps toward system-wide coherence.

AALCO has concrete part to play in this coherent agenda. Thailand recognises and appreciates the work of AALCO on the three model bilateral agreements for the promotion and protection of investment which was adopted during the Twenty-Third Session. We commend our effort in addressing key investment related issue and in promoting a balanced and protective framework for international investment. Moreover, our organisation already cooperates closely with the United Nations system including UNCITRAL and has deepened tie through a 2024 Memorandum of Understanding with UNIDROIT that provides among other thing for mutual observer participation and knowledge sharing.

AALCO has also partner with the HCCH to promote accession in implementation for private international law instruments among our Members. Through this link, our goal can convey, convene Asian-African consultation, relay common position, and help align legislative assistance with our priority. Our task going forward is to promote greater coherence between substantive rule and procedure reform between regional practise and global standards and between the aspiration of States and the mechanism available to realise them.

Coherence will ensure that international economic law function as a system that is predictable, fair, and responsive to the need of all States including importantly the one in our region.

Madam Vice-President, in closing, we must give States a choice in how disputes are prevented and resolved notably through an Advisory Centre that levels the playing field. We must deepen cooperation across region so that rules are responsive to our realities and faithful to the Charter's peaceful settlement of disputes. And we must pursue coherence among the diverse institutions that govern this field, so we can ensure that international law remains an instrument of equity and progress for all.

Vice-President: Thank you. I thank the distinguished delegate from the Kingdom of Thailand. I now have the honour to give the floor to the distinguished delegate from Japan followed by Malaysia. Japan, you have the floor, please.

The Delegate of Japan: Madam Vice-President, although the prospect of the situation surrounding international trade is not necessarily clear, we should advocate the importance of the multilateral trading system with the WTO at its core. Meanwhile, it is also clear that the WTO faces various challenges. We need to accelerate discussions towards WTO reform.

Towards the fourteenth WTO Ministerial Conference (MC14) to be held in March next year, it is important to demonstrate the significance of the WTO by showing progress on issues such as electronic commerce, particularly the extension of the current practice of not imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions, and investment facilitation, as well as paving the way for WTO reform.

In the field of rule-making, the Fisheries Subsidies Agreement, (which Japan accepted in July 2023), is one step away from the entry into force. Japan calls for the prompt conclusion by relevant Members.

The Disciplines on Services Domestic Regulation, which was negotiated as an initiative for voluntary plurilateral commitments at the WTO, entered into force for Japan in June this year, following the approval of the Diet. These Disciplines are regarded as the first set of new rules on trade in services in 24 years and Japan took active part in its negotiation.

Looking ahead to the MC14 and beyond, Japan will continue working to maintain and strengthen a free, fair and rules-based multilateral trading system.

Madam Vice-President, in the fifty-eighth session of the Commission, the UNCTIRAL adopted three instruments, including the draft convention on negotiable cargo documents. Japan has participated in all of the Working Groups and highly appreciates this adoption that shows the progress of each working group of the UNCITRAL.

Japan appreciates the adoption of the Draft Convention on Negotiable Cargo Documents in the fifty-eighth session of the Commission, noting the importance of avoiding conflicts with rules concerning bills of lading used in maritime transport. Japan intends to actively contribute to future work on the preparation of Explanatory Notes for the Convention.

The Commission adopted the Toolkit and Background Notes on asset tracing and recovery (ATR) in insolvency proceedings prepared by Working Group V. This is a non-prescriptive instrument intended to allow judges and practitioners to refer to ATR measures of other jurisdictions when considering issues and solutions related to asset tracing and recovery in insolvency proceedings. Japan contributed to the discussions of this working group and hopes this instrument will be useful to many countries.

In the fifty-eighth session of the Commission, the UNCTIRAL adopted the UNCITRAL Toolkit on Prevention and Mitigation of International Investment Disputes UNCITRAL which

was developed by the Working Group-III. The UNCITRAL Working Group III is working diligently on the ISDS reform. Japan believes that a fair and effective ISDS mechanism is meaningful in ensuring a stable investment environment and attaches importance to the discussion in the working group.

Japan recognizes the importance of discussions regarding the legal nature of verified carbon credits. Considering the responses which will be submitted by other countries to this study, Japan intends to closely monitor future discussions on this issue.

The Draft Model Organization Rules for Limited Liability Enterprises are a template for limited liability companies to use when creating their organization rules, based on the UNCITRAL Legislative Guide on Limited Liability Enterprises adopted at its fifty-fourth session of the Commission. Japan appreciates the secretariat's efforts of drafting the Model Organization Rules, and its adoption at the Commission.

Madam Vice-President, UNCTAD has contributed to the development of the international investment agreements regime through various initiatives and capacity building.

The World Investment Report 2025 objectively presents the current state and risks of international investment, while also providing concrete guidance for expanding investment in the digital and sustainable sectors.

As an example of the contribution by UNCTAD to the formation of investment rules in international forum, UNCTAD's expertise has recently been utilized in the efforts of the WTO Investment Facilitation for Development. It provides for technical assistance to developing countries and LDCs. Japan hopes that this agreement will contribute to attracting investment and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in these countries.

International investment agreements play an important role in promoting sustainable energy. It is important to strike a balance between the promotion of investment and States' rights to regulate.

We will continue to work on improving the legal foundation to enhance predictability for investors and promote investment activities.

Madam Vice-President, Japan welcomes the recent progress made by HCCH and UNIDROIT. HCCH and UNIDROIT are also key institutions to develop and maintain a robust cross-border legal framework in private law as well as UNCITRAL.

In particular, we believe that the UNIDROIT Principle on the legal nature of verified carbon credits and the HCCH's Expert Group meetings on digital assets to be best examples of these international institutions tackling new issues in areas where international uniform rules have yet to be established.

Japan believes it is important that wide varieties of states join these international institutions to enhance the international private law. The projects carried by both organizations vary from those related to digital assets to investment contracts, and may influence private law system of AALCO Member States. It is important that more countries to join the ongoing discussion to reflect their position. Japan hopes that more AALCO Member States to participate in HCCH and UNIDROIT.

Madame Vice-President, as for the proposal to develop a Model Investment Treaty, while Japan shares the recognition that balancing investor protections with the right of states to regulate is

an important issue, however, given the significant time that has passed since the previous attempts to develop a Model Investment Treaty within AALCO, and the fact that the AALCO member states has not engaged in substantive discussions on investment treaties in recent years, we prefer to start discussions by sharing best practices, rather than to rushing to the conclusion.

Vice-President: I thank the distinguished Delegate of Japan. Now I have on the list Malaysia followed by Sudan and then Kenya and then the People's Republic of China and then Vietnam and Uganda. So I now have the honour to give the floor to the distinguished Delegate of Malaysia. Yeah, Malaysia, you have the floor, please.

The Delegate of Malaysia: Thank you, Ms. Vice-President. Ms. Vice-President, in relation to the UNCITRAL, Malaysia reaffirms its support for the Commission's efforts in strengthening the international legal framework on trade and investment. Malaysia is happy to inform that we have been re-elected into the Commission and we appreciate the trust and support given to Malaysia in continuing the work of the Commission. Malaysia continues to provide its unwavering support to the work of the Commission for the next six years.

Malaysia welcomes the outcome of the fifty-eighth session of UNCITRAL held in Vienna from 7 to 23 July 2025, particularly on the adoption of three instruments and the approval of three documents for publication and circulation. Malaysia acknowledges that these developments contribute significantly to the harmonisation and unification of international trade law in areas such as negotiable cargo documents, ISDS reform and carbon credits.

Malaysia reiterates its commitment to participate constructively in UNCITRAL's work and to ensuring that the perspectives of developing countries are adequately reflected, particularly in relation to ISDS reform and emerging areas of trade law.

Ms. Vice-President, with reference to the proposal put forth for the development of a Model Investment Treaty ("MIT") Malaysia wishes to thank the United Republic of Tanzania for the proposal put forth for the development of MIT with the aim of addressing the complexities and imbalances associated with existing international investment agreements ("IIAs").

Malaysia echoes the observation that many AALCO Member States have experienced challenges by way of arbitration claims leading to substantial financial burdens and regulatory changes made in the public interest that were deemed violations of treaty obligations. For example, an ISDS claim brought against the host State would inevitably bring high financial implications to the host State, require utilisation of resources and may include extensive coordination with other agencies. It would also affect the host State's overall reputation as an investment hub. Therefore, Malaysia agrees for a fair and balanced approach to IIAs to be explored.

With regard to sustainable development provisions, most international investment agreements do not specifically provide for sustainable development provisions due to the inability of the host State to enforce or implement such provisions, the necessity for the host State to attract capital-intensive investments and the assurance of the State's economic growth. Malaysia notes that the MIT proposes that IIAs should be designed and evaluated with respect to their ability to promote investments that advance sustainable development goals and withholding benefits from investments that undermine these goals through provisions on corporate social responsibility, environmental sustainability and respect for human rights.

As stated in the previous AALCO Session, Malaysia has always dealt with the elements of sustainable development under specialised treaties, such as international human rights treaties,

environmental treaties and their implementation regimes. Therefore, if there is any insufficiency in addressing sustainable development concerns, then the insufficiency should first be addressed in those specialised agreements.

While the conclusion of a sustainable development-oriented IIAs is an emerging trend, it does not necessarily mean that an IIA with a high level of sustainable development commitment is suitable for all Member States or that such an IIA can best serve the development goals of a country. Therefore, the MIT should consider the effects of its proposed elements on Member States' policy-making processes and regulatory space to ensure that ultimately, the Member States' interests remain safeguarded and protected.

With regard to the question of modalities, Malaysia proposes for preliminary consultations to be held on the onset of drafting the MIT to assess its viability and necessity to avoid any possible redundancy or duplication considering the fact that other international institutions have also undertaken extensive research on reforming IIAs.

Based on AALCO's experience in coming up with the three Draft Models, it could be seen that the challenge has been to harmonise the different legal frameworks, approaches and practices of Member States. These challenges still exist and in fact, are more complex in the present day. Thus, it may be helpful to gather such information to provide an indication on the acceptance of a unified model approach. We also encourage for the consolidation of the elements under all the three Draft Models when drafting the MIT.

Ms. Vice-President, once again, Malaysia stands committed to engage in discussions in all relevant platforms to advance its course for the betterment of international trade and investment law.

Vice-President: I thank the distinguished delegate of Malaysia. Thank you. I now give the floor to the distinguished delegate of the Republic of Sudan. You have the floor, please, followed by Kenya. Sudan, you have the floor, please.

The Delegate of the Republic of the Sudan:¹ Thank you, Madam Vice-President. International trade and investment represent a significant tributary to the national economy, in which Sudan holds great hope, especially when considering regional agreements such as the COMESA Agreement and the Arab Agreement.

The Investment Act 2021, Amendment 2025, regulates investment in Sudan, and Section 19(1), provides the following investment guarantees:

- All the investments established in the Sudan, shall enjoy just and fair treatment.
- The State shall guarantee to the foreign investor a similar treatment to that granted to the national investor.
- The invested funds shall not be subjected to any arbitrary procedures, or any discriminatory decisions.
- Non-nationalizing or seizure, wholly or partially, the investment projects assets and real-estate, save for public benefit and in consideration of fair compensation.
- Non-seizure of the investment project funds, takes possession, freeze, retain or take custody thereof, save in accordance with legal procedures.

¹ The statement was delivered in Arabic. The Secretariat acknowledges with gratitude the official translation provided by the Delegation of the Republic of the Sudan for inclusion in the Verbatim Records.

- There shall not confiscate the investment project or the funds thereof, save under a judicial judgment.
- Re-transfer the invested funds in case of non-implementation of the investment projects or disposal thereof in any way, after the approval of the Ministry and the bodies having connection, provided that all legally due obligations are fulfilled.
- Re-export the machines, equipment, goods, devices, means of transportation and other supplies imported for the project to the destination from which the import was made in case of non-implementation, wholly or partially of the project, whenever legally due obligation are fulfilled.
- Transfer of the profits and financing cost on the foreign capital or loans in the currency where the Central Bank of Sudan deals therewith on the due date, and the same shall be after payment of the legally obligations due on the investment projects.
- Import the raw materials needed for the project and exporting the products thereof, after registering the investment project in the Exporters and Importers Register.

As for disputes that arise in investment, they have been addressed by Section 29 of the Act, which provides that Sudanese courts shall be competent in considering any legal dispute with respect to investment, as well as the two parties may resolve the dispute thereof amicably, or through consultations or direct negotiation, or resolve to arbitration. There shall be excluded disputes governed by bilateral or international agreement to which Sudan is a party thereof.

We believe that the legal frameworks of both parties as well as that of investment organization play an effective role in attracting investment projects and fair laws protecting them.

Madam Vice-President, the Republic of Sudan welcomes the efforts of AALCO to develop legal frameworks for investment, particularly the initiatives presented by the United Republic of Tanzania. Thank you, Madam Vice-President.

Vice-President: Thank you to the distinguished delegate of the Republic of the Sudan. I now give the floor to the Republic of Kenya followed by the People's Republic of China. Kenya, you have the floor, please.

The Delegate of the Republic of Kenya: Madam Vice-President, Secretary-General, distinguished delegates, Kenya is honoured to address this conference on this agenda item. International trade and foreign direct investment are powerful engines for economic growth, sustainable development, and poverty eradication.

For developing nations across Asia and Africa, they represent a pathway to achieving the sustainable development goals and integrating into the global economy. However, this potential can only be realised if the legal framework governing this are fair, balanced, and supportive of our development aspirations. Madam Vice-President, Kenya wishes to emphasise the following key principles and concerns.

One, reforming the multilateral trading system. The WTO remains the cornerstone of a world-based global trading system. However, its current challenges, including the impasse and the dispute settlement mechanism, require urgent attention.

Kenya calls for a revitalised and reformed WTO that is more responsive to the needs of developing countries. This includes, one, resolving the appellate body crisis, and we urge Member States to find a lasting solution to restore a fully and effective functioning two-tier dispute settlement system, which is essential for the security and predictability of international trade.

Second, delivering on development. The core principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries must be preserved, strengthened, and made more precise, effective, and operational. It is a treaty-embedded right, not a concession.

Third, on agriculture, we call for outcomes that address historic imbalances, eliminate trade-distorting subsidies by developed nations, and provide developing countries with the necessary policy space to ensure food security, livelihoods, and rural development.

Secondly, balancing investment protection and regulatory space. While Kenya welcomes foreign investment, the international investment law regime must evolve to achieve a better balance between the rights of investors and the right and duty of host States to regulate in the public interest.

Our priorities include, one, reforming Investor State Dispute Settlement. The current ISDS system is marked by inconsistencies, lack of transparency, and high costs. Kenya supports a fundamental reform, including the exploration of a multilateral investment court. In the interim, we advocate for the increased use of regional dispute settlement mechanisms and domestic courts.

Second, on promoting sustainable investment, investment agreements must include robust provisions that encourage responsible business conduct, compel investors to adhere to environmental standards, respect human rights, and contribute to local capacity building and technology transfer.

Third, the African continental free trade area is a model. Kenya is a proud and active model of the AfCFTA, which represents a transformative project for Africa's development.

The AfCFTA is not just about trade liberalisation. It is about integrating our markets, building regional value chains, and industrialising. We encourage AALCO to study the AfCFTA's innovative approach to investment, competition policy, and intellectual property rights, which are designed to be development-oriented and could serve as a model for south-to-south cooperation.

Madam Vice-President and delegates of AALCO, as eighty per cent of global trade is facilitated by shipping, Kenya takes this opportunity to humbly seek your vote for its candidatures for the International Maritime Organisation Council Category C.

Fourth, coherence between trade, investment, and climate action. Trade and investment policies must be aligned with our climate obligations and the just transition. Kenya opposes unilateral environmental measures such as carbon border adjustment that are discriminatory and create new barriers for trade for developing countries. We call for support and technology transfer to enable our industries to transition to greener production methods rather than punitive measures that stifle our development.

Madam Vice-President, the nations of Asia and Africa, which represent the majority of the world's population and its most dynamic economy, must have a greater voice in shaping the rules of global trade and investment. AALCO provides a vital platform for us to build common positions, share best practises, and enhance our legal capacity to negotiate and implement agreements that truly serve our people.

Kenya stands ready to work with all Member States to advocate for a more inclusive, equitable, and development-friendly international trade and investment legal architecture. I thank you, Madam Vice-President.

Vice-President: I thank the distinguished delegate of the Republic of Kenya. I now give the floor to the distinguished delegate of the People's Republic of China, followed by Vietnam. China, you have the floor, please.

The Delegate of the People's Republic of China: Thank you very much, Madam Vice-President. Since the beginning of this year, a country with significant influence imposed large-scale tariff measures such as reciprocal tariffs, which are protectionist and unilateral bullying measures in nature. The tariff measures threatened to trigger a global trade war seriously impacted the multilateral trading system with the WTO at its core and undermined the stability of the global industrial chain and supply chain, especially causing great damage and impact to small and vulnerable economies and the least developed countries. China always firmly upholds the multilateral trading system with the WTO at its core.

History has proved that protectionism always fails itself and open cooperation is the only right way. China is willing to work with all parties to support genuine multilateralism, firmly safeguard the multilateral trading system, strengthen economic and trade cooperation, and inject more stability and certainty into the world economy.

With respect to the work of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, we know that since July 2017, UNCITRAL initiated Investor-State Dispute Settlement reform. Its Working Group III has identified the problems with the current ISDS mechanism and confirmed the need for reform. UNCITRAL member States are discussing various reform options. This reform will have a significant impact on international investment arbitration rules and practises.

It has attracted wide attention from the international community. At present, the reform has entered the stage of substantive negotiation on the draft text and UNCITRAL member States have reached preliminary agreements on some issues such as the Code of Conduct for Arbitrators, an advisory centre, and mediation rules, which many issues remain to be solved. China supports addressing the shortcomings in the current ISDS region by refining multilateral rules and mechanisms to boost confidence in dispute settlement and uphold the rule of law. China supports the establishment of an appellate mechanism as a key part of ISDS reform and a multilateralism instrument to extend this new mechanism for broad application. Thank you for your kind attention.

Vice-President: I thank the distinguished delegate from the People's Republic of China for her statement. I now give the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Vietnam, you have the floor, please.

The Delegate of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam: Thank you Madam Chair, Madam Vice-President, Excellences, Distinguished Delegates our delegation would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Secretariat for the informative report on the topic of international trade and investment law.

Viet Nam fully supports and commits its active engagement in efforts to improve the legal framework for international trade and investment. We attach great importance to the role of multilateral legal mechanisms such as the International Law Commission (ILC), the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), and AALCO in promoting discussion on the topic.

It is with great honour that I announce Vietnam's successful election by the United Nations General Assembly as a member of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law

(UNCITRAL) for the 2024–2030 term. This marks not only recognition of Vietnam’s ongoing efforts to promote the rule of law and international economic integration, but also reflects the international community’s trust in Vietnam’s increasingly active, proactive, and responsible role in multilateral institutions.

In the upcoming term, Vietnam will prioritize its participation in Working Group III, which focuses on the reform of the Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanism. Viet Nam expresses its warm welcome and sincere appreciation for the commendable work carried out by the UNCITRAL Working Group III in its review and its proposition of measures to reform the Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanism. Discussions have advanced to substantive negotiations, though several issues remain unresolved. Viet Nam reaffirms its support for UNCITRAL’s ongoing ISDS reform under Working Group III, which aims to address the concerns of States, investors, and other stakeholders regarding the current ISDS mechanism. The objective to enhance transparency and efficiency, establish equitable conditions based on international law for both host States and their investors. Viet Nam also underscores the significance of fostering a conducive environment for effective and sustainable dispute resolution. We supported the establishment of the ISDS Advisory Centres and also extend this recognition and encouragement for all AALCO Member States to play a more active role in advocating for the establishment of these Advisory Centres.

Furthermore, Viet Nam has also actively participated in the work of the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH), including the meeting of the Council on General Affairs and Policy. We remain committed to contributing to discussions on prospective legislative instruments, as well as to following up on post-convention developments. Thank you, Madam Vice-President.

Vice-President: Thank you. I thank the Distinguished Delegate from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. I now give the floor to the Republic of Uganda. Uganda, you have the floor, please.

The Delegate of the Republic of Uganda: Madam Vice-President, Secretary-General, Distinguished Delegates, I wish to express on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Uganda our appreciation to the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organisation for providing a forum where our two regions can deliberate on pressing legal issues that shape international trade and investment.

Madam Vice-President, trade and investment inevitably give rise to trade and investment related disputes which can potentially lock up millions of dollars in capital. The Delegation of Uganda wishes to commend various international institutions such as UNCITRAL, the Permanent Court of Arbitration, and the ICSID to mention but a few that continue to facilitate resolution of these disputes and shape international trade and investment policies.

Trade and investment are inevitable precursors to sustainable growth and development. At the heart of trade and investment is trade financing and access to credit, negotiable cargo documents, connectivity and digitalisation, all of which have been subject to discussions under the auspices of UNCITRAL. We would like to urge the AALCO to take keen interest and make a contribution to the UNCITRAL processes to ensure that the unique operational capacity and technical challenges that bedevil Africa and Asia are taken into consideration and are reflective of the final documents that will be adopted by UN Member States to which we all subscribe.

We urge AALCO Member States to actively engage in these negotiations to ensure that the perspectives of developing economies are fully incorporated. Trade and investment by its very nature is prone to disputes and therefore efficient, fair and affordable dispute resolution

mechanisms are key facilitators of trade and investment. In Africa, investor-State disputes are on the rise on account of an increasing trend to assert national sovereignty over natural resources, government-imposed taxes and disagreements over revenue distribution.

Madam Vice-President, arbitration remains a viable forum for settlement of trade-related disputes. Arbitration has been used extensively by foreign investors seeking to challenge State actions that they believe violate contractual or investment rights. While we commend the work of the AALCO in establishing arbitration centres, we would like to highlight the growing concerns of cartels in arbitration which erode the confidence of the parties in the process.

My delegation is, however, delighted to note that the AALCO is making a contribution to the Code of Conduct of arbitrators that UNCITRAL is currently working on. This code of conduct is very much needed to restore or maintain ethical conduct in arbitration proceedings.

Madam Vice-President, some States have particularly begun to rethink the worth of subscribing to international arbitration given the exorbitant costs on, for example, travel, fees, accommodation and so on that are attendant to international arbitrations.

This has created a new thinking of home-grown interventions with home-grown arbitration institutions such as the Asian International Arbitration Centre in Malaysia and the Singapore International Arbitration Centre. Alternative options to be explored include domestic litigation which strengthens jurisprudence although it often faces the perceptions of bias from investors. Alternative dispute resolution, particularly mediation, is equally important as it offers flexible and participatory resolutions.

It is along this thinking that the Republic of Uganda is a pioneer signatory to the Convention for the Establishment of the International Organisation for Mediation spearheaded by the People's Republic of China. Uganda reaffirms her commitment to working closely with AALCO and fellow Member States to ensure that international legal developments in trade and investment contribute meaningfully to sustainable development, equitable growth and the well-being of our peoples. I thank you, Madam Vice-President.

The Delegate of the Kingdom of Bahrain:² Your Excellency, Madam Vice-President, Excellencies and happiness. Dear presence. The delegation of the Kingdom of Bahrain conveys its greetings and appreciation, and expresses its sincere gratitude for organizing this important international forum, which brings us together to discuss international trade and investment issues, as it is a basic pillar of international economic law, and a major tool to achieve sustainable development and enhance the luxury of peoples.

The Kingdom of Bahrain, and with its awareness of the importance of the World Trade Organization and its pivotal role in consolidating the rules of the multilateral international commercial system, stresses the need to intensify cooperation and coordination within the framework of the ongoing negotiations within the Organization. In this regard, the Kingdom believes that the success of these negotiations requires reaching balanced solutions that take into account the interests of all members, and achieve the compatibility between the liberalization of trade and the protection of legitimate national policies, in a way that contributes to enhancing the stability of the international economic system.

With regard to the path of negotiations on the fishing agreement, Bahrain supports the conclusion of a fair agreement that prohibits harmful practices leading to overfishing, and

² A copy of the statement was provided to the Secretariat for inclusions in the Verbatim Record.

ensures the protection of marine resources, while preserving the rights of local fishermen, in compliance with the relevant international standards and sustainable development goals.

The Kingdom also confirms that negotiations related to the regulation of agricultural trade must start from the principle of achieving a balance between food security and freedom of trade, taking into account the special needs of developing and less developed countries. In this context, Bahrain supports the establishment of transparent and fair criteria that prohibit distorted market practices, and ensure equality in access to agricultural markets, in line with the principles of justice and fairness on which international economic law is based.

In the context of developing the business environment and attracting investments, the Kingdom of Bahrain has made a leading step by hosting the first permanent office of the permanent arbitration court in the Arab world and the Middle East region, according to the headquarters agreement signed in June 2025. This achievement represents a qualitative addition to the advanced national judicial structure, and provides an independent and effective platform for the settlement of commercial and investment disputes according to the rules of international law. The Kingdom also strengthened its position by linking its judicial system to the International Commercial Court in Singapore, which enhances confidence in the business environment and provides modern and effective settlement mechanisms according to international best practices.

Bahrain continues its endeavour to consolidate its position as a regional and international centre for arbitration and the settlement of disputes by updating its legislation and alignment with international standards, and developing its legal and institutional infrastructure, benefiting from its strategic location and its open economic environment.

Based on Bahrain Economic Vision 2030, the Kingdom confirms its commitment to strengthening international partnerships and attracting specific investments that contribute to achieving sustainable economic growth. It also renews its willingness to work with all partners for the success of multilateral negotiations, in a way that contributes to strengthening the international trade system based on rules, and achieving commercial integration between countries.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain expresses its confidence that the concerted efforts and adherence to the founding principles of the World Trade Organization will lead to the construction of a more just and stable global trade system, achieving the interests of all peoples and supports the prosperity of their economies. Thank you.

Vice-President: I now open the floor to observer States, observer States followed by observer organisation but we only have one observer. So we have from the UN Commission on International Trade Law, the distinguished representative from UNCTRAL, you have the floor please.

The Delegate of UNCITRAL: Thank you. My name is Jae-Song Lee and I'm representing UNCTRAL here. Thank you, Madam President. Thank you for giving UNCTRAL the opportunity to represent our views on this important topic of investment trade law, trade law and investment law. Let me provide some reflections on the statements that have been made by the AALCO Member States.

First, as has been emphasised by a number of the Member States, ISDS reform is at a critical juncture. As the Secretary of UNCTRAL's Working Group III on ISDS reform, I guess it's

obvious that I say this. Having begun its work in 2017 with an ambition to possibly complete the ISDS reform by 2028 or earliest by 2027, Working Group III is embarking on a number of different aspects or efforts to reform ISDS. A number of these initiatives have been mentioned, the draft provisions on procedural and cross-cutting issues which would deal with the right to regulate, denial of benefits, damages, local remedies have a place to also, could be linked with the possible development of a model investment treaty as proposed by Tanzania.

The proposal to establish a standing mechanism to address international investment disputes, the Working Group has already reviewed the Statute of a possible standing mechanism and will be discussing the design and structure of that in the September session that is coming soon. The multilateral instrument to implement all these reforms and to reform and amend existing investment treaties is also being addressed. Of course, the IIA reforms and ISDS reform has a broader context also in the context of climate change as well as financing for development as has been recognised in the UN context more broadly.

A number of references have also been made to the already outcomes of the process of Working Group III referring to the Code of Conduct, the text on mediation, the toolkit on dispute prevention and mitigations, as well as the Statute of the Advisory Centre. So in the context of ISDS reform, I would really urge active participations of the AALCO Member States, broader participations, because we are at this critical juncture and there are some possibilities for travelling support for travel support for the delegations.

Of course, ISDS reform is not the only aspect of UNCITRAL. Work continues in a number of different areas of international trade law, as has been mentioned, which are also important in support of MSMEs in the areas of insolvency where the Toolkit on Asset Tracing and Recovery was adopted by the Commission this year, which has a linkage to the next topic of this AALCO meeting on asset recovery.

The legal study on the voluntary carbon credits is also of interest to the Member States, and a guide on blockchains has also been prepared. Work is also ongoing on a number of areas, with five of the six Working Groups actively engaging in the use of AI in international dispute resolution, the data provision contract, as well as the applicable law in insolvency proceedings.

And therefore, there are a number of future works is also being considered, with work on digital platforms, digital payments, the use of AI in trade dispute resolution, as well as digital platforms. So these are future work that will be considered by the Secretariat and presented to the Commission in the coming Session.

Let me conclude with a few of the upcoming activities that are relating to UNCITRAL. The UNCTRAL annual report will be presented to the Sixth Committee on the 20th of October, which includes the Draft Convention on Negotiable Cargo Documents, which would cover multimodal transport. Hopefully, adopted by the General Assembly in the fall of this year, this Convention will open for signature next year, and this is something probably of great interest to the AALCO Member States. There will be a request for additional resources to support ISDS reform, and as I mentioned, because we are at a critical co-juncture and we would like to complete the project by 2027 and possibly 2028, we would also urge AALCO Member States to support this request for additional resources to the General Assembly.

Lastly, the establishment of the Advisory Centre is of great interest for developing countries and least developed countries who are faced with difficulties in handling a number of investment disputes at their hand. With the Statute adopted in principle by the Commission last year, there is work in progress to operationalize and establish the centres and to finalise the

Statute as well. We have also had a final call for candidates to host the regional office or the headquarters of the Advisory Centre, which is due on the 20th of October as well. So, as mentioned by one of the delegates, there will be an operationalization meeting that will continue in Paris in December of this year to discuss all of the operationalization issues that relate to the Advisory Centre.

So, people say that multilateralism is at risk, but UNCITRAL is an example of multilateralism at work, and we hope to cooperate and coordinate closely with AALCO and its Member States in this process of providing legal certainty international standards that govern international trade law. I am happy to be actually responding to any questions and happy to engage in any dialogue with Member States here.

Vice-President: Thank you very much. Thank you for that very informative intervention. May I know if there are any further requests for the floor? There being none, we are very efficient and we have concluded our deliberations on this topic. We now take a coffee break and after that we shall take up the next substantive topic on our agenda this Session, which is Asset Recovery Expert Forum from 11.30. So, we'll take a coffee break and please come back at 11.30. Thank you very much. We adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

**XIV. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTH
GENERAL MEETING (CONTINUED) OF THE
AALCO MEMBER STATES**

**XIV. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTH GENERAL MEETING (CONTINUED)
OF THE AALCO MEMBER STATES HELD ON THURSDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2024,
AT 11:45 AM**

Alternate Head of Delegation of the Republic of the Philippines in the Chair¹

AGENDA ITEM: ASSET RECOVERY EXPERT FORUM

Vice-President: Before we begin, I would like to inform everyone that in line with Rule 12, Sub-Rule 4 of the AALCO's Statutory Rules, 2024, on behalf of the Vice-President, I will be chairing this session on Asset Recovery Expert Forum. So as informed earlier, we take up the next topic on the agenda, Asset Recovery Expert Forum. I invite the AALCO Secretariat to make the introductory remarks. DSG, please.

Mr. Yong Zhu, Deputy Secretary-General of AALCO: Madam Vice-President, Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. Asset recovery remains critically important for Asian and African nations due to its profound implications for governance, development, and international relations. AALCO's commitment to combating corruption in all its forms and fostering cooperation among Member States dates back to the Forty-First Annual Session held in Abuja, Nigeria in 2001. AALCO further produced two comprehensive Special Studies on this vital topic in 2005 and 2006.

The topic of "Asset Recovery Expert Forum" was first introduced and presented to AALCO at the Sixty-First Annual Session held in Bali, the Republic of Indonesia in October 2023, at the proposal of the Republic of Indonesia. The deliberations at this Annual Session centered on the need for the creation of an Asset Recovery Forum within AALCO. The proposal received support from numerous delegations who recognized the importance of asset recovery in combating corruption and acknowledged the necessity of establishing a dedicated expert forum to address the complexity and significance of asset recovery processes.

Following the mandate received from Member States, an Inter-sessional Meeting titled "Best Practices of Recovering Stolen Assets from Asian and African Countries" was convened on 21st June 2024 at AALCO's Permanent Headquarters in New Delhi, in collaboration with the Government of Indonesia. This meeting facilitated valuable consultations on the establishment of the Forum and prepared the groundwork for future deliberations. Further discussions regarding the establishment of the proposed Asset Recovery Expert Forum were extensively held during the Sixty-Second Annual Session in Bangkok, Kingdom of Thailand, in 2024.

Pursuant to a request received from the Republic of Indonesia on 17th March 2025, a Secretariat *Note Verbale* enclosing a template dated 8th April 2025 was circulated to all Member States, requesting details of national authorities responsible for asset recovery. As of 4th September

¹ Rule 12 of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization Statutory Rules, 2024 provides for the "Rules of Procedure for Annual Session". Sub-Rule 4 of Rule 12 lays down that: "In case both the President and Vice-President are not available then the plenary meetings shall be presided over by the Alternate Head of the Delegation of the Member State presiding over the Annual Session." Accordingly, a part of the meeting was chaired by Ms. Melissa Anne M. Telan, Second Secretary & Consul, Embassy of the Philippines in New Delhi, India.

2025, we have received responses from nine Member States. This information will contribute to developing a comprehensive contact list and strengthen collaborative efforts among Member States. Other Member States are also invited to do so.

The Secretariat's brief for this session provides a comprehensive overview of recent developments in asset recovery. It focuses on two critical areas for our deliberations: First, The Conference of States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and asset recovery developments, and second, Charting the way forward for the establishment of an Asset Recovery Expert Forum.

I invite all delegations to participate actively in the discussions that follow and to share their respective positions on this highly significant initiative. Together, we can strengthen our collective capacity to recover stolen assets and restore these vital resources to serve our peoples' development needs. Thank you.

Vice-President: Thank you, DSG, on behalf of the AALCO Secretariat for introducing everyone to this important topic. Now on my list, there are 10 Member States that will be delivering interventions for this topic in the following order. We have the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of India, the United Republic of Tanzania, Japan, the Republic of South Africa, the Republic of Kenya, the People's Republic of China, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Malaysia, and the Republic of the Sudan. And now I invite the distinguished delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran to deliver their statement. You have the floor.

The Delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Madam Vice-President, we thank the AALCO Secretariat for its dedicated work on the topic and preparation of the relevant report which facilitates the discussions and gives direction thereto.

Madam Vice-President, the Islamic Republic of Iran has long advocated that recovery and return of assets and proceeds of corruption are an integral part of combating corruption. We recall that under Chapter V of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, return of assets of illicit origin derived from acts of corruption is a fundamental principle and critical to the successful implementation of the Convention whereby States parties are obliged to afford to one another the widest measures of mutual legal assistance during investigation, prosecution and judicial proceedings to facilitate recovery and return of stolen assets to the country of origin.

In this regard, States parties should carry out their obligations under the Convention in a manner consistent with the principles of sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States and that of non-intervention in internal affairs of other States.

Return and recovery of assets faces longstanding challenges and barriers. These challenges not only negatively affect sustainable development of our societies and mobilization of financial resources but also violate the fundamental rights of victims and individuals including the right to compensation. Absence of political will, complexity of legal procedures, lack of a comprehensive legal mechanism, arduous procedural and evidentiary laws, inability to recognize and enforce foreign confiscation and restraint orders, onerous legal requirements to MLA and broad MLA refusals are part of these impediments for recovery and return of asset and proceeds of crime.

In this sphere, recognizing root causes, current barriers, and a collective and coordinated response to corruption are crucial for removing and resolving the impediments in the process of return of assets of illicit origin derived from acts of corruption. Furthermore, denying safe haven to the proceeds of crime, returning assets to the requesting State party, returning such property to its prior legitimate owners, or compensating the victims of the crime, within the framework of the Convention, are considered as practical and proper solutions for combating and tackling corruption;

Anti-corruption measures without regards for these measures may very well undermine development, as States have an obligation to ensure the progressive realization of the right to development, rooted, *inter alia*, in the Charter of the United Nations. Accordingly, the Preamble and Article 62 (1) of the UNCAC have respectively expressed concern regarding, and took note of, the negative effects of corruption on sustainable development. In this context, asset recovery constitutes an important element in fulfilling the right to development and in promoting domestic resource mobilization required for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

As States endeavor to fulfill their obligations, there are certain barriers that seriously undermine the allocation of resources to this cause, namely unilateral coercive measures (UCMs) that are illegitimate, unlawful and in clear contradiction with the UN Charter and other principles of international law. These are flagrant interference in the sovereign affairs of other States and undermine the right to sustainable development for societies and the principle of providing effective remedy for those affected by corruption offences.

Without doubt efforts and resources need to be allocated to assist Member States to fully implement their obligations on asset recovery as a pressing challenge, and encourage other Member States to refrain from political reasoning to respond to MLA requests and more importantly remove barriers to the recovery and return of assets and proceeds of corruption.

In the end, it is noteworthy to mention, while asset recovery is a way of indemnity for the victims of corruption, it is a strong signal to the offenders and ultimately enhances preventive measures effectiveness as well. For this, full use of the possibility of concluding agreements or mutually acceptable arrangements for the return and final disposal of confiscated property and removing barriers to the recovery of assets is of utmost importance. This demonstrates the significant role the AALCO could play in mainstreaming the potentials of the Member States, in particular, in terms of capacity-building and sharing experiences within the domain of asset recovery.

The Asset Recovery Forum at the AALCO provides a unique opportunity to coordinate efforts of the Member States in line with the purposes of the UNCAC. Best practices and lessons learned could be shared by Member States and challenges of the States Parties in implementation of the Convention as reflected in the UNCAC Conferences of States Parties resolutions, reports and recommendations could be discussed as appropriate.

To conclude, we hope that these deliberations may further contribute to capacity-building, cooperation, and experience sharing among member States in terms of recovery and return of assets and proceeds of corruption. Thank you, Madam Vice-President.

Vice-President: Thank you very much to the distinguished representative from the Islamic Republic of Iran. We have the President now of the Sixty-Third Session. I would like to invite him to the podium. Mr. President.

Hon'ble Kiryowa Kiwanuka, the Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda and the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO in the Chair.

President: I would like to thank the last speaker from the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement. I would now like to yield the floor to the Republic of India. Republic of India, you have the floor.

The Delegate of the Republic of India: Mr. President, India reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the global fight against corruption and underscores asset recovery as a cornerstone of international legal cooperation. From a legal standpoint, India views asset recovery not merely as a policy imperative but as a binding obligation under international law. Mr. President, India is a State Party to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), the only universal and legally binding instrument dedicated to combating corruption. UNCAC's Chapter V on Asset Recovery provides a robust legal framework for tracing, freezing, confiscating, and returning illicit assets. India has domesticated these provisions through a number of enabling legislations, including: The Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA) – which empowers authorities to attach and confiscate proceeds of crime; The Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 – which authorizes special courts to seize assets of absconding economic offenders. Another legislation is The Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, and The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, among others.

India has also operationalized Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLATs) with numerous jurisdictions, facilitating cross-border cooperation in asset identification, restraint, and repatriation. These treaties serve as the backbone of India's legal response to foreign asset recovery requests and are actively utilized by our designated Central Authorities.

Mr. President, India recognizes that effective asset recovery require not only legal tools but also institutional capacity and inter-jurisdictional trust. We support the establishment of this Expert Forum as a mechanism to enhance legal harmonization, promote capacity-building, and foster peer-to-peer learning among Asian and African jurisdictions.

Mr. President, we also emphasize the importance of avoiding duplication with existing international frameworks. The Forum should complement ongoing efforts under UNCAC, FATF, and other regional mechanisms, ensuring coherence and legal interoperability. India stands ready to contribute its legal expertise, share best practices, and support Member States in strengthening their domestic legal frameworks. We believe that recovered assets, when reinvested into public services and anti-corruption initiatives, can catalyze development and restore public trust.

Mr. President, in conclusion, India views this Expert Forum as a legally significant platform to advance collective efforts in asset recovery, grounded in mutual respect, legal reciprocity, and shared institutional goals. I thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of India. We will have the United Republic of Tanzania, followed by Japan, followed by the Republic of South Africa, and then the Republic of Kenya. The United Republic of Tanzania, you have the floor.

The Delegate of the United Republic of Tanzania: Thank you Mr. President, the United Republic of Tanzania is a party to key international and regional instruments, including the United Nations Conventions against Corruption (UNCAC) (2003), United Nations Conventions against Transnational and Organized Crimes (UNTOC) (2000), and the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (2003), which require States to adopt effective asset forfeiture regimes and ensure the return of illicit assets to their rightful owners.

To meet these obligations, Tanzania has enacted a comprehensive legal framework, including the Proceeds of Crime Act, the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Act, Anti Money Laundering Act and related legislation. These provide mechanisms for parallel investigation which entails recovery of assets even during investigation. It also provides for confiscation, cross-border cooperation and repatriation of tainted properties.

Mr. President, recognizing the complexities of asset recovery, Tanzania is an active member of the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for Eastern Africa (ARIN-EA) and the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for Southern Africa (ARINSA), which facilitate international cooperation in tracing, freezing, and confiscating assets. In 2023, Tanzania further issued guidelines on asset forfeiture, recovery, management, and mutual legal assistance to strengthen implementation.

Mr. President, Tanzania strongly supports the proposal by AALCO to establish an Asset Recovery Expert Forum. We believe this platform will enhance cooperation, promote the exchange of best practices, and address challenges in recovering stolen assets across jurisdictions. Tanzania also reminds AALCO Secretariat and Member States to fasten the establishment of the Asset Recovery Expert Forum and make it operational for the benefit of Member States in combating transnational organized crimes. In conclusion, Tanzania recommends the development of guidelines for the nomination of experts by Member States based on clearly defined criteria and qualifications to be developed as soon as possible. Thank you for your kind attention. *Asante Sana*.

President: I thank the distinguished delegate from the United Republic of Tanzania. I now yield the floor to Japan.

The Delegate of Japan: Mr. President, corruption undermines trust in public officials and public authority, diverts public funds that should be allocated to social development, hinders foreign investment and assistance, and thereby has a profound negative impact on sustainable development. Therefore, it is vital not only to rigorously detect corruption and enforce punishment through criminal procedures, but also implement effective preventive measures. The international society has taken various initiatives and measures to eradicate corruption, however, it continues to pose a serious challenge.

To eradicate corruption, the Japanese government also recognizes the importance of deepening discussions on asset recovery and its related issues and enhancing international cooperation in the field of anti-corruption.

The Japanese government holds capacity-building programs for criminal justice practitioners from developing countries around the world, including Asia and Africa, through UNAFEI (United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders) which is operated by Japan, to address issues related to anti-corruption and asset recovery. UNAFEI annually conducts “International Training Course on the Criminal Justice Response to Corruption” for criminal justice practitioners from developing countries including Asia and Africa. In recent years, asset recovery and relevant issues have been highlighted in 2014, 2017 and 2022. The participants discussed and shared best practices of effective investigative methods of detection, tracking, accurate and prompt preservation and secure confiscation of proceeds of corruption, and international cooperation. Through these efforts, Japan is contributing to enhancing asset recovery capacity of criminal justice practitioners of the UN Member States.

In addition, UNAFEI conducted the 187th International Training Course from May to June this year under the main theme of “Current Challenges and Effective Countermeasures in the Fight Against Money Laundering” with the aim of enhancing capacity of the participants to investigate money laundering as a prerequisite for asset recovery. Experts from relevant organisations shared their expertise on the use of digital forensic in criminal investigations and tracking crypto assets that are often misused for concealing proceeds of crime including corruption.

Mr. President, given that corruption constitutes a shared challenge for the international community, asset recovery should be discussed not only within Asian and African countries but also with countries from all regions. UNCAC Asset Recovery Working Group and G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group are functioning platforms which enables discussion on asset recovery among countries from various regions. On top of that, there are also regional expert forums such as FSRB (FATF-Style Regional Bodies) and ARIN-AP (Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network of Asia Pacific) in the Asia-Africa region.

Mr. President, when establishing a new framework, duplication with existing ones must be avoided, its added value and uniqueness should be clearly demonstrated, and resource implications must also be taken into account. In regard to the establishment of Asset Recovery Expert Forum, Japan believes it is important to carefully examine possible overlaps between existing mechanisms. In this regard, I am a little bit puzzled by the absence of the Member State which proposed this topic in last two years Annual Session. Without a driving force of this topic in AALCO, Japan is skeptical that new Expert Forum can have its added value and uniqueness in relation to the existing mechanism. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, distinguished delegate from Japan. I now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Republic of South Africa.

The Delegate of the Republic of South Africa: Thank you very much Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, South Africa expresses its appreciation to the Government of Indonesia and to the AALCO Secretariat for bringing the issue of asset recovery to the agenda of AALCO. This is a matter of central importance to governance, justice, and sustainable development across Asia and Africa.

Corruption and the illicit transfer of assets out of developing countries deprive our peoples of billions of dollars each year. Funds urgently needed for health care, education, and

infrastructure are lost. We subscribe to the position that proceeds from crime must be returned to its country of origin where such proceeds are to be redirected for its initial purpose, that is to say, to the benefit of the population and victims.

For South Africa, the recovery of stolen assets is not simply a financial exercise, but a matter of justice and restoring integrity to the rule of law.

South Africa ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption in 2004 and has developed a comprehensive domestic framework for asset recovery, including through the Prevention of Organised Crime Act and the International Cooperation in Criminal Matters Act. Our Asset Forfeiture Unit has worked extensively to return the proceeds of crime to victims and to requesting States, often on the basis of both formal and informal cooperation. South Africa's legal framework ensures that confiscated assets are returned to the requesting State, less only the expenses incurred, as provided for in our law.

Excellencies, my delegation wishes to emphasise the importance of cooperation and collaboration between different jurisdictions to ensure the prompt recovery of assets of illicit origin. South Africa was one of the first jurisdictions in the world to introduce non-conviction based forfeiture. The Asset Forfeiture Unit (AFU) of the National Prosecuting Authority implements the freezing and forfeiture provisions in respect of the proceeds and instrumentalities of unlawful activities and benefits of crime.

The Criminal Assets Recovery Account (CARA) was established and is a separate account within the National Revenue Fund (NRF) into which monies and property are deposited following a judicial forfeiture or confiscation order and this fund is used to fight crimes and corruption in our country. This is regulated in law by the Prevention and Combatting of Corrupt Activities Act, of 2004, which forms part of a larger legislative architecture to criminalise corrupt activities. South Africa is keen to share its experiences and to learn from other countries through the establishment of an Asset Recovery Forum.

Criminal asset forfeiture enhances the ability of law enforcement to combat organised criminal activity. The proceeds are distributed to the prosecution and police to assist them in fighting crime. Victims of crimes are also considered.

The Public Protector is an independent institution in our country established in terms of section 181 of the Constitution, with a mandate to support and strengthen constitutional democracy. A supreme administrative oversight body, the Public Protector has the power to investigate, report on and remedy improper conduct in all State affairs. Accountability, Integrity and Responsiveness are key values that this Office is guided by. Incidentally, the Office of the Public Protector is partly supported by the CARA funds in programmes that are aimed at bolstering accountability and preventing crime.

Distinguished delegates, South Africa stands ready to share its own best practices, including its beneficial ownership transparency regime, its Corporate Alternative Dispute Resolution framework, and its work with international partners in tracing and repatriating stolen funds. We will also continue to press for greater cooperation, including in relation to cryptocurrencies and other virtual assets, which present new challenges for asset tracing.

We therefore call on Member States to support the swift operationalisation of the Asset Recovery Expert Forum under AALCO, as a concrete step towards ending impunity for

corruption and ensuring that stolen wealth is returned to the peoples from whom it was taken. Thank you very much.

President: Thank you, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of South Africa. I now yield the floor to the Republic of Kenya.

The Delegate of the Republic of Kenya: Mr. President, on behalf of the Republic of Kenya, I thank you for the opportunity to make this statement on this agenda item. Distinguished delegates, Kenya commends the Secretariat of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization for the successful convening of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of the Organization. Kenya applauds the Secretariat and the Member States for the great initiative in the establishment of the Asset Recovery Expert Forum and bringing together the practitioners in asset recovery.

Kenya takes cognizance of the efforts made in convening Inter-Sessional Meeting on the “Best Practices of Recovering Stolen Assets from Asian and African Countries”, the Sixty-First Annual Session of AALCO, and the Sixty-Second Annual Session of AALCO, which were crucial in the establishment of the forum and developing the operational modalities of the forum.

Kenya acknowledges that recovery of proceeds of crime is an important tool in the fight against organized crime. Asset recovery goes beyond conviction in criminal cases, it ensures that perpetrators and criminals do not benefit from their crime.

Kenya has adopted asset recovery as a mechanism for combating crime and has developed a robust legal and institutional framework on asset recovery. Kenya has ratified several international instruments on assets recovery which includes; United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances; United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and the Protocols thereto; United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC); African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC) among others.

As a State party to the aforementioned international instruments, Kenya has taken significant steps in implementing the Conventions by putting in place a comprehensive legal framework on asset recovery. This include: the Proceeds of Crime and Anti-Money Laundering Act, the Anti-Corruption and Economic Crimes Act, Prevention of Organized Crime Act, Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Kenya recognizes the importance of asset recovery in combating crimes and illicit financial flows and has successfully applied both conviction and non-conviction-based confiscation in recovery of proceeds of crime. Through the Assets Recovery Agency and the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, Kenya has recovered assets that include: cash, motor vehicles, developed and undeveloped properties. The forfeited cash and funds obtained from the disposal of the forfeited assets are ploughed back into the economy to support the Government development projects.

Kenya has successfully concluded bilateral agreements with other States to enhance international cooperation in asset recovery and is in the process of negotiating more bilateral agreements. To facilitate the repatriation of proceeds of crime, Kenya entered into an agreement

with the Governments of the United Kingdom, Switzerland and Jersey through the Framework for the Return of Assets from Crime and Corruption in Kenya (FRACCK).

Other strategic international partnerships that enhance international cooperation in asset recovery comprise membership to regional and international organizations for information sharing, joint trainings and exchange of best practices. These include; the INTERPOL, the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for Eastern Africa (ARIN-EA), the East African Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities.

While we have made significant strides in asset recovery, challenges still abound. Complex cross-border asset tracing and recovery processes, lengthy judicial processes, varying legal systems and non-cooperative jurisdictions continue to slow down asset recovery. Kenya therefore, calls upon AALCO Member States to enhance mutual legal assistance (MLA), strengthen information sharing mechanisms and harmonize laws to accelerate asset recovery and repatriation.

Kenya recognizes the transformative role of innovation and technology in asset recovery. We must therefore embrace and leverage on data analytics, block-chain tools and financial intelligence to track and disrupt illicit financial flows within and across the borders. The adoption and use of cutting-edge technologies is critical in unraveling complex criminal networks and the effective recovery of assets.

Further, Kenya is addressing emerging risks in this field by strengthening regulation in virtual assets and Virtual Asset Service Providers (VASP). Through VASP, we are establishing a framework to monitor, license and supervise the entities to ensure crypto currencies and digital assets are not exploited for money laundering, terrorism financing or other economic crimes.

Kenya remains committed to the fight against organized crime and the recovery of proceeds of crime. *Asante* Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from Kenya, *Asante Sana*. I will now yield the floor to the People's Republic of China.

The Delegate of the People's Republic of China: Mr. President, asset recovery is a crucial part of our criminal justice system. An effective asset recovery regime can, amongst other things, deter and swiftly disrupt criminal activities. In that way, not only the interests of victims of crime are protected, but the integrity of the global financial system could also be safeguarded. China attaches great importance to the recovery of assets and proceeds of crime and I would like to take this opportunity to highlight three aspects of China's practice in asset recovery.

First of all, China has always been working on enhancing its asset recovery legal framework. China has enacted and amended legislations, including the Criminal Law and the Law on International Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, in refining and enhancing its asset recovery framework, in line with the latest international standards and in view of evolvement of technology. The effective coordination and cooperation between law enforcement agencies and financial institutions have facilitated the sharing of intelligence and investigation of fund flow of proceeds.

Amidst the growing use of virtual assets and cryptocurrencies, the courts of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China have recognised such assets as property and have, in

2024, granted a restraint order, freezing crime proceeds in the form of cryptocurrencies with more than USD 20 million worth of value pursuant to a mutual legal assistance (MLA) request from an AALCO Member State.

Second, China fosters cooperation with the use of bilateral treaties and multilateral conventions, as well as global and regional cooperation mechanisms. China has concluded bilateral judicial assistance treaties with more than 80 countries. With the authorization of the Central People's Government of China, the Hong Kong SAR, under the principle of "One Country, Two Systems", has entered into more than 30 bilateral mutual legal assistance agreements, covering asset recovery.

As a State Party to multilateral conventions including the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), China recognises the importance of cooperation in matters including mutual legal assistance and asset recovery.

China also focuses on the role of global and regional cooperation mechanisms by partaking in initiatives including INTERPOL, the Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities ("GlobE Network"), and the South East Asia Justice Network (SEAJust), which China and its two special administrative regions, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Macao Special Administrative Region, have joined since 2024. SEAJust is a judicial cooperation network established with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime that serves as a platform facilitating direct contact and communication between central authorities for mutual legal assistance. China is also one of the nine AALCO Member States to participate in the pilot scheme of INTERPOL's Sliver Notice, which enables member countries to request and share information on assets linked to criminal activities, thus facilitate the location and identification of proceeds of crime.

Third, China leverages new technologies in asset recovery. China incorporates new technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence, blockchain, and big data analysis in effectively identifying and freezing proceeds of crime and their equivalent value, so as to facilitate their eventual confiscation and repatriation to injured parties. Apart from enforcing conviction-based confiscation orders, China also places much emphasis on alternative measures, including the issuance of non-conviction based confiscation orders and the recognition of those made by foreign authorities.

For instance, as recognized and commended in the Executive Summary of China in the First Implementation Review Mechanism of the UNCAC, the laws of the Hong Kong SAR of China recognize and allow for the enforcement of both conviction-based confiscation orders and civil forfeiture orders for the purposes of mutual legal assistance, which is significantly broader than its local confiscation regime, which is generally conviction-based. The laws furthermore recognize such orders, decrees, directions, judgments, or any part thereof, howsoever described, whether the proceedings are in the form of proceedings against a person (in *personam*) or property (in *rem*). These measures allow us to provide a wide scope of mutual legal assistance and to facilitate asset recovery through international co-operation.

Mr. President, different countries and jurisdictions have their distinct laws and requirements on the restraint, confiscation and repatriation of assets. China recognises the benefits in setting up the Asset Recovery Expert Forum within the framework of AALCO, including the sharing of

best practices, legal procedures and requirements. We also recognise that effective communication between requesting and requested parties and their willingness to participate in asset recovery initiative as indispensable elements to successful international cooperation.

In view of the above, China fully supports the establishment of the Asset Recovery Expert Forum within the framework of AALCO and looks forward to it strengthening international cooperation amongst Asian and African States. Furthermore, China would invite the Secretariat of AALCO to consider the models, the rules and procedures, and the interplay of stakeholders in these fora and platforms, including the SEAJust and the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative (StAR Initiative), which is co-founded by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Bank.

In conclusion, we could all leverage AALCO's distinctive advantages with its extensive network of Asian and African States, so as to better facilitate asset recovery initiatives. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you, the distinguished delegate from the People's Republic of China. I now invite the distinguished delegate from the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to make their statement.

The Delegate of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam: Mr. President, first of all, the Vietnamese delegation highly appreciates AALCO's efforts and initiatives in the field of asset recovery. It can be said that, in addition to the process of prosecuting criminal acts, the process of searching, detecting, freezing and confiscating assets obtained from crimes also plays a very important role. Especially in the current period, transnational organized crime activities are on the rise, and assets from crimes are often dispersed to many different countries, through many channels (bank accounts, "shell" companies, investments in real estate or assets hidden in international financial centers).

Like many other countries, Viet Nam faces challenges in recovering assets abroad. These include differences in laws and procedures, the absence of direct cooperation mechanisms, and limited options for recovery outside criminal convictions.

To address these difficulties, Viet Nam has been actively implementing several measures such as: expanding our network of bilateral treaties on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters; actively engaging in multilateral mechanisms on corruption prevention and asset recovery; learning from international best practices to strengthen domestic laws and institutions; and enhancing coordination among competent authorities in asset recovery.

Viet Nam is currently a member of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; the United Nations Convention against Corruption; the ASEAN Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, as well as 27 bilateral agreements on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters. In addition, the Central Authority of Viet Nam for mutual legal assistance in criminal matters and international cooperation in asset recovery, which is the Supreme People's Procuracy of Viet Nam, is also a member of relevant multilateral cooperation mechanisms such as: Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authority, Asset Recovery Interagency Network-Asia Pacific (Arin-AP).

Some of the outstanding results in Viet Nam's cooperation in recovering assets include the successful implementation of one request for asset recovery from Bulgaria (over 6.5 million

USD) and the coordination with the Attorney General of Singapore to successfully implement two requests from Viet Nam for asset recovery (total amount over 9.4 million USD).

Looking ahead, as Viet Nam develops an International Financial Centre with a specialized court, we seek to learn from the experiences of established financial centres. In particular, we are interested in mechanisms that ensure transparency, secure financial flows, and prevent money laundering. On that basis, Viet Nam highly appreciates the initiative of establishing the Asset Recovery Expert Forum within the framework of AALCO. In addition, Viet Nam recommends strengthening bilateral cooperation between countries in mutual legal assistance and asset recovery.

We believe that through open dialogue and experience sharing at the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO, countries will together build effective cooperation mechanisms on law enforcement in common and asset recovery in particular. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. I now yield the floor to Malaysia.

The Delegate of Malaysia: Your Excellency, Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, Malaysia welcomes the development of the Asset Recovery Expert Forum first introduced by the Republic of Indonesia at AALCO's Sixty-First Annual Session in Bali in October 2023, and the continuing work as exhibited in AALCO's Sixty-Second Annual Session in Bangkok in 2024, as well as in the Intersessional Session in New Delhi in June 2024 to fine-tune and improve on the modalities of the Asset Recovery Forum. Malaysia also commends the Secretariat on the *Note Verbale* circulated on 8th April 2025 to collate the data on each Member States contact points and asset recovery authorities to better coordinate cooperation and collaborate between Member States on this important endeavour. In this regard, Malaysia has shared the contact details of the Malaysia's National Anti-Financial Crime Centre (NFCC) as its contact point and asset recovery authority. Malaysia further encourages Member States who have not yet shared their contact points and asset recovery authorities, to do so as a means to support this effort by the Secretariat.

As Malaysia expresses its support for the continuing work of the Asset Recovery Expert Forum, Malaysia reiterates its view that the work of the Asset Recovery Expert Forum should not duplicate the work currently available and undertaken under existing frameworks. Malaysia sees value in a platform that is practical, consensus-based and focused on the needs of Asia and Africa. In that regard, Malaysia recalls the objective in the Concept Note for Asset Recovery Expert Forum to, among others, "...accommodate a discussion, exchange views and information.." on matters related to asset recovery.

To that end, Malaysia proposes that the Asset Recovery Expert Forum continues to develop guidelines for the nomination of experts, emphasising that nominees should possess proven experience in asset recovery, international cooperation and financial investigations. This will ensure the Forum is populated by practitioners capable of contributing constructively to its work.

Malaysia further considers that detailed operational procedures for the Forum should be developed carefully and with full consultation of Member States. Procedures should promote transparency, efficiency and inclusivity, while recognising the diversity of national legal systems. Malaysia further notes that the Secretariat's role should primarily be administrative

and knowledge-support, providing research, coordination and training, while operational cooperation remains with competent national authorities.

Malaysia once again records its appreciation to the Republic of Indonesia for the introduction of this important topic and to the Secretariat for its ongoing efforts and welcomes the continued engagement of Member States in the discussion of this topic. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from Malaysia. I will now invite the distinguished delegate from the Republic of the Sudan to present their statement.

The Delegate of the Republic of the Sudan²: Thank you, Mr. President for giving me the opportunity to speak on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of the Sudan on the issue of stolen assets. At the outset, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to AALCO for its continued interest in this important matter. The Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative is a partnership between the World Bank and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), aimed at recovering stolen public funds and helping to combat corruption by strengthening the legal framework and providing practical support and training to countries, especially underdeveloped countries.

In this context, capacity-building and training efforts require the following measures: building trust between countries; facilitating the exchange of information and providing technical assistance to freeze, confiscate, and return assets to the country of origin. Therefore, we must work towards the following objectives and initiatives:- Facilitating the return of looted assets through the use of international communication networks and law enforcement organs; Combating corruption by reducing safe havens for looted funds. Others include: Capacity-building by training specialists in asset recovery and enhancing their capabilities in this field and enhancing international cooperation by exchanging information between bodies having connection and coordinate efforts between governments, financial institutions, and civil society organizations to ensure the recovery of stolen assets.

Mr. President, as you are aware, there are similar forum that can provide valuable opportunities for co-operation, such as: The Arab Forum on Asset Recovery and INTERPOL Asset Recovery Information Network (SCP).

Mr. President, as you know, this session comes at a time when Sudan is going through exceptional circumstances due to the war waged by the Rapid Support Forces militia. Through this war, they have deliberately destroyed infrastructure, looted and stolen public state funds, including vehicles, electricity transformers, and numerous hospital machinery and medical devices, in addition to looting and stealing the private property of citizens, a large amount of which has crossed the country's borders. We will work hard, with the help of the international community through the bodies having connection, to recover these assets. Here, we reiterate that this esteemed organization has previously included the matter of asset recovery on the agenda of its sixty-first session, which was held in the Republic of Indonesia in 2023. We hope that this matter will receive renewed and greater attention in this session, leading to clear

² Statement was delivered in Arabic. The Secretariat acknowledges with gratitude the official translation provided by the Delegation of the Republic of the Sudan.

recommendations that will assist our nation, Sudan, in recovering its stolen assets. Thank you Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of the Sudan, I now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the State of Palestine.

The Delegate from the State of Palestine:³ In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Asset recovery is a cornerstone of the international and regional legal system and a vital tool for promoting justice, integrity, and transparency. Asset recovery refers to the legal procedures and policies implemented to recover funds and property that have been illegally acquired or transferred, whether through corruption, fraud, economic crimes, or other violations.

This legal framework is based on a set of international and regional agreements that define the obligations of states to prevent illicit enrichment, combat money laundering, and facilitate international judicial cooperation, including: The United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), which obligates Member States to take the necessary measures to recover and transfer assets to the affected State; The United Nations Convention against Crime (Palermo Convention); The United Nations Convention against Cybercrime (soon to be added) and The United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic. All these conventions, to which the State of Palestine has acceded, contain specialized chapters on the recovery of property and assets.

The State of Palestine faces significant challenges in recovering its assets and properties that have been looted or illegally seized. Among the most prominent of these challenges are the Palestinian clearance revenues, which are funds collected by Israel on behalf of the Palestinian Authority for taxes and customs duties on exports and imports, such as value-added tax and customs duties. These funds are transferred periodically to the Palestinian Authority's treasury according to the 1994 Paris Economic Agreements.

However, in recent years, the occupation has withheld these funds or seized a portion of them for political reasons, as a punitive measure against the State of Palestine due to certain political stances, in an attempt to deter it from pursuing international recognition. This withholding and seizure constitutes a clear violation of international law and bilateral agreements, directly impacting Palestine's ability to fulfill its obligations to its citizens, harming the national economy, and complicating sustainable development efforts. The State of Palestine is committed to international and regional standards in combating corruption and recovering assets, including the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the Arab Convention against Corruption. Through its membership in the Euro-Mediterranean Network for Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters, Palestine demonstrates its commitment to international cooperation and the exchange of judicial expertise to track down and recover stolen funds for the benefit of the State and its people.

Asset recovery, including withheld clearance revenues, is not merely a legal obligation, but a fundamental pillar for promoting justice and sustainable development in Palestine. The international community's support for these efforts is essential for strengthening the rule of

³ Statement was delivered in Arabic. This is an unofficial translation done by the Secretariat.

law, respecting international agreements, and achieving justice for the Palestinian people. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the State of Palestine, I now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Asian Academy of International Law.

The Delegate from the Asian Academy of International Law: Mr. President, distinguished delegates. The Asian Academy of International Law is grateful to AALCO for this opportunity to take the floor.

Last year in the Sixty-Second Session in Thailand, the distinguished delegate from Indonesia highlighted the importance of establishing forums to recover cultural assets taken during the colonial period. Inspired by his remarks, our delegation further articulated the position that the Asset Recovery Expert Forum should also enable the return of cultural heritage removed as a result of foreign occupation or colonization. Following this line of thought, our delegation at this year's session aims to address AALCO's crucial role in resolving cultural heritage disputes.

The cultural heritage issue is of paramount significance for us. Most Asian and African nations present here have suffered a great loss of cultural heritage due to colonization or foreign occupation, in history. Its restitution should have been an essential part of the decolonization process but such a process has not yet been completed. Cultural heritage represents unique and irreplaceable State assets that embody our cultural and national identity, uniting us with the glory of our past, the present of our development, and the promise of our future prosperity. To ensure our cultural survival and revival, we are asserting our fundamental need to regain this lost heritage.

We believe AALCO is the ideal venue for our nations to unite and seek a global solution for addressing such kind of historical injustice. AALCO possesses the collective strength and capacity to deal with this issue. This is demonstrated by the successful retrieval of certain Member States over hundred artifacts in July 2023. This momentum was further bolstered by the launch of the Qingdao Recommendations for the Protection and Return of Cultural Objects Removed from Colonial Contexts in June 2024. I was honoured to sit in the drafting committee and to witness that this initiative gained the signatures of 19 States, 9 of which are AALCO members. Therefore, we suggest to give more attention to this aspect in the agenda of the Asset Recovery Expert Forum. Through this forum, we can share best practices, exchange experiences, and collaborate with other organizations, such as the UN, UNESCO, International Committee of Museums, and INTERPOL, to promote awareness and to toward a global solution. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Asian Academy of International Law. Now, we seem to have exhausted ourselves on this issue. We will now take our lunch break and reconvene for the plenary at 2.30 P.M. When we reconvene, we shall take up the substantive topic on the agenda for the session, which is legal protection of migrant workers. The first speaker on the floor upon our return will be the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Türkiye, followed by the Republic of India, the People's Republic of China, Japan, and the Republic of the Philippines. I would also like to inform the plenary that we have organised a side event, "A Pathway of Inter-State and Investment Disputes", which will take place during the lunch break.

The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

**XV. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTH
GENERAL MEETING (CONTINUED) OF THE
AALCO MEMBER STATES**

**XV. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTH GENERAL MEETING (CONTINUED)
OF THE AALCO MEMBER STATES HELD ON THURSDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER 2025
AT 02:30 PM**

Hon'ble Kiryowa Kiwanuka, Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda and the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session in the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM: LEGAL PROTECTION OF MIGRANT WORKERS

President: I would like to invite the Deputy Secretary-General of AALCO to make the introductory remarks on this topic. Dr. Ali, you are welcome.

Dr. Ali Hasankhani, Deputy-Secretary General of AALCO: Thank you, President. Excellency, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. It is my honour to open our deliberations on the legal protection of migrant workers and the issue of enduring importance for our member states. Migrant workers are vital to our economies and societies, contributing through their labour and remittances, yet they remain among the most vulnerable, often facing discrimination, exploitation, and barriers to justice. The Asian-African region, being both a major source and destination of migrant labour, carries a special responsibility to ensure that migration governance is fair, humane, and rooted in respect for human rights. For this reason, AALCO has chosen to reintroduce this topic, recognising its increasing relevance in the light of rising global migration flow, persistent vulnerability of migrant workers, and emerging challenges such as climate change-induced displacement. In this session, our focused deliberation will cover the following.

First, foundational international instruments for protection of migrant workers, including the International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, or ICMW, and key International Labour Organisation Conventions. And second, recent developments for protection of migrant workers.

Excellency, AALCO can play a pivotal role for fostering dialogue and promoting solidarity among Member States. I look forward to hearing about your national experiences and proposals to strengthening the protection of migrant workers and uphold their dignity and rights. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much. Excellencies, distinguished delegates, I am now going to invite the distinguished delegates to make their statements. On my list, I have the Republic of Türkiye, the People's Republic of China, Japan, the Republic of Philippines, and the Syrian Arab Republic. The distinguished delegates from the Republic of Türkiye, you have the floor.

The Delegate of the Republic of Türkiye: Thank you, Mr. President. Excellencies, distinguished delegations, Türkiye hosts a significant number of migrant workers abroad and accommodates a large foreign labour force within its borders. Our country is committed to finding durable solutions to the challenges faced by migrant workers. We believe that promoting and protecting the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families require combined efforts at national and international levels. With this understanding, Türkiye has long become party to all relevant international instruments, both at global and regional level, such as the UN, the ILO, and the Council of Europe, and maintains a close and constructive cooperation with the special mechanisms of these organizations tasked with upholding the rights of migrant workers. Türkiye actively contributed to the negotiations of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2018, which also contains references to migrant workers.

In this regard, Türkiye attaches importance to the accession of all UN Member States to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

Mr. President, climate change is causing loss of land and livelihoods, environmental degradation, food insecurity, water scarcity, and impacting women, girls, and vulnerable populations the most. Climate change is a risk multiplier that is threatening social and economic stability of nations. However, we are of the opinion that the impact of climate change on migration should rather be addressed within the context of sustainable development agenda and by taking into account consideration of the root cause of migration. Thank you all.

President: Thank you, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Türkiye. I will now yield the floor to the distinguished representative from the People's Republic of China.

The Delegate of the People's Republic of China: Thank you, Mr. President. The Chinese Government attaches great importance to the management of foreign nationals working in China. In accordance with domestic laws and regulations, China grants access to foreign workers in China without imposing any restrictive measures based on ethnicity, race, gender, religious beliefs, or other such factors. For foreigners who have obtained legitimate work permits and residence documents to work in China, the Chinese government protects their rights and interests during their employment in accordance with the law. Furthermore, the Chinese Government facilitates foreign workers by continuously improving systems related to professional development, social insurance, labour dispute resolution, foreign exchange, and other areas.

Mr. President, for Chinese citizens working and living abroad, the Chinese Government consistently requires their compliance with the laws of their host countries and respect local religious beliefs and customs. Host countries should also adhere to the principle of equity and non-discrimination, effectively protecting the rights and interests of the Chinese citizens within the territories with the host countries. Mr. President, the mobility of migrant workers contributes to promoting international exchanges and the development. Host countries and sending countries should strengthen international legal cooperation, peacefully implement international laws, including the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, and work together to safeguard the rights and interests of migrant workers on the basis of respect for national sovereignty. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the People's Republic of China. I now yield the floor to Japan.

The Delegate of Japan: Thank you, Mr. President. It is essential for every society to be fair in the way it receives and treats people from other countries. Societies should promote cultural diversity and strive for openness, flexibility, and more mobile workforces. Migrant workers can contribute to the development of their countries of origin, often gaining skills and engaging in economic activities in the country of destination. Many issues need to be resolved, however, in order for international migration to be of benefit of migrants and their countries of origin and destination in accordance with the principles of international law.

In this regard, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration, GCM, which includes objectives such as dealing with the structural factors underlying migration, saving the lives of migrants, and strengthening global partnerships, continues to be important. Japan places human security as one of the major pillars of its diplomacy, and it goes without saying that consideration of migrants and displaced people is indispensable for the realisation of a "society that leaves no one behind", which reflects the concept of human security. The GCM,

which embodies international cooperation to promote safe, orderly, and regular migration and human security, as well as SDGs, share the same goals. Japan will continue to work towards those goals.

Specifically, in order to tackle climate change, a common concern of humankind, which is one of the causes of forced migration, Japan will advance its climate actions and make necessary contributions while encouraging that all parties to the Paris Agreement commit themselves to net zero emissions by 2050. These supports contribute to the objectives of the GCM, such as addressing the causes of forced migration and promoting safe, orderly, and regular migration, while also examining and addressing the legal challenges of labour migrants.

Japan will continue to cooperate to address the various challenges associated with migration around the world in order to achieve the objectives of the GCM. I thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from Japan. I now yield the floor to the distinguished delegate from the Republic of the Philippines.

The Delegate of the Republic of the Philippines: Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, the Philippines thanks the Secretary-General for the agenda item on the legal protection of migrant workers and reaffirms our commitment to this agenda item, which were first introduced at AALCO's Thirty-Fifth Annual Session held in Manila in 1996.

As a leading migrant-sending country, the Philippines has long championed international frameworks for migrant protection, fair and effective migration governance, and legal pathways that safeguard the rights and dignity of all migrant workers. Our commitment is evident in both international and domestic measures. We were among the first to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families in 1995. In the same year, we enacted the Migrant Workers in Overseas Act also known as Republic Act 8042, which created comprehensive mechanisms for the protection of our migrant and overseas workers preceding the entry into force of the Convention.

We also established a strong legal framework against trafficking in persons through the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003. This law introduced robust prevention, protection, and prosecution measures supported by inter-agency coordination, strict monitoring of recruitment agencies, and specialised support services for survivors including overseas Filipino workers.

Today, our anti-trafficking regime is globally recognised as a model of best practise. Mr. President, in 2021, the Philippines created the Department of Migrant Workers, a ministry consolidating all migration-related functions. It's also known as the DMW, manages the AKSYON Fund with over 2 billion PHP or approximately 35 million USD allocated this year for comprehensive legal, medical, and emergency assistance to overseas Filipinos, 75% of whom are women, particularly domestic workers.

The Philippines ratified ILO Convention 189 on domestic workers and gave effect to it nationally through the Batas Kasambahay which provides legal protection to domestic workers and addresses their specific vulnerabilities. The Philippines is likewise active in global migration governance. We serve as a champion country for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular migration.

We recognise that migration has a distinctly gendered dimension. A gender-responsive implementation of the Global Compact specifically addresses fair recruitment and sustainable reintegration through dedicated national action plans. We have established gender-focal point officers across all migrant workers' offices and migrant workers' resource centres ensuring women migrants receive specialised support throughout their migration journey.

We also recognise climate change as an emerging driver of human mobility. Our National Climate Change Action Plan, National Adaptation Plan, and National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan highlight climate-related displacement and call for comprehensive responses. While we support discussions on new international frameworks, we emphasise that existing human rights instruments remain essential and must be fully applied.

Mr. President, the Philippines supports stronger cooperation among AALCO Member States many of whom are simultaneously countries of origin, transit, and destination. AALCO provides a valuable platform for dialogue, exchange of good practices, and South-South cooperation on protection frameworks, bilateral negotiations, and crisis response mechanisms.

For the Philippines, protecting migrant workers is both a human rights obligation and an economic imperative. With women comprising the majority of our migrant workforce and contributing significantly to development, their safety, dignity, and rights must remain paramount. As we face evolving challenges including conflict, climate change, and technological transformation, our collective response must be anchored in human rights and recognition of migrants' vital contributions to sustainable development.

The Philippines stands ready to share its experiences and best practices in support of AALCO's continued work on this issue. We remain committed to advancing evidence-based policies and multi-stakeholder collaboration to protect all migrant workers across the Asian-African region. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much the distinguished delegate from the Republic of the Philippines. Now I yield the floor to the Syrian Arab Republic. Syrian Arab Republic, you have the floor.

The Delegate of the Syrian Arab Republic:¹ In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, ladies and gentlemen, the Syrian Arab Republic has endured a devastating fourteen-year war, resulting in the migration of approximately twelve million citizens abroad through various means, predominantly irregular migration driven by the dire circumstances of conflict. Many of these individuals faced immense hardships in the process of their journeys, some perished in forests along European borders, while others drowned at sea aboard vessels lacking the most basic safety measures.

Consequently, Syria ranks among the countries with the highest number of citizens working abroad, with half of its population forcibly displaced by the former dictatorial regime. Millions of Syrians are now scattered across the globe, particularly in neighbouring countries and Europe. On this occasion, we wish to express Syria's profound gratitude and deep appreciation to the nations that have welcomed our people.

We emphasize the critical importance of strengthening legal protections for migrant workers and ensuring their fundamental rights. As a significant source country for migrant labour, Syria places great priority on this issue. We call for enhanced international cooperation to safeguard migrant workers from exploitation and discrimination.

Ladies and gentlemen, we underscore the necessity of activating international agreements related to workers' rights, particularly the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and ensuring its effective

¹ Statement was delivered in Arabic. This is an unofficial translation done by the Secretariat.

implementation. We also urge the strengthening of AALCO's role in providing support and assistance to migrant workers, guaranteeing their full rights.

We draw attention to a vital provision of the above convention: irregular migrant workers should not be regarded as criminals or wrongdoers. Rather, they are victims of poverty, unemployment, and war, seeking better living conditions for themselves and their families.

To this end, we emphasize the importance of:

1. Strengthening national legislation to protect the rights of migrant workers, including those in irregular situations, and ensuring their safety.
2. Establishing effective mechanisms to receive and investigate complaints regarding exploitation or discrimination.
3. Raising awareness about migrant workers' rights and the means to protect them.
4. Facilitating family reunification without overly complex procedures, an issue that has caused, and continues to cause, significant hardship for many Syrian families.

In conclusion, we highlight that migrants contribute significantly to the economic growth of host countries. They should be integrated into labour markets to ensure both protection and development. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate of Syrian Arab Republic.

The Delegate of Malaysia:² Mr. President, the Honourable Secretary-General, Excellencies and distinguished delegates, ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of the Malaysian delegation, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the AALCO Member States and the Secretariat of the AALCO for their dedicated efforts in undertaking the brief on the issue of "Legal Protection of Migrant Workers".

Mr. President, the current issues relating to migrant workers raised in the AALCO's paper is noted by Malaysia. Malaysia observes that the central issue on this topic is regarding migration governance whereby the international labour conventions on migrant workers outlines the recognition of rights, protection and fundamental freedoms entitled by all migrant workers including refugees.

Malaysia further notes the inclusion of recent developments in Treaty Body deliberations, regional consultations on xenophobia, and the emerging issue of climate-induced migration, in the current paper on legal protection of migrant workers.

Malaysia wishes to reiterate its position in previous sessions insofar as it is relevant to the current paper. Malaysia further affirms that while the protection and promotion of the human rights of migrant workers is a shared international aspiration, such efforts must be carefully balanced with the paramount importance of respecting national sovereignty and the political independence of states. These foundational principles should remain inviolate in the pursuit of human rights obligations.

Mr. President, we again thank the AALCO Secretariat for its work on this topic. We look forward to continuing discussions that will help develop a fair and practical approach in dealing with migrant workers. Thank you.

² The delegate of Malaysia did not make oral statement at the Plenary. A written copy of the statement was provided to the Secretariat for inclusion in the Verbatim Record.

The Delegate of the Kingdom of Bahrain:³ Your Excellency the President, Excellencies and happiness, women and gentlemen, delegates, the delegation of the Kingdom of Bahrain oversees this important international debate on protecting the rights of migrant workers, a field that represents a strategic priority within the national policies of the Kingdom, and reflects Bahrain's steadfast commitment to protecting human rights and promoting social justice and human dignity.

Based on Bahraini constitutional principles and national legislation, the Kingdom seeks to develop its legal system to ensure comprehensive protection for all residents on its territory, including migrant workers who are an effective force in the national development process. These policies are based on adherence to international standards for human rights and work, including:

- The International Labour Organization Conventions (ILO), especially Convention No. 97 on migrant workers, and Agreement No. 143 on the social protection of migrant workers.
- The International Charter for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which guarantees the right of everyone to work in fair and safe conditions.
- International agreements to combat discrimination and human rights protection, including Bahrain's obligations under the International Convention to End all forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has realized from an early date the danger of the dangerous international phenomenon of trafficking in people, which represents one of the forms of violation of human rights, and from this standpoint the Kingdom sought to develop a solid legal and institutional structure to confront it, by joining the relevant international agreements, led by the United Nations Convention on the Combating Organized Crime through patriotism and protocols attached to it.

The Kingdom also initiated the enactment of advanced national laws in the field of combating trafficking in persons, and the establishment of a specialized and active national committee working to coordinate policies and programs with all relevant authorities, including official authorities, civil society organizations, and expatriate workers, with the aim of setting effective protection mechanisms. The judiciary and the public prosecutor play a pivotal role in pursuing all forms of this crime, bringing its perpetrators to justice, and ensuring the achievement of the in force, which reflects the full commitment to the Kingdom of Bahrain to the standards of international law and human rights.

In this context, the Kingdom worked to enhance the legislative and judicial environment through:

First: Updating national labour laws in line with international standards, through the issuance of the labour law for the private sector and its amendments, which guarantees workers' rights and regulates labour relations in a balanced manner, and ensures the protection of the two parties and respect for the obligations of employers, in line with the international obligations of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

³ The delegate of Kingdom of Bahrain did not make oral statement at the Plenary. A written copy of the statement was provided to the Secretariat for inclusion in the Verbatim Record.

Second: Establishing an effective mechanism for labour inspection to ensure compliance with national laws and international standards, follow up on the application of labour rights, and verify any potential violations, in order to enhance transparency and legal accountability.

Third: Enhancing the judicial system by establishing specialized departments to consider labour disputes, while providing two judicial levels of appeal, to ensure that justice is reached quickly and integrity to all workers, in line with international obligations in the field of human rights and work.

Fourth: The adoption of a comprehensive system for social protection, which includes insurance against work injuries and the provision of comprehensive health care for all workers, reflecting the Kingdom's commitment to protecting human dignity and workers' rights, in line with international human rights and work standards.

These efforts resulted in wide international recognition, as Bahrain obtained the first-level classification (Tier 1) for the seventh year in a row in the US State Department report on human trafficking, which represents an appreciation of the continuous efforts of the Kingdom in the field of protection of migrant workers and combating exploitation and human trafficking.

Bahrain continues to develop its policies and programs in cooperation with international organizations and all partners, to ensure a fair, safe and sustainable work environment for all workers, with a focus on awareness programs and capacity building in the field of labour protection, in order to enhance commitment to national laws and international standards.

Your Excellency the President, the Kingdom of Bahrain confirms that protecting the rights of migrant workers is not only a legal commitment, but rather an investment in human capital and a basis for sustainable development. The Kingdom also confirms its commitment to enhancing cooperation with all international partners to exchange best practices and experiences, with the aim of achieving continuous progress in protecting the rights of migrant workers at the global level, according to the highest international standards for human rights and work. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much. I think we have now come to the end of the interventions from Member States and observers on my list and that brings up to the end of this topic on the "Legal Protection of Migrant Workers". Thank you.

The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

**XVI. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTH
GENERAL MEETING (CONTINUED) OF THE
AALCO MEMBER STATES**

**XVI. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTH GENERAL MEETING (CONTINUED)
OF THE AALCO MEMBER STATES HELD ON THURSDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2025,
AT 04:45 PM**

Hon'ble Kiryowa Kiwanuka, the Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda and the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO in the Chair.

**AGENDA ITEM: PROHIBITION OF AGGRESSION AND USE OF FORCE IN
INTERNATIONAL LAW**

President: This is the end of this topic on the “Legal Protection of Migrant Workers”. I request that distinguished delegates, we move straight into the next item on our agenda, which is the “Prohibition of Aggression and Use of Force in International Law”. This topic was proposed by the Islamic Republic of Iran and it was agreed in pursuance with Rule 10(3) and 10(4) of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization Statutory Rules 2024 by a meeting of the Heads of Delegation held on 7th September 2025.

I would like to invite the Secretariat to give us an introductory remarks in respect to this topic, and thereafter we have the following speakers on the schedule. We have the Islamic Republic of Iran, we have the Republic of Türkiye, and then we have Japan.

Dr. Ali Hasankhani, Deputy Secretary-General of AALCO: Thank you, Mr. President, Excellency, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. On 8th July 2025, as per, Statutory Rule 10 (2), the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in New Delhi proposed the inclusion of the topic “Prohibition of Aggression and Use of Force in International Law, and Protection of Civilians during Armed Conflicts” for the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO. The same was subsequently circulated by the Secretariat to Member States.

The Meeting of the Heads of Delegations held on 7th September 2025 decided to include the topic as an agenda item for the Sixty-Third Annual Session as well as place the same on the Work Programme of AALCO with the revised title “Prohibition of Aggression and Use of Force in International Law”. The Provisional Agenda, as agreed at the Meeting of the Heads of Delegations, including the said topic with the revised title was placed before the Plenary of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO for final approval and the same was adopted.

In this backdrop, the agenda item, titled “Prohibition of Aggression and Use of Force in International Law” is now being opened for deliberations. I urge Member States to actively engage with this topic. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much, Deputy Secretary-General. As advised, this topic was introduced on the agenda by the Islamic Republic of Iran. I therefore invite the distinguished delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran to present their statement.

The Delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Thank you, Mr. President. In the wake of the horrendous and devastating Second World War, the Charter of the United Nations was adopted by the peoples of the world who determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Sovereign nations resolved to settle their dispute by peaceful means. That is why they firmly prohibited the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State or in any other manner inconsistent with the purpose of the United Nations through Article 2(4) thereof.

The UN General Assembly has elaborated the key principles in relation to the prohibition on the use of force in several resolutions, including declaration on the inadmissibility of interventions in the domestic affairs of States, the declaration on principles of international law concerning friendly relations, and the resolution on definition of aggression. All these resolutions have been adopted by consensus. For instance, Article 5(2) of Resolution 2625 of 1970 prohibits the threat or use of force and explicitly states that a war of aggression is a crime against international peace for which there is responsibility under international law.

Resolution 3314 in particular defines aggression as, “the invasion or attack by the armed force of a State of the territory of another State, bombardment by the armed force of a State against the territory of another State, or the use of any weapons by a State against the territory of another State; an attack by the armed force of a State on the land, sea, or air forces, or marine and air fleets of another State.” Against the backdrop of abundant UN instruments, the International Law Commission, for its part, recognised prohibition of aggression as a peremptory norm in international law from which no derogation is permitted in its 2022 Draft Conclusions on peremptory norms of general international law *Jus Cogens*. Besides prohibition of aggression, the UN General Assembly Resolution 3314 is also explicit in stipulating that no consideration of whatever nature, whether political, economic, military, or otherwise, may serve as a justification for aggression.

This is echoed as well in UNGA Resolution 42/22 of 1987, which reaffirms that States must refrain from the threat or use of force under any circumstances, and condemns attempts to justify aggression under the guise of self-defence or political necessity. In this context, justification for aggression against a State under any fabricated nomenclature, such as the so-called pre-emptive self-defence, or other excuses in terms of anticipatory attacks, has no place in international law. And Article 51 of the UN Charter limits the right of self-defence to situations where an armed attack has occurred against another State.

The jurisprudence of the International Court of Justice is clear in this respect. In its judgement in the case concerning Military and Paramilitary Activities against Nicaragua against the United States of America in 1986, the Court clearly stated that “in the case of individual self-defence, the exercise of this right is subject to the State concerned having been the victim of an armed attack. Reliance on collective self-defence, of course, does not remove the need for this.”

In the *Oil Platform case* too, the ICJ reaffirmed the principles developed in its previous cases and stated that “in order to establish that it was legally justified in attacking the Iranian platform in exercise of the right of individual self-defence, the United States has to show that attacks had been made upon it for which Iran was responsible and that those attacks were of such a nature as to be qualified as armed attack with the meaning of that expression in Article 51 of the UN Charter and as understood in customary law on the use of force.” Evidently, the Court rejected the United States self-serving excuse and deemed its attack against Iran in violation of the UN Charter.

Mr. President, we elaborated the reasons why the Islamic Republic of Iran proposed the inclusion of this topic on the all-cause agenda in our general statement. The recent cases aggressions by the U.S. and Israeli regime have not been the only instances of aggression followed by baseless justification and they will not be the last should we, the United Nations Member States, do not speak out in favour of abidance by the well-founded principles of international law as enshrined in the UN Charter, in particular prohibition of the use of force and respect for territorial integrity of other States. This trend, if not stopped, can make each and every sovereign nation a victim of those adventurists who have nothing but addiction to

breach every principles of international law at the cost of humanity. At the same time, as we have said and acted, the Islamic Republic of Iran remains prepared to exercise its inherent right to self-defence resolutely and consistent with the principles of international law in response to any act of aggression.

As a case in point, and thanks to our vigilant armed forces, it was the same exercise of self-defence by Iran that compelled the aggressor to request and indeed beg for ceasefire. To conclude, Mr. President, I hope in order for our next generations to live in peace and tranquilly, we all collaborate with each other in rejection of aggression and use of force in international relations and abiding by the fundamental principles of international law enshrined in the UN Charter. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran. I now yield the floor to Japan.

The Delegate of Japan: Mr. President, Japan has been working to ensure that the importance of the rule of law at the international level is widely confirmed from the perspective of not tolerating changes to the *status quo* by force. Specifically, Japan has been particularly emphasising three points. One, international law must be complied with in good faith, not permitting actions such as territorial acquisition through the abuse of the right to self-defence. Two, changing a peacefully established situation by force or cohesion is unacceptable. And three, States should cooperate to end serious violations of international law. The ICJ's Advisory Opinion in July 2024 has clearly confirmed the principles of the prohibition of territorial acquisition resulting from the threat or use of force as a corollary of the prohibition of the threat or use of force.

Japan believes that it could be considered as acquisition of territory by force, which is prohibited under Article 2 (4) of the UN Charter, to attempt to acquire territory through creating *fait accompli* by acquiring or strengthening control over territory through cohesion on the ground, such as sending regular or irregular forces to a territory which is within another State's internationally recognised border or a territory under another State's peacefully established control, even if those acts do not cause death, injury, or destruction.

Mr. President, *Jus ad bellum* and *Jus in bello* apply to use of force in parallel. Therefore, the State invoking the rights of self-defence shall make sure not only that each attack is proportionate to the aim of attack against a legitimate military objective in terms of *Jus in bello*, but also that the use of force in self-defence as a whole is a proportionate response to the armed attack against which the right to self-defence is invoked in terms of *Jus ad bellum*. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you, the distinguished delegate from Japan, for your intervention. I now yield the floor to the People's Republic of China.

The Delegate of the People's Republic of China: Thank you, Mr. President. The Chinese delegation welcomes the inclusion of this agenda item at the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO. The current global security situation faces severe challenges, with local conflicts continuing to spread. In this context, it is the shared responsibility of the international community to reaffirm the purposes and the principles of the UN Charter, adhere to the obligations under international law, prohibiting the illegal use of force.

China wishes to express the following views on this topic. First and foremost, the principle of the prohibition of the use of force shall be firmly upheld. Article 2 of the UN Charter explicitly provides that all "members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of

force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.”

This principle strictly confines the resort to force by States within the framework of the UN Security Council’s collective security mechanisms and the right to self-defence. We must fully implement the provisions of the UN Charter, respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States, adhere to the peaceful resolution of disputes, and oppose any arbitrary use of force or threats of force. In addition, the right to self-defence shall be exercised strictly in accordance with international law.

Article 51 of the UN Charter, which outlines the conditions and limitations for the exercise of the right to self-defence, shall be interpreted in good faith and not be abused. The International Court of Justice, in its landmark case of *Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua*, clearly stated that the right to self-defence applies only in cases of an armed attack and must comply with the principles of necessity and proportionality. No State should abuse the use of force under the pretext of so-called preventive self-defence, infringe upon the sovereignty, territorial integrity, or political independence of other states.

China is concerned over the recent use of force against Iran by Israel and the United States of America on the alleged grounds of potential future threats. The U.S. attack on Iranian nuclear facilities under the supervision of IAEA safeguards sets a dangerous precedent and threatens the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. Mr. President, this year marks the 80th anniversary of the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War and the founding of the United Nations.

The pledge in the preamble of the UN Charter to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war remains as relevant and urgent as ever. As a founding member of the United Nations, China will always be a practitioner of international rule of law, a promoter of peaceful solutions, and a defender of the interests of developing countries. China is willing to work with all countries, including the Member States of AALCO, to jointly uphold the purposes and the principles of the UN Charter, to strive for the early resolution of conflicts, and to live in peace and stability. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the People’s Republic of China, and thank you all for this intervention.

The Delegate of Malaysia¹: Malaysia wishes to congratulate the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for its proposal to include in the agenda of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO the topic of “Prohibition of Aggression and Use of Force in International Law and Protection of Civilians during Armed Conflict”.

Mr. President, Malaysia acknowledges the importance of the prohibition of the use of force, as enshrined in Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, stands as a cornerstone of the international legal order. This prohibition, elevated to the status of a *jus cogens* norm, reflects the collective will of the international community that no State may resort to aggression to settle disputes or pursue political objectives. Acts of aggression not only undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States but also imperil the very foundations of international peace and security. Malaysia believes the use of force must always be a last resort, justified under

¹ The delegate of Malaysia did not make oral statement at the Plenary. A copy of the written statement was provided to the Secretariat for inclusion in the Verbatim Record.

international law, and proportionate to the threat posed. We must ensure that any resort to military action must be legally justified and in line with international obligations.

Mr. President, Malaysia reaffirms its national position that international law applies fully to arm conflict and protection of civilians, including the UN Charter, international humanitarian law, and international human rights. We must remember that there are laws even in war, although war must be avoided by all means. Compliance with these laws is not optional, it is moral and legal obligation.

In many situations, such as in the Occupied Palestinian and other territories, the cycle of impunity enjoyed by the Occupier continues to deepen the occurrence of further violations. Malaysia consistently advocates peaceful settlement of disputes in line with the UN Charter and believes that ending armed conflict must always be the ultimate goal in order to protect civilian population.

Mr. President, finally, Malaysia reaffirms its unwavering commitment to working closely with AALCO Member States to uphold the fundamental prohibition of aggression and the unlawful use of force, and to ensure the protection of civilians are indispensable to preserving the rule of law and safeguarding international peace and security. We believe that by upholding international law and fostering cooperation, we can build a safer and more just world.

In this regard, Malaysia supports the initiatives by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the present session of AALCO to commence the deliberation on the issue relating to the prohibition on aggression and use of force in international law, and protections of civilians during armed conflict. Malaysia looks forward to the deliberation on this agenda in light of the principles as expounded in the Statute of AALCO and its Statutory Rules. Thank you.

President: These were all the interventions we had on this topic. This is a new topic on our agenda. Now that we have it on the agenda, we will work together with the proposing country to determine a way forward on this topic. We thank you for all your interventions and we look forward to further engagement in this regard. That brings us to the end of that topic.

The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

**XVII. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTH
GENERAL MEETING (CONTINUED) OF THE
AALCO MEMBER STATES**

**XVII. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTH GENERAL MEETING (CONTINUED)
OF THE AALCO MEMBER STATES HELD ON THURSDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2025,
AT 05:15 PM**

Hon'ble Kiryowa Kiwanuka, the Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda and the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO in the Chair.

**AGENDA ITEM: VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW BY THE RAPID
SUPPORT FORCES IN SUDAN**

President: Now, we move on to the next topic. This is also a new topic, “The Violations of International Law by the Rapid Support Forces in Sudan”. This topic has been proposed by the Republic of Sudan and has been agreed upon at the Heads of Delegations Meeting held on 7th September 2025. I invite the Deputy Secretary-General to give introductory remarks on this topic.

Dr. Ali Hasankhani, Deputy Secretary-General of AALCO: Thank you Mr. President. Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. The topic of “Crimes and Violations Committed by Rapid Support Forces and their Supporters in the Ongoing War in Sudan” was introduced by the Republic of the Sudan through an Explanatory Memorandum dated 7th August 2025 as per Rule 10(2) of the Statutory Rules of AALCO. The same was forwarded by the Secretariat to the Member States via *Note Verbale* on 12th August 2025.

The proposal by the Republic of the Sudan was placed for the consideration of the Heads of Delegations on 7th September 2025 as per Rule 10(3) and Rule 10(4) of the Statutory Rules of AALCO. Pursuant to the deliberations held, the Heads of Delegations agreed on revising the topic to “Violations of International Law by the Rapid Support Forces in Sudan” and including the revised topic in the provisional agenda of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO and the work programme of AALCO.

The ongoing conflict in Sudan, which began on 15th April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, has resulted in widespread violations of international law. AALCO has been steadfast in its commitment to upholding international law and promoting respect for the fundamental principles that protect civilians during armed conflicts. In pursuance of AALCO's mandate to provide legal perspectives on matters of common concern to Asian and African Member States, this topic provides an opportunity to examine the applicable international legal framework and consider appropriate responses to these grave violations.

I invite all delegations to actively participate in the deliberations that follow and share their respective positions on this highly significant matter. I wish you all a productive and meaningful session. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the Deputy-Secretary General for the introductory remarks. Excellencies, distinguished delegates, as I had noted this topic was included in the agenda on the initiative of the Republic of Sudan. Therefore, I invite the distinguished delegate of Sudan to make their statement.

The Delegate of the Republic of the Sudan¹: Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, as you may know the rebel militia attempted on 15th April,

¹ Statement was delivered in Arabic. The Secretariat acknowledges with gratitude the official translation provided by the Delegation of the Republic of the Sudan.

2023, to seize power by force in Sudan, aimed at controlling the State, erasing and dismantling its legitimate and constitutional institutions. This was carried out through direct support from the United Arab Emirates and some neighboring countries that are providing the militia with advanced weapons, mercenaries and other logistics, in clear violation of all international laws and norms.

International organisations such as the United Nations Security Council, the Arab League, the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, as well as many countries and humanitarian organisations have condemned that acts of this terrorist militia and its heinous violations. The said organisations alongside with many countries have also condemned its recent step of formation of a so-called parallel government in areas under its control.

In reaffirmation of the nature of the terrorist crimes committed by the militia and their supporters, this document reviews the violations in accordance with international law as follows:

First: War crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the RSF rebel militia and its supporters under international humanitarian law:

1. Killing of civilians based on ethnicity and tribal affiliation: The number of victims is estimated to be in the tens of thousands, and many organisations and videos available online having documented this in addition; the militia members themselves have confirmed these acts. In this context, international humanitarian law explicitly states that deliberately targeting civilians is prohibited and constitutes a war crime and a crime against humanity, according to the fundamental principles of customary international law and the Geneva Conventions concerning the protection of civilian persons during wartime, 1949. The protocols annexed to these conventions, added in 1977, further detail this protection, its requirements, and criminalize the killing of civilians during war as both a war crime and a crime against humanity.

2. Forced Displacement: Since the rebellion of the militia on 13th May, 2023, they have been forcibly removing citizens from their homes in Khartoum State, the capital of the country, as well as in the five states of Darfur, El Gezira, Sennar states, and other cities. The number of internally displaced persons from Khartoum alone has reached six million three hundred thousand people. The total number of internally displaced persons across the country due to this militia exceeds twelve million people. Despite the documented nature of this crime, which is witnessed by the entire world, it represents a flagrant violation of Rule (129) of International Humanitarian Law and the 1949 Geneva Convention for the Protection of Civilian Persons, which criminalizes forced displacement of civilians.

3. Arrest of civilians and enforced disappearance: The rebel Rapid Support Forces militia has arrested more than (14,000) civilians since the start of its rebellion on 15th April, 2023. They have detained them in poor conditions, and the militia established (41) detention centers in Khartoum alone, according to the African Center for Peace Studies. The militia has carried out this crime more broadly in Darfur and Kordofan greater states, especially in West Darfur, South Darfur, and North Darfur, systematically targeting the cities of El Geneina, Zalingei, Ardamta, and Mesteri. These acts were based on ethnic grounds. Therefore, this crime is classified as a war crime in accordance with the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance of 1992, which stipulates that no one should be subjected to enforced disappearance, and no exceptional circumstances, including war or others, justify such acts.

4. Execution of Prisoners of War: In a conduct that violates all values, customs, and international treaties related to prisoners of war, the world has witnessed, in documented videos

by the militia, how they executed prisoners of war and deprived them of their right to life. This occurred in the cities of Khartoum, Omdurman, Nyala, Geneina, Zalinji, Hebiila, Wad Madani, El Fasher, and many other towns and villages across the country. The militia documented the execution of prisoners from the armed forces, accompanied by hateful racist language. The Geneva Convention of 1949, specifically Article (22) of the Third Geneva Convention, criminalized the execution of prisoners of war. This act is classified as a war crime and constitutes a blatant violation of the right to life.

5. Destruction of infrastructure and looting of public and private properties: The RSF rebel militia engaged in destroying public and private infrastructure and institutions. For example, in the water sector, the militia deliberately disrupted water stations in Khartoum state, Gezeera Darfur and Kordofan and prevented technical teams from accessing these stations for the maintenance. Disrupting these stations and cutting off water was one of the militia's tactics to force residents of Khartoum to leave their homes. Additionally, they used violence, stormed, and occupied hospitals, and repeatedly attacked medical personnel. Furthermore, they looted property belonging to citizens, banks, universities, schools, markets, state institutions, museums, antiquities, airports, radio and television stations, as well as major factories and the oil refinery in Sudan. The total losses from this systematic looting and destruction are estimated to exceed US\$150 billion.

6. Sexual Violence: Based on monitoring conducted by human rights organisations and volunteer medical workers in Khartoum State, El Gezira State, West Darfur State, and North Darfur State, at least (335) cases of rape committed by militia forces have been documented. This number was recorded by the Women's Violence Combat Unit and local human rights organizations. There are also volunteers and activists who indicate that the actual number of such crimes is much higher, but due to fear of stigma and other social considerations, victims do not disclose or report these crimes.

According to testimonies from some survivors, the militia conducts rape operations as part of a systematic targeting based on ethnicity. Some of these cases have been documented by the militia members themselves. In all areas entered by the rebel militia, women and girls bear a particularly heavy burden, facing horrific risks to their safety, including rape and forced kidnapping.

In this regard, the most prominent violations committed by the rebel militia are sexual violence in its various forms, including rape, kidnapping, and sexual slavery. These are considered war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Legally, systematic rape or any form of sexual violence is classified as a violation of the rules of customary international humanitarian law. These acts fall under Rule (93) of International Humanitarian Law. Additionally, the Third Geneva Convention considers systematic sexual violence as a war crime and a crime against humanity.

7. Child Recruitment Crime: International humanitarian law prohibits the recruitment of children under the age of fifteen, as outlined in Rule (136). The Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977 explicitly state this. Additionally, the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 emphasizes the need to protect children and prohibit their recruitment. The world has seen footage showing how militias recruit children under fifteen, in blatant violation of international humanitarian law. The International Red Cross has documented these crimes, having received several child fighters who were recruited by these militias and captured by armed forces. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Trafficking, Siobhán Mullally, reported that militias extensively recruit children, often using children from poor families, especially in the outskirts of Khartoum, and children from Arab

tribes in Darfur and Kordofan. According to her report, (600) children have been killed while fighting with these militias. Based on credible reports and witnesses from conflict zones, it is estimated that the militias have recruited over (30,000) children under fifteen, most of whom have been killed in this war.

8. This is in addition to its strict blockade of the city of El Fashir: Since June 2024, the militia has burned the Zamzam and Abushouk displacement camps and killed displaced persons on racial grounds, as well as starving civilians and looting humanitarian aid intended for the displaced, children, and people with special needs. In this regard, the United Nations Security Council issued Resolution No. (2736) on 2024, demanded the militia to lift its blockade on El Fashir. However, the militia has not responded to this resolution until now. International humanitarian law prohibits starving civilian populations as a method of war. The Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, concerning the protection of victims of international armed conflicts and adopted in 1977, states in Article (54), Paragraph (1): "It is prohibited to starve civilians as a method of warfare."

Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed dignitaries, Sudan looks forward to a clear position from AALCO as a legal body to condemn these massive violations and crimes, which violates international laws. The lack of immediate and effective actions in this matter will encourage the rebel militias and mercenaries to continue their violations and commit all kinds of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Moreover, this may encourage other extremist groups and outlawed rebel to commit similar crimes elsewhere and anytime.

The delegation of Sudan calls upon AALCO Member States, to classify this militia as a terrorist group, and hold its leaders accountable for committing these massive crimes in accordance with international laws. The delegation also requests that this statement be included in the final report of the Sixty-Third session of the Organization. I thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate of the Republic of the Sudan. I now yield the floor to the Republic of Türkiye to make its statement.

The Delegate of the Republic of Türkiye: Thank you Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates. The developments in Sudan are of great concern for us, as the devastation of the country and humanitarian consequences are deepening each passing day. Unity, territorial integrity and public order of Sudan are at the center of our principled approach. Within this scope, we have been calling on both sides to exert restraint in order to prevent bloodshed and harm to civilians.

In addition to our endeavors, the efforts of the international community should also turn into an inclusive peace process that will enable a permanent ceasefire, followed by a comprehensive political process. In this regard, we support all regional and international initiatives aimed at ending the conflict; easing the human suffering and preserving Sudan's unity, stability and security.

Mr. President, Sudan is currently going through one of the worst humanitarian disasters in the world. 12 million people are domestically displaced with almost 200 thousand people having lost their lives. In these difficult times, we do not remain indifferent to the ongoing humanitarian situation in the country. Turkish hospital in Nyala in South Darfur continues to provide health services to Sudanese people despite all the setbacks and hardship. Three Turkish aid ships delivered approximately 8000 tons of aid to Port Sudan in the last quarter of 2024. A fourth ship has arrived at Port Sudan, carrying 1.605 tons of aid. Given the dire humanitarian consequences and the increasing risk of fragmentation of the country, we should accelerate our efforts to end the crisis.

While striving towards peace, we will continue to work with all our institutions to ensure that civilians in Sudan have access to humanitarian aid supplies. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate of the Republic of Türkiye. There is a request for intervention from the People's Republic of China. People's Republic of China, you have the floor.

The Delegate of the People's Republic of China: Thank you Mr. President. The armed conflict in Sudan has lasted for over two years, with spillover effects impacting regional stability. China believes that the top priority is to achieve a ceasefire, de-escalate the situation, and alleviate the humanitarian crisis. The fundamental way out is a political solution to achieve sustainable reconciliation. China supports all parties in actively promoting peace talks based on respect for Sudan's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. China is willing to work with the international community to help Sudan restore peace as soon as possible, achieve reconstruction and development, and bring peace and stability to the people of Sudan. Thank you Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the People's Republic of China. If there are any other interventions on these two topics at this point, you could raise them. That brings us to the end of the deliberations on both these two topics. We thank all of you who have been able to make interventions. AALCO is fully seized of these two topics and we will engage with the sponsors on the way forward.

The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

**XVIII. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THIRD
MEETING OF DELEGATIONS OF THE AALCO
MEMBER STATES**

XVIII. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THIRD MEETING OF DELEGATIONS OF THE AALCO MEMBER STATES HELD ON FRIDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2025, AT 9:30 AM

Hon'ble Kiryowa Kiwanuka, the Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda and the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO in the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM: SEVENTH OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL LAW IN CYBERSPACE

President: Good morning, distinguished delegates. As you may all be aware, today is the last day of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO. I hope to conclude our session by lunchtime so that we may be able to have an opportunity to explore the beauty of Uganda. So the first item on the agenda today is the Seventh Meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group and I will invite the Secretary-General of AALCO to make the introductory remarks.

Secretary-General: Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the Seventh Meeting of the AALCO Open-ended Working Group on International Law in Cyberspace, convened on the side-lines of our Sixty-Third Annual Session here in Kampala. Allow me at the outset to thank the Chair, the Islamic Republic of Iran, for their continued leadership of this Working Group, and to acknowledge the dedication of our Special Rapporteur, Professor Zhixiong Huang, for his tireless efforts over the years. Since its establishment in 2015 at the Fifty-Fourth Annual Session in Beijing, this Working Group has become a vital platform for Member States to engage in focused, structured discussions on the applicability of international law in cyberspace. In an era where digital technologies permeate every aspect of international relations, the importance of this work cannot be overstated.

Across six meetings held in New Delhi, Tokyo, Hangzhou, Bali, and Bangkok, the Open-Ended Working Group has examined some of the most pressing issues of our time-sovereignty in cyberspace, cybercrime, data security, harmful online content, and the peaceful use of digital technologies. This has also provided Member States the opportunity to shape Afro-Asian contributions to ongoing discussions at the United Nations and other multilateral forums.

The hallmark of this process has been its inclusiveness and the consensual approach taken by Member States. Guided by your feedback, our Special Rapporteur has carefully refined his work, culminating in the finalized report that will be presented today. The finalized report of the Special Rapporteur which will be discussed today represents both the conclusion of the current mandate of the OEWG and a foundation for Member States to consider possible future directions. With these words, I hand the floor to the Chair to continue the proceedings. Thank you.

President: I now hand over to the Chair of the OEWG. Sir you can lead us through the proceedings.

Dr. Abbas Bagherpour Ardekani, Director-General of the Department for International Legal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Chair of the AALCO OEWG on International Law in Cyberspace: Thank you, Mr. President. Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. As Chairman of the Open-Ended Working Group on International Law in Cyberspace, I warmly welcome you to the seventh meeting of the Working Group, convened on the side-lines of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO.

I also thank the Secretary-General for his opening address, which has set the stage for our discussions today. The AALCO Open-Ended Working Group on International Law in Cyberspace was established at the Fifty-Fourth Annual Session in Beijing in 2015 and has since convened six meetings. Over the years, it has become a central platform for AALCO Member States to engage in collective reflection on how international law applies to cyberspace and how Asian-African perspectives can enrich the global debate.

The first meeting in New Delhi in 2016 initiated substantive discussions on sovereignty in cyberspace, the applicability of existing international law and cooperation in combating cybercrime. The second meeting in 2017 further deepened the debate with six sessions on sovereignty, governance, cyberwarfare and cybercrime, laying a firm basis for future work. The third meeting in Tokyo in 2018 was especially significant as the Special Rapporteur presented his first substantive report.

It examined UN processes such as the Group of Governmental Experts and proposed that AALCO Member States consider elaborating consensual principles of international law in cyberspace. At the fourth meeting in Hangzhou in 2019, discussions built upon responses from Member States to a detailed questionnaire. The meeting addressed international cooperation against cybercrime, data sovereignty and flows, harmful online content and the peaceful use of cyberspace.

It also advanced the idea of preparing a non-binding set of principles reflecting common ground among member states. The fifth meeting in Bali in 2023 reaffirmed the importance of the Asian-African perspective and requested the Special Rapporteur to update his draft principles. The sixth meeting in Bangkok in 2024 considered his report on the recent developments in international law in cyberspace which contained 15 Consensual Principles and for the first time contained brief reflections on the impact of artificial intelligence (AI).

Delegations welcomed the effort but stressed that the principles should remain non-binding, avoid legally binding language and remain consistent with the discussions at the UN. Today, at our seventh meeting, we turn to the finalised report of the Special Rapporteur. This report incorporates the comments and observations of Member States and consolidates the outcomes of the Open-Ended Working Group's work since 2015. It retains the 15 Consensual Principles while highlighting the importance of addressing the implications of emerging technologies including artificial intelligence for international law.

Excellencies, over the course of six meetings, the Working Group has provided clarity, momentum and coherence to AALCO's engagement with the subject of international law in cyberspace. It has shown the value of Asian-African cooperation and demonstrated AALCO's ability to contribute meaningfully to global discussions on issues at the cutting edge of cyberspace.

I urge all Member States to engage actively in today's deliberations so that together we can take an informed decision on how best to carry this important work forward as we conclude this phase of the Open-Ended Working Group and decide on its future work. As the Open-Ended Working Group is a Member State-driven process, it is for the Member States to decide on its future course of action. With these remarks, I now have the honour to invite our Special Rapporteur, Professor Huang, to present his finalised report.

Professor Zhixiong Huang, Special Rapporteur, AALCO OEWG on International Law in Cyberspace: Thank you Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates. It's a great honour for me to present the report on 'Recent Developments in the Field of International Law in Cyberspace' I have prepared in my capacity as Special Rapporteur of the AALCO's Working Group on

International Law in Cyberspace, following the guidance of the Secretariat, Chair of the Working Group, and Member States of AALCO. Based on the Draft Report I submitted in August 2024, this Updated Report aims to summarize and briefly discuss some of the recent developments in the field of international law in cyberspace both within and outside the AALCO, although it should be admitted that it cannot be, and does not intend to be, comprehensive in scope.

As all the distinguished delegates should have received a printed copy of the report, you can see like the Draft Report of last year, its structure consists of five parts: Part I provides an overview of the AALCO's engagement with the topic 'International Law in Cyberspace'; Part II introduces the drafting process and substantive content of the 'Consensual Basic Principles of International Law Applicable in Cyberspace of AALCO' and the Explanatory Note; Part III elaborates the progress with regard to international law in cyberspace in various multilateral forums; Part IV offers a general survey of recent national position statements in which States share their understandings and stances about international law in cyberspace; Part V tries to provide some suggestions to the AALCO and its Member States based on the previous discussions.

As the remarks by His Excellency Chair of the Working Group just now has already provided a clear summary of AALCO's engagement with the topic 'International Law in cyberspace', I will just skip over the first part, and instead start from the second part, namely 'The Consensual Basic Principles of International Law Applicable in Cyberspace of AALCO and the Explanatory Note'.

The origin of the Consensual Basic Principles can be traced to the eight non-binding, non-exhaustive "Consensual Basic Principles of International Law Applicable in Cyberspace" proposed by His Excellency former Secretary-General Prof. Kennedy Gastorn, pursuant to the mandate of the Fourth Meeting of the AALCO Open-ended Working Group on International Law in Cyberspace held in Hangzhou, China in September 2019. On the basis of comments received from the Member States and an internal review of the principles, I was asked to help the Secretary-General revise the principles in my capacity as Special Rapporteur of the Working Group. The revised draft of July 2021 consisted of 14 carefully and elaborately drafted principles, including an Explanatory Note containing background information on the relevant principles.

Based on the very helpful suggestions and comments from the Secretary-General, Chair of the Working Group and Member States of the AALCO in the following years, further revised drafts were submitted to the Fifth Working Group Meeting held in Bali, Indonesia in October 2023 and the Sixth Working Group Meeting held in Bangkok, Thailand in September 2024, respectively, to reflect the international discussions relating to this topic in the past years, including the deliberations within the United Nations, the AALCO, and other relevant international organizations. Just for example, in view of the rapid development of new and emerging technologies in cyberspace, the revised draft of August 2024 added a new principle on the peaceful use of new and emerging technologies, especially the application of artificial intelligence in cyberspace.

In preparation for today's Working Group Meeting, the Consensual Basic Principles was again revised. In particular, all the use of the term "shall" in the Consensual Basic Principles were replaced with "may" or "should", to indicate the non-binding nature of the Consensual Basic Principles. Overall, the 15 Basic Principles outlined in the most recently revised draft primarily address fundamental principles of international law such as State sovereignty, non-intervention, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-use of force, and the respect and protection of human

rights. In the meantime, those Principles cover issues such as State responsibility, due diligence, regulation of harmful content, protection of critical infrastructure, ICT supply chain integrity, trans-boundary data flow, bridging the digital divide, international cooperation in combating cybercrime, the formulation of international digital trade rules, and the peaceful use of new and emerging technologies in cyberspace. It is hoped that those 15 Basic Principles, after continuous revisions and updates, are now in a better position to strike a proper balance between the need to reflect international consensus from other forums, particularly discussions within the United Nations on the one hand, and the desire to make unique contributions from the perspectives of Asian and African countries.

Turning to the third part on ‘Progress in Various Multilateral Forums’, it mainly focuses on the following three forums within the framework of the UN, which have had crucial impacts on the discussion of international law in cyberspace.

First is the UN GGE, which had convened six sessions during its operation from 2004 to 2021, and produced four consensus reports contributing to international deliberation on international law in cyberspace. While it is true that the UN GGE served as the most important international forum for discussing international law in cyberspace before it finished its mandate in 2021, it did not continue to operate since 2021, and hence there is no further updates in the report of this year.

Second is the UN OEWG, which was established for the purpose of allowing a wider range of States to participate directly in the discussion of international law in cyberspace. To date, two OEWGs have been established by the UN General Assembly: the 2019/2021 OEWG which co-existed with the last and 6th UN GGE, and the 2021-2025 OEWG which operated without the UN GGE. Here I will simply highlight one very important development, that is: following eleven substantive sessions, the 2021/2025 OEWG adopted its final report by consensus in July 2025, which reflects three key areas of consensus and progress concerning the application of international law in cyberspace, outlines three forward-looking recommendations, and also establishes by consensus a future single-track permanent mechanism to continue its work. Those developments were the focus of update in my report this year. However, in the interest of time, I will not elaborate too much on this.

The third is the Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate a global convention against cybercrime. As was already mentioned in my report submitted last year, the draft text of the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime was unanimously adopted on 8th August 2024. Further updates were reflected in this year’s report, mainly the unanimous adoption of the Convention by the UN General Assembly on 24th December 2024. As many of you know, the convention will be open to all States for signature in Hanoi, Vietnam from 25th-26th October 2025 until 31st December 2026, and will enter into force after being ratified by 40 Member States. It is fair to say that the adoption of the Convention marks a major breakthrough in combating cybercrime at the global level. Thus in order to solidify the valuable outcomes achieved through numerous negotiations, it is recommended that all States should consider signing and ratifying the UN Cybercrime Convention at their earliest convenience.

The fourth part of the draft report is ‘National Position Statements on International Law in Cyberspace’, which discusses the notable phenomenon that in recent years, more and more States have begun to issue their own position papers on international law in cyberspace through written documents or speeches by senior officials. The report this year included latest developments in this regard by the end of July 2025, including the submission of 39 such national position statements or speeches by senior officials have been released. Among them, 38 have been presented by individual States, with the exception of the Common African

Position on the Application of International Law in Cyberspace (or “CAP” for short) as the joint effort of 55 African states. More specifically, most of the individual national positions were released by developed countries, while only a few are from developing countries. In total, 21 AALCO Member States have issued their position papers either individually or as participants of the CAP.

I just would like to add that the Common African Position released in January 2024 marks a new paradigm for the involvement of developing countries in developing international law in cyberspace. Gathering the consensus of the 55 Member States of the AU, the CAP has 11 pages, which is already very long and detailed even compared with the position papers of many developed countries, and included carefully articulated viewpoints on sovereignty, due diligence, non-intervention, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-threat or use of force, IHL, international human rights law, attributions and capacity-building in cyberspace. Largely thanks to this collective endeavour, a group of African States that are generally weak in terms of cyber and overall strength were able to effectively voice their views and concerns on international law in cyberspace. Looking ahead, it is foreseeable that national position statements will continue to proliferate in the years to come, and will continue to be an important form of national participation in international rule-making in cyberspace.

The fifth and last part of the draft report is suggestions for AALCO and its Member States, and the following suggestion are offered to the AALCO and Its Member States.

- First, greater focus on international law in Cyberspace, i.e. the AALCO and its Member States should pay more attention and devote more resources to this field, ensuring that Asian and African states will not be left in a disadvantageous position.
- Second, accelerating discussion on the Consensual Basic Principles and the Explanatory Note, i.e. the AALCO and its Member States should expedite this discussion, and consider adopting or publishing the Consensual Basic Principles and the Explanatory Note in an appropriate manner.
- Third, enhancing engagement in multilateral forums, i.e. the AALCO and its Member States should be more active in their involvement in such multilateral forums, including but not limited to the UN OEWG, the future POA, and the newly adopted UN Cybercrime Convention.
- Fourth, promoting release of national position statements, i.e. the AALCO should encourage and provide necessary assistance to its Member States, so that they can articulate their national positions either individually or collectively (as in the case of the CAP).
- Fifth, strengthening capacity-building, i.e. greater cooperation in capacity-building such as technical assistance and personnel training among Member States should be encouraged, and a lot can be learned from the experience of AU Member States during their preparation for the CAP.
- The last suggestion is initiating discussion on principles of international law in terms of artificial intelligence, i.e. given AI’s growing strategic importance, the AALCO and its Member States should initiate discussions on how core principles of international law apply in the context of AI, including considering whether new norms or clarifications are needed to address the unique challenges posed by autonomous systems, algorithmic decision-making, and data governance. It would be both timely and appropriate for the AALCO OEWG on International Law in Cyberspace to expand its mandate to include discussions on AI.

Due to the constraint of time, it is unlikely that I will be able to summarize all the important points in this short presentation. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the AALCO Secretariat for the support for preparing this draft report, and comments from all the Member States will be most sincerely welcomed. In the meantime, it is my sincere hope that the Open-Ended Working Group on International Law in Cyberspace of AALCO will continue to play a key role in the international deliberation on international law in cyberspace, for the interest of all AALCO Member States. Thank you!

Chair: I thank the Special Rapporteur for his detailed and comprehensive report. I now open the floor for the Member States to furnish us with their inputs, remarks, and to shed light on the future work of the Working Group. In my list, I have first Japan to be followed by the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and Malaysia. Japan, you have the floor, Sir.

The Delegate of Japan: Mr. President, as has been confirmed repeatedly in the past UNGGE and OEWG reports, existing international law, including the UN Charter, is applicable to cyberspace. Going forward, Japan believes it is important to deepen the discussion on how international law applies to cyber operations such as application of State responsibility, violation of sovereignty, due diligence, international humanitarian law, etc.

With regard to this point, if more States make their basic positions regarding international law applicable to cyber operations public, it will contribute to deepening of a common understanding on how international law applies to cyber operations. Thus, we call on each State to make its national position public.

Mr. President, Japan believes that the discussion of international law applied in cyberspace should be in line with the discussion in the UNGGE and OEWG. In particular, the UNGGE and OEWG have conducted balanced discussions on the relationship between control based on territorial sovereignty and freedom of data flow. The discussion in the AALCO should not be excessively biased in one direction. The latest draft of the “Consensual Basic Principles of International Law Applicable in Cyberspace of AALCO” seems to place too much emphasis on the importance of sovereignty. There is a large discrepancy from the discussions in the UNGGE and OEWG. In addition, as pointed out by delegations from Japan and other countries at previous Annual Sessions, legally binding terms such as “agree” should not be used. We consider that the AALCO should take time to discuss closely and carefully among AALCO Members and Observers rather than jumping to conclusions in a hasty manner.

Chair: I thank the distinguished representative of Japan and I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to be followed by Malaysia. Viet Nam, you have the floor.

The Delegate of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam: Mr. President. International cooperation in the governance of cyberspace is essential to foster a peaceful, safe, secure, friendly, open, and human-centred cyberspace at national, regional, and global levels. To respond to the evolving nature of the cyber threats and facilitate effective international cooperation, Vietnam therefore strongly advocates the continued development of the international legal framework for cyberspace, cybersecurity, and cybercrime within multilateral forums centred on the UN and based on consensus. We welcome the adoption of the draft United Nations Convention against Cybercrime, a landmark achievement that establishes the first global treaty for cyberspace and affirms a global approach to combating cybercrime.

More importantly, the convention has recognised the sovereignty of States in cyberspace as a cornerstone for international cooperation. Indeed, this convention will provide a robust foundation for countries to work together against growing cybercrime challenges. Viet Nam actively participated in its negotiations and is honoured to host the signing ceremony of this convention in October this year.

This event is not merely ceremonial but a crucial step to foster dialogue, set back practices, and promote partnerships among all stakeholders. It signifies Viet Nam's strong commitment to promoting multilateral cooperation and actively contributing to global efforts against cybercrime. We also support the discussion on international law in cyberspace and mechanisms such as the UN Open-Ended Working Group OEWG on ICT and welcome the OEWG's unanimous adoption of the draft final report which includes elements for establishing a UN global mechanism to discuss ICT's as well as further development of international law in cyberspace and exploration of new rules governing responsible behaviour of States in cyberspace.

Viet Nam calls for a seamless transition from the OEWG to the new standing global mechanism, continuing to contribute to the discussion on international law in cyberspace in the coming time. Viet Nam has been actively participating in the discussions of the AALCO OEWG and would like to suggest the group to continue to study in depth how the concept of cyber sovereignty as recognised in the cybercrime convention is applied in the practise of AALCO Member States.

Mr. President, in conclusion, Viet Nam is determined to promote an open, secure, healthy, stable, accessible, and peaceful global cyberspace. We aim to continue working hand-in-hand with AALCO Member States to strengthen international law and make practical contributions to peace, security, and sustainable development. I thank you Mr. President.

Chair: I thank the distinguished representative of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Malaysia to be followed by China, Iran and Türkiye.

The Delegate of Malaysia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Malaysia wishes to express its appreciation to the Special Rapporteur Professor Zhixiong Huang for the comprehensive final report on international law in cyberspace and for the inclusive manner in which the views of Member States have been incorporated.

Malaysia reaffirms its national position that international law applies fully to cyberspace, including the Charter of the United Nations, international humanitarian law, and international human rights law. In this regard, we underscore the importance of core principles—sovereignty, non-intervention, peaceful settlement of disputes, prohibition of the use of force, and the promotion and protection of human rights—as guiding standards for responsible state behaviour in the digital domain.

Malaysia further supports the establishment of a permanent, UN-led single-track mechanism to carry forward the OEWG's work and to advance responsible State behaviour in the use of ICTs. It is essential that this mechanism remains inclusive, transparent and reflective of the voices of developing countries, in order to avoid fragmentation and ensure a balanced and equitable international legal order.

We also emphasize the need for capacity-building initiatives to enable developing States to participate effectively in global cyber governance. In this regard, Malaysia highlights the role of regional cooperation through ASEAN, including the ASEAN Computer Emergency

Response Team (CERT), as a valuable platform for enhancing threat intelligence sharing, strengthening incident response, and fostering resilience against cyber threats.

Finally, Malaysia welcomes the consideration of new and emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, within the framework of international law. It is imperative that their peaceful use be promoted while safeguarding sovereignty, security and human rights.

Mr. Chairman, Malaysia stands ready to continue engaging constructively with all AALCO Member States and partners in shaping a secure, stable and inclusive cyberspace. We note the Final Report of the Special Rapporteur with appreciation, and we affirm our support for its adoption under the leadership of the Chair. Thank you.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished representative of Malaysia, and I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of People's Republic of China. You have the floor, Sir.

The Delegate of the People's Republic of China: Thank you Mr. Chairman. China would like to extend its gratitude and appreciation to the Secretary-General in facilitating this meeting. We also express our deep appreciation to the Chair, the Special Rapporteur and all participants of the Open-ended Working Group for their hard work and fruitful outcome in the past decade.

Mr. Chairman, China appreciates the Special Rapporteur's update on the "Consensual Basic Principles of International Law Applicable in Cyberspace" and the explanatory note annexed to the report. China believes that the "Consensual Basic Principle" touches on issues including management of cross-border data flow, digital trade, international cooperation in cyberspace and the combat against cybercrime and would be helpful in the field of global cyberspace governance. By reflecting the common concerns of Asian and African countries on international rules in cyberspace, the "Consensual Basic Principle" can be conducive to maintaining peace and security, as well as promoting common development in the field of cyberspace.

China greatly values the unique platform AALCO offers and aspires to the formation of a strong common voice of Asian and African States in the sphere of global cyberspace governance. In this regard, China suggests that AALCO adopts the "Consensual Basic Principles of International Law Applicable in Cyberspace" at the Sixty-Fourth Annual Session of AALCO in the year 2026. To this end, we suggest the Secretariat prepares a draft resolution on the basis of the report of the Working Group. We also suggest all Member States provide their input to the "Consensual Basic Principles", which should be reflected in the draft resolution for adoption next year.

Mr. Chairman, the Special Rapporteur has suggested in his report that AALCO and its Member States initiate discussions on how core principles of international law apply in the context of artificial intelligence within the Open-ended Working Group. China believes that AI is closely linked to the use of the Internet and cyberspace. Their synergy has profoundly changed and impacted the ways we all live and work. The development and use of AI raise new questions on the interpretation and application of international law. We can all ensure that AI would benefit humanity by working on and improving global AI governance.

China supports and encourages the Open-ended Working Group in furthering its studies on AI from both the legal and practical aspects, thereby pooling the wisdom of Asian and African States for our common benefit and for the improvement of global AI governance.

In order to facilitate the Open-ended Working Group in its studies on the regulation and use of AI and to keep the momentum going, China suggests AALCO decides on inviting all Member

States to submit their documents and papers on their respective domestic laws, regulations, policies and practices on the regulation and use of AI by the end of first-half of 2026.

China also seeks the kind support of the Special Rapporteur in furthering his studies on AI. China also suggests that the Secretariat of AALCO compiles information and materials submitted by Member States and the Special Rapporteur for its onward transmission for the Working Group's consideration. The Working Group could then deliberate and proceed with the work on the issue of AI in the next Annual Session in 2026.

In conclusion, with the timely support of all AALCO Member States in this initiative, Asian and African States can play a more active role in this crucial matter on AI, which is relevant to AALCO Member States and beyond. We would be obliged for Member States consideration of China's suggestion including the adoption of the Consensual Basic Principles at the next Annual Session of AALCO with inputs from Member States and the Working Group's further study on the issue of AI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chair: I thank the distinguished representative from the People's Republic of China. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. You have the floor, Sir.

The Delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. In the beginning, allow me to thank you and the Special Rapporteur of the Open-ended Working Group on International Law in Cyberspace.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has been eagerly following the work of the Working Group and considers it a convenient platform for the member states to exchange views in a legal context. Information communication and technology (ICTs) has become an integral part of global business and governance offering numerous opportunities while at the same time introducing evolving threats. Addressing these requires a multifaceted approach encompassing technological, legal and cooperative strategies.

The primary responsibility for maintaining secure, safe and trustworthy ICT rests with individual States. States must act responsibly and in accordance with international law. The prominent role and active involvement of States in the ICT environment governance at the global level, especially in terms of policy and decision-making, must be enhanced and ensured.

ICT governance should be developed in a manner that does not adversely affect the rights of states to determine their own development, governance and legislation concerning the ICT environment. The work of the Open-Ended Working Group concerning the Special Rapporteur's report on recent developments in international law in cyberspace, the relevant draft Consensual Principles, as well as the comments and observations of Member States in this regard, constituted a useful exercise by the AALCO. Principles of international law as enshrined in the UN charter continue to apply in any domains, including cyberspace.

Regardless of various interpretations, this was confirmed by the work of the Working Group, as well as comments and observations by Member States. As the way forward, as also referred to by the delegations of Malaysia and China as regards the importance of artificial intelligence, introduction of artificial intelligence in recent years has provided governments and citizens worldwide with unique opportunities. However, it is of urgent importance to compile relevant State practice as concerns laws and regulations.

The developments in this field are extremely rapid, but policy makers should not get overwhelmed by these rapid changes. On the other hand, we need to learn from each other how to regulate this new realm, what policies to adopt in order to make the best of AI developments,

and what adaptations to make. The Open-Ended Working Group has the necessary potential for sharing best practises and experience of Member States at the national level in terms of laws and regulations and policy making on AI. While we are flexible with the format and timing, we are prepared to extend any cooperation and assistance in this regard. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chair: I thank the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran and I now give the floor to the distinguished delegate of Türkiye. You have the floor, Sir.

The Delegate of the Republic of Türkiye: Thank you Mr. Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates. Türkiye welcomes the development of the Consensual Basic Principles of International Law Applicable in Cyberspace. We view these principles as a valuable contribution to fostering shared understanding while reflecting the perspectives of Asian and African States.

Taking into consideration the opportunities and threats arising from the developments in information and communication technologies (ICTs), Türkiye fully supports an international order based on international law that promotes an open, secure, robust, effective, resilient, stable, accessible and peaceful ICT environment.

Mr. President, Türkiye believes that these discussions will contribute to develop norms and principles of the responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in international law and considers it as a fundamental element for establishing the framework of the responsible State behaviour in cyberspace including their cyber activities, which is the most important precondition for maintaining international peace and security.

Given these considerations, I would like extend our gratitude to the Secretariat, Members of the Working Group and the Special Rapporteur Zhixiong Huang for his valuable report on “Recent Developments in the Field of International Law in Cyberspace” and briefly share Türkiye’s views under the following headings.

On the prospect of new global instruments, we note that the idea of a binding UN instrument in this field has been raised. For Türkiye, any such instrument must not contradict existing regional commitments and, above all, must not include provisions that would limit our national jurisdiction. This principle must be clearly recorded. On the question of non-militarization, we take note of the call for States to jointly strive for the non-militarization of cyberspace.

Türkiye underscores its opposition to the misuse of ICTs for hostile or offensive purposes. At the same time, we also underline that every State has the sovereign right to develop the necessary defensive capacities to safeguard its national security. It is therefore important that this principle not be interpreted in a manner that could constrain legitimate defensive measures.

On State responsibility and capacity differences, we agree that States should not knowingly allow their territory to be used for malicious cyber operations. Yet, in many developing countries, harmful traffic may transit without detection due to technical limitations. The application of this principle must therefore take into account differences in national capacity and be accompanied by robust international cooperation and assistance.

Türkiye also attaches importance to supply chain security, data governance, and bridging the digital divide. In this regard, we welcome the AALCO report’s strong emphasis on capacity-building and international cooperation. Türkiye wishes to express its appreciation for the report’s clear recognition that, while transparency and inclusiveness are important, the intergovernmental nature of this process must remain paramount. We share this perspective. Multi-stakeholder engagement can indeed bring value, but participation must follow established UN procedures and the principle of non-objection, thereby ensuring that the central

role of States is fully preserved. Consequently, Türkiye remains committed to contributing constructively to AALCO's work. Our shared goal must be to ensure that international law is applied in cyberspace in a manner that safeguards sovereignty, strengthens security, and supports sustainable development. Thank you all.

Chair: I thank the distinguished representative of Türkiye. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Republic of Korea. You have the floor, Sir.

The Delegate of the Republic of Korea: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for giving me the floor. The Republic of Korea appreciates the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on international law in cyberspace. Our delegation reiterates its position that existing international law, including the UN Charter in its entirety, is applicable to cyberspace. We believe that the discussions should focus on the specific application of existing law rather than on creating a new convention. In this regard, we will take the OEWG report back to the other concerned ministries and agencies to review it for better and more constructive opinions. We hope that our discussions can lead to an outcome that is in line with the consensus of the international community. Thank you, Mr. President.

Chair: I thank the distinguished representative from the Republic of Korea. We have no more requests for the floor at this juncture. I thank all of you for your very fruitful inputs, which I am confident will guarantee the future work of the Working Group and also help to echo the AALCO perspective at the global level on this very important topic. Based on the suggestions that you, the Member States, have presented in this meeting, we now have a better understanding on the future work of the Working Group, specifically one idea that was presented regarding the AI, according to which the report of the Working Group will be updated appropriately. To that end, certainly, we count on the assistance of the Secretary-General and his capable team to help us to proceed. Since the deliberation of this working group has been now concluded, I now turn to the President to lead us afterward. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much. We will continue to support the Working Group.

AGENDA ITEM: REPORT ON AALCO'S REGIONAL ARBITRATION CENTRES

President: Excellencies and distinguished delegates, now we move to consider the report of the AALCO Regional Arbitration Centres. So I invite the AALCO Secretary-General to make the introductory remarks on this topic.

Secretary-General: Thank you. Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, it is my honour to introduce the agenda item on the report of the AALCO Regional Arbitration Centres.

This agenda is supported by document AALCO/53/2025/KAMPALA/ORG 3, which contains the reports of our six centres, Kuala Lumpur, Cairo, Lagos, Tehran, Nairobi, and the AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre. For more than five decades, AALCO has played a leading role in promoting international commercial arbitration, beginning with its cooperation with UNCITRAL in the late 1960s, beginning with its cooperation with other institutions. And at that time, there were very few arbitral institutions in Asia and Africa, which often obliged our States and enterprises to turn to distant institutions in Europe and North America.

This created an urgent need for regional mechanisms that were accessible, cost-effective, and responsive to developing countries. From the early discussion in Lagos in 1972 and in Tokyo in 1974, Member States endorsed the establishment of regional arbitration centres, leading to

the first centre in Kuala Lumpur and then Cairo in the late 1970s. Since then, the network has expanded to Lagos, Tehran, Nairobi, and most recently in Hong Kong SAR in 2021.

Today, these six centres are recognised for world-class, efficient dispute resolution services, expanding beyond arbitration to mediation, conciliation, and even online and hybrid mechanisms. They host highly qualified arbitrators and enjoys the strong support for their host government and remain among the most trusted institutions in our region. I take this opportunity to warmly congratulate the Directors and their host Governments for the remarkable process achieved, and I encourage all Member States to continue supporting this centre. They are without doubt one of our most successful endeavours, and they stand as pillars of excellence for the future institutions in Asia and Africa. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, Your Excellency, Secretary-General. I kindly request all the Directors to be mindful of the time of their presentations, which is seven minutes each. First, now I invite the representative from the Nairobi Centre for International Arbitration to kindly present their report. Thank you.

Ms. Millicent Shitakha, Manager, Business Development, Nairobi Centre for International Arbitration (NCIA): I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to present the work of the Nairobi Centre for International Arbitration as it aligns with the mandate of AALCO. As one of the AALCO's six regional centres for arbitration, the NCIA is instrumental in fulfilling AALCO's core mandate to promote international commercial arbitration in the Asian-African region. Our mission is to provide world-class alternative dispute resolution services and promote Nairobi as a preferred seat for international arbitration. Our strategic goals align with AALCO's objectives of capacity-building, legal development, and regional cooperation.

Our caseload for the financial year ending June 2025 is as follows. 13 new cases were referred to the centre, and this is the highest number registered since inception. Of these 13 new cases, 46.2% were registered under the NCIA Arbitration Rules, and 38.5% were registered under the NCIA Mediation Rules. 15.3% were only for adjudicator and arbitrator appointments. The sum in dispute for the 13 cases was 4.7 billion Kenyan Shillings, which translates to 36 million U.S. Dollars. Cumulatively, the centre has handled a caseload value of 37.7 billion Kenya shillings, translating to 292.2 million U.S. dollars. Geographically, all the disputes that were handled at the Centre were domestic disputes.

Reflecting on the sectoral analysis and the economic priorities driving arbitration within the centre, we had the construction sector, we had supplies and delivery, agriculture, commercial, technology, finance, and education. For the financial year ended June 2025, the top three sectors of disputes that were handled by the centre were 58% on supplies of commodities, 17% under construction industry, and 25% under service contracts.

On regional leadership and diversity, our panel of neutral arbitrator are from different nationalities, 75% of the arbitrators were Kenyan, while 10% were from the United Kingdom, 3% from Nigeria, 3% from the United States of America, 3% from Ireland, 3% from Pakistan, 2% from India, and 1% from other countries. In terms of gender diversity for arbitrators, we had 22% comprising of female arbitrators and the rest of male arbitrators. For the mediator nationalities, all of them were Kenyan, with 25% comprising of female mediators. On the caseload that we handled on mediation cases, the value was worth 5.8 billion Kenyan shillings, which sums up to 50 million U.S. dollars.

In terms of innovation and thought leadership, in March 2025, the Centre organised and hosted the second Nairobi Arbitration Week, whose goal was to promote arbitration as a reliable and

effective dispute resolution mechanism across Kenya and Africa, showcase Nairobi to users, investments, practitioners, and academics as a regional centre for arbitration, foster collaboration and knowledge exchange among domestic and international arbitration professionals, including members of the judiciary, advancing arbitration practises to support African economic growth and development, building capacity among legal practitioners, and enhancing awareness of arbitration.

The Centre is also proud to have launched the fourth NCIA Journal, which is a key publication for disseminating knowledge and African perspectives on international arbitration. The thematic areas covered in this journal included environment and climate, convergence of technology and ADR, ethical considerations in ADR, protection and promotion of human rights. As part of our mandate to build capacity of young and upcoming practitioners, the centre also held a moot competition that targeted 16 universities in Kenya, where the winning university was African Nazarene University.

Of importance note is that the Centre signed the Green Action, which is a commitment to sustainable arbitration, and some of the activities that we are doing under this is having virtual hearings, e-submissions and case management platforms as a standard, prioritising arbitrators who champion green practises, providing green model orders and protocols for all users, and all our conferences follow a strict environmental protocol and training teams for sustainable internal and external communication. As part of compliance to our presidential directive and the Green Action, we also participated in tree planting to improve our tree cover. I thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, Nairobi Centre for International Arbitration. I now invite the representative from AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre to make their report.

Mr. Dennis Cai, Deputy Director, Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre (HKRAC): Secretary-General Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, Your Excellency, Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, very good morning.

On behalf of the AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre, it is my great privilege to address this esteemed assembly. May I begin by extending our deepest gratitude to the government of the Republic of Uganda for their exceptional hospitality in hosting this Sixty-Third Annual Session in the beautiful city of Kampala. I wish to convey to our profound appreciation to our Secretary-General, His Excellency Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol for his visionary leadership and steadfast support and guidance.

His unwavering support has been instrumental to our centre's development. We are particularly honoured by his personal presence at our International Arbitration Masterclass in Hong Kong, SAR this July, where his keynote remarks inspired senior leading practitioners from across the region.

Distinguished delegates, Hong Kong SAR's status as a dispute resolution hub is underpinned by a robust legal framework in Hong Kong SAR, deeply rooted in the common law system and tradition, and fortified by a modern arbitration ordinance.

The presence of AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre as the first arbitration institution established in Hong Kong SAR by an international organization has significantly enhanced this ecosystem. Our unique status as an international organization provides a neutral, credible platform for dispute resolution that enjoys the full confidence of the parties across Asia, Africa, and beyond. This framework is powerfully upheld by the excellent effort of Hong Kong Department of Justice.

Their commitment to rule of law, their unparalleled support to the law-related international organization are truly commendable. This supportive environment has been fundamental to our operational success too. Guided by our founding agreement between AALCO and China, the AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre has laid down a solid foundation to provide full-spectrum dispute resolution services, which include arbitration, adjudication, mediation, and many sector-based dispute resolution schemes, including the recent sports dispute resolution in Hong Kong, SAR.

Our reports submitted to the Secretariat highlight our progress in several key aspects. First, on the international front, we have significantly advanced transnational coordination through delivering a dedicated mission trip to Africa, which comprises more than 20 leaders, senior delegates in legal and economic sectors from Hong Kong, SAR and the neighbour regions, and actively participating in several events, many events across the region. We have been building vital bridges with our sister centres in Cairo, Nairobi, and Kuala Lumpur, and engaging directly with Member States to foster deeper collaboration.

Secondly, our work in specialised ADR is directly serving the new economy. We are spearheading an innovative dispute resolution to meet the complex demand of modern industry, a commitment that clearly reflected in a rising volume of enquiry and cases we have handled. We are now actively handling matters and providing tailor-made services in key growth sectors, such as sports industry, intellectual property dispute resolution, and construction adjudication through mediation, adjudication, and domain dispute resolution mechanism.

Moreover, capacity-building remains as a core cornerstone of our mission. We are dedicated to cultivating the next generation of dispute resolution professionals in Asia and Africa. We actively support the China-AALCO Exchange and Research Programme on International Law.

We also host many practical International Arbitration Master-classes, adjudication training, and intimate fireside chats. These efforts ensure a skilled and vibrant community of dispute resolution practitioners for the future. We now maintain a diverse panel of over 300 neutrals from more than 35 jurisdictions. Most of them are from AALCO Member States, ensuring culturally aware resolution across all service areas.

So, Your Excellency, distinguished delegates, the achievement of the past year would not have been possible without the guidance of our Secretary-General, His Excellency Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, and the Secretariat's support of our hosting country and the People's Republic of China, and the dedicated partnership of the Hong Kong Department of Justice. With this solid foundation beneath us, AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre is poised for its next chapter.

We are particularly excited about the future establishment of international arbitration for mediation, IOMeD, in Hong Kong, SAR. We pledge our full support to IOMeD and look forward to exploring strong collaborative opportunities to strengthen the global dispute resolution landscape together. We reaffirm our commitment to promoting arbitration and ADR as a peaceful means of dispute resolution.

We will continue to work in close collaboration with all AALCO Member States and our sister centres to advance our shared goals and achieve another level of success for the AALCO dispute resolution system. Thank you very much. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much, Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre. I will now invite a representative from the Cairo Regional Centre for International Arbitration to make their report.

Mr. Tarek Badawy, Member, Advisory Board, Cairo Regional Centre for International Commercial Arbitration (CRCICA): Thank you, Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. It is a pleasure to be here. My name is Tarek Badawy. I am a partner in private practise, arbitrator, and member of the Cairo Regional Centre for International Commercial Arbitration's advisory board.

As rightly indicated by the Honourable Secretary-General today, CRCICA was established in 1979 in Cairo under the auspices of AALCO. The Director, Dr. Ismail Selim, unfortunately could not make it today and had requested me to come and give the presentation on his behalf.

The Centre, or the Director, is assisted by members of the board of trustees. The board comprises of citizens, mostly citizens of AALCO, about 80% of the board of trustees are citizens of AALCO. It comprises of former ministers of foreign affairs, professors, ICJ judges, and eminent statesmen.

The board of trustees works in conjunction with the advisory board that assists the centre with matters such as designing policies and ruling on claims of conflict of interest against arbitrators and challenges to impartiality.

The centre has received various accolades in the very recent past. For example, it was endorsed by institutions such as the African Development Bank, which had recommended CRCICA and commended it for aligning its procedures with the highest international standards. It is also featured in the Global Arbitration Review Guide to International Arbitration and has been recognised for its performance throughout the years. And the latest piece of news, it has been recognised by the Russian Ministry of Justice as the fifth institution under its domestic laws recognised as a permanent arbitration institution, joining the ranks of the ICC, the Singapore International Arbitration Centre, Hong Kong, SAR and Vienna. It is the first in Africa and the Arab world to receive this recognition.

Now, with respect to certain statistics, in 2003, the centre registered 53 new cases, which include 22 non-Egyptian parties and 14 non-Egyptian arbitrators. In 2024, it registered 76 new cases, including 11 ad hoc proceedings, so not governed by the CRCICA rules, however administered by CRCICA. 20 of those cases included multiple parties, 22 non-Egyptian parties and 15 non-Egyptian arbitrators.

Now, the nationalities of the non-Egyptian arbitrators include many citizens of AALCO States, such as China, Iran, Lebanon, and Egypt. Now, the average value, and finally, in 2025, until half the year, 50 new cases were registered, so there's a noticeable significant increase, including two cases that are subject to, that are seated outside of Egypt, notably in Abu Dhabi and New York. Now, the average value of cases presented before CRCICA, in 2024, it was around 3 million dollars, which was a slight decrease from 2023, which was largely due to the devaluation that took place. However, in 2025, there is a significant increase in the first quarter, compared to 2024, where the average sum in dispute is 4 million dollars, and the total sum in dispute was 71 million dollars, just in the first quarter of 2025, which signifies nearly a 200% increase compared to the previous year.

Now, with respect to the types of disputes, unlike many jurisdictions in the Middle East, where they're predominantly construction law-based disputes, the retail sector comprised 22% of the total value of cases, which was followed by real estate development, and then construction only at 10%, followed by tourism, hospitality at 6%, and the regular commercial disputes, sale of goods, healthcare, etc., at 5% each.

Now, what distinguishes CRCICA from various centres is that it actually administers disputes against States and State-owned companies. It has administered disputes against entities owned by the Egyptian, Libyan, Sudanese, Moroccan, UAE, and Yemeni Government entities and ministries, and it is also chosen as the arbitration centre in many bilateral investment treaties involving not only Egypt, but also Morocco and Libya.

Now, the latest developments, which I believe is probably the most important point to conclude with, is that in addition to its mediation rules, so the centre is not only engaged in arbitration, it has its own mediation rules, but in addition to that as well, it has its own dispute board rules that govern construction disputes, but in January 2024, the arbitration rules were amended, introducing concepts such as consolidation of arbitrations, emergency arbitration.

In fact, in 2025, there was one case registered under the emergency arbitration scheme in which the arbitrator was appointed within 24 hours and the decision issued within 17 days of the arbitrator's appointment, and that includes holidays and weekends as well. There are provisions for expedited proceedings. The fee schedule was amended to compensate arbitrators fairly for the work that they do, and keeping up with modern times, there are provisions for online filing and virtual arbitration to accommodate the parties in a post-COVID world. With this, I will conclude, but I will be very happy to answer any questions following this session. Thank you very much.

President: Thank you very much, representatives from the three Arbitration Centres associated with AACO. Thank you very much for the report. Thank you very much for the good work that you are doing.

I will now open the floor to statements. I have got on my list the People's Republic of China. People's Republic of China, you have the floor.

The Delegate of the People's Republic of China: Thank you, Mr. President. China would like to express appreciation for the reports on the AACO's Regional Arbitration Centres and commend their excellent work and efforts in facilitating peaceful resolution of international disputes. In particular, we note the significant progress made by the AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre, which is the most recently established regional arbitration centre of AALCO, and its invaluable contribution in promoting the growth and effective functioning of alternative dispute resolution.

We encourage the AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre to continue to make good use of the unique strengths of Hong Kong SAR as the only common law jurisdiction within China and a leading international legal and dispute resolution service centre in Asia Pacific. We will continue to support the work of all the AALCO Arbitration Centres and look forward to more events, capacity-building, and other initiatives by the Regional Arbitration Centres for AALCO Member States and beyond. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, distinguished representative from the People's Republic of China. I do not know whether we have any other interventions from the floor. Okay. United Republic of Tanzania, you have the floor.

The Delegate of the United Republic of Tanzania: Thank you, Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates. The United Republic of Tanzania recognises a significant role of AALCO Regional Arbitration Centres in promoting alternative dispute resolution mechanism across Asia and Africa, fostering the access to justice and facilitating the resolution of commercial and investment dispute in a fair, efficient, and cost-effective manner.

As a Member of AALCO, Tanzania is committed to support the objective of these centres, which align with international and regional effort to enhance trade investment and economic cooperation. The United Republic of Tanzania is a signatory to the key international instruments that promote arbitration as an alternative method of resolving dispute, including the 1958 New York Convention on Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitration Award and the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration. These frameworks underscore the importance of arbitration in providing the neutral binding mechanism for dispute resolution, which ensuring legal certainty in a cross-border transaction.

At the regional level, Tanzania is a member of the African Union, South Africa Development Community, and East African Community, all which emphasise the development of a healthy legal framework for dispute resolution to support the economic integration. In the East Africa region, there are arbitration centres in Nairobi, which serve the country within the region.

Mr. President, in compliance with its international and regional commitment, Tanzania has established the Principal Registration Arbitration Act, K-15, which governs domestic and international arbitration, proceeding as well as the enforcement of the arbitration award.

In addition, the United Republic of Tanzania, through the Minister of Constitutional and Legal Affairs, is mandated under the Civil Procedure Code to accredited arbitration institutions. Currently, the Minister has accredited several arbitration institutions, including the National Construction Council, the Tanzania Institution of Arbitrators, Tanzania International Arbitration Centre, and iResolve, which promote arbitration and provide training for arbitrators and trainers. This effort ensures that Tanzania remains conducive for arbitration, contributing to the resolution of disputes in a manner that supports economic growth and investor confidence.

The United Republic of Tanzania acknowledges the critical role of our co-regional arbitration centre in capacity building, knowledge sharing, and promoting the best practise in arbitration. This centre includes those in Cairo, Nairobi, and Hong Kong. In addition, Tanzania supports the ongoing initiative by AALCO to strengthen the operational efficiency of these centres, including the adoption of the model law, the use of technology in dispute resolution, and promotion of inclusivity to address the needs of small and medium enterprises.

We believe that this effort will improve the credibility and accessibility of arbitration as a viable alternative to litigation. We believe that the discussion of Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO will further strengthen collaboration among the Member States, facilitate the exchange of experience, and address the challenges in the effective operation of these centres. The centre's work in connecting knowledge gap and harmonising arbitration practises will contribute to the development of a strong equitable dispute resolution framework.

Mr. President, in a conclusion, the United Republic of Tanzania praises AALCO's continued effort in sustaining and expanding the impact of the regional arbitration centre and looks forward to the constructive discussion at this session. Thank you. Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the United Republic of Tanzania.

President: Do we have any other interventions from the floor? Okay, so thank you very much. We shall continue to have this conversation on the Arbitration Centres and Cairo, Nairobi, and Hong Kong SAR, thank you for the work you do. We remain available to support you in any way possible, and at least from the interventions that we have heard from Members, everyone.

AGENDA ITEM: REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF STATUTORY RULES

President: We now have the report of the Subcommittee on the Review of the Scale of Assessed Contributions of Member States. We have the Chair of the Subcommittee present among us, Ms. Mellisa Anne Telan from the Republic of Philippines. I now invite her to come to the stage and present her report.

Ms. Mellisa Anne Telan, Second Secretary & Consul, Embassy of the Philippines in New Delhi, India and Chairperson of the Subcommittee on the Review of the Scale of Assessed Contributions of Member States: President, distinguished delegates, I have the pleasure of presenting before you the Draft Report of the Subcommittee on the Review of the Scale of Assessed Contributions of Member States for your perusal. The Subcommittee on the Review of the Scale of Assessed Contributions of Member States was established on the 15th of February, 2020, based on the mandate provided in the speech during the Sixtieth Annual Session of the AALCO in New Delhi, the Republic of India, in 2022. I am pleased to inform you that the work of this Subcommittee is proceeding in a satisfactory manner and we are engaging with AALCO members to solicit all viewpoints and how to provide a review of the scale of assessed contributions of Member States in the most appropriate manner acceptable to all.

As you are aware, this is a consensual Member States driven process and we have so far completed five meetings from 2023 to 2024 and six meetings from 2024 to 2025. In addition to the two revised options reported to the Sixty-Second Annual Session last year, a third option has been presented by a Member State for deliberation during the last two meetings of the Subcommittee. The subcommittee has also considered a proposal for setting a transition period for introducing the new scale, namely a period of three years, which will allow Member States to gradually adjust to the new scale.

The proposal of setting a transition period has gained emerging support from the Liaison Officers to AALCO. This year, the Subcommittee seeks the mandate of the plenary to continue our work in the coming year, in particular on the consideration of the three options. We respectfully request the endorsement of the plenary for the introduction of a transition period from 2027 to 2029 applicable to whichever option may ultimately be adopted due to the budgetary cycles of some of the Member States.

In closing, I request the continued support and cooperation of Member States for the progress of the mandate of this subcommittee. I also thank this occasion to express my gratitude to all the Liaison Officers of AALCO Member States, based in New Delhi, for actively participating in this process, as well as to the members of the Secretariat who have facilitated the work of the Subcommittee. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, Chair of the committee. I will now open the floor for any comments from Member States on the report of the Subcommittee. On the list of speakers, I have Japan.

The Delegate of Japan: Thank you, Mr. President. Japan would like to take this opportunity to commend the AALCO Secretariat for the tireless effort to support the work of the Subcommittee on the Scale of Assessed Contributions. We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to Ms. Melissa Anne Telan, chairperson of the Subcommittee on the Scale of Assessed Contributions, for her leadership and hard work to lead its intensive discussions in New Delhi.

Japan supports the draft report, which is presented, so it will be presented later. It is evident that current scale based on the scales of UN assessed contribution 2007-2009 is outdated. It is high time for the Member States to update the scale of assessed contributions to improve the accountability of the AALCO and to support its activities. Japan hopes to see the consensus among Member States for new scale of assessed contribution in the next Annual Session. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from Japan. A Member would like to have an intervention at this point. Okay, so the distinguished delegate from Malaysia, you have the floor.

The Delegate of Malaysia: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Malaysia wishes to express its appreciation to the Chair of the Subcommittee of the Scale of Assessed Contributions.

Malaysia attaches great importance to this process as the financial stability of AALCO is vital to the continued fulfilment of its mandate. Malaysia notes with appreciation the application of the United Nations' most recent scale of assessments under General Assembly Resolution 79/249, adopted on 24th December 2024, to the proposed revised AALCO formulas. In this regard, Malaysia takes note of revised Option 1, based on the 10-year UN average, and revised Option 2, based on the most recent UN scale of assessments.

Malaysia reaffirms its preference for revised Option 2. This option provides transparency, predictability, and alignment with established international practice by relying on the most recent UN scale of assessments. We view this as the most viable and sustainable basis for determining the contributions of Member States. On the circulation of the third option, based on the combined gross national income and per capita gross national income formula, Malaysia recognises the constructive spirit behind this option. Nevertheless, the lack of clarity on the methodology renders the formula less clearly defined and not expressly anchored in the Secretariat's established approaches. In our view, this creates ambiguity regarding its long-term application, including with respect to sustainability and equitable distribution among Member States. With regard to the implementation of the new scale, we note the Secretariat's revised proposal for a transition period spanning 2027 to 2029, with 2026 designated as a preparatory year.

Malaysia views this phased approach as useful in providing stability and allowing Member States to adjust their national budgetary planning. In conclusion, Mr. President, Malaysia urges member states to work towards consensus on a formula that balances equity, transparency, and sustainability. We remain committed to constructive engagement with the Secretariat together with the Member States and reaffirm our support for the revised Option 2 as the preferred option, while remaining open to the phased implementation of the transition period. I am much obliged. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from Malaysia. We appreciate your intervention. Are there any other interventions? Okay. So there being no other interventions, I think it speaks very well to your work. Thank you very much for the work and we continue to see this through.

AGENDA ITEM: REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE

President: Okay. Now we will move to the next item on the agenda, which is the report of the Chairperson of the Drafting Committee. I request the Chairperson of the Drafting Committee to make their way.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Drafting Committee was constituted by us on the first day of the Annual Session to prepare a Summary Report and finalise the Secretariat Draft Resolutions on the Organizational, Administrative, and Financial matters. I will now call upon the distinguished Chairperson of the Drafting Committee, who is Ms. Elizabeth Nakkungu, who is a Commissioner in the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uganda, to give us her report. Thank you very much, distinguished chair.

Ms. Elizabeth Nakkungu, Commissioner Legal Advisory Services, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, the Republic of Uganda and Chairperson of the Drafting Committee: Mr. President, the Secretary-General, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, good morning. It is my privilege to present to the plenary the Report on the work and accomplishments of the Drafting Committee. As the President has stated, this Drafting Committee was constituted on the first day of the Annual Session, which was 8th September, 2025, and in accordance with AALCO tradition, a representative of the host government chairs the Committee, and I have had the honour to serve as the Chairperson of that Committee. Other members of the drafting committee were delegations from the People's Republic of China, Japan, Kingdom of Thailand, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Uganda, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

The Committee was tasked to prepare and finalise the provisional Summary Report and draft the resolutions for the consideration of the plenary with the assistance of the AALCO Secretariat. The Committee convened daily in the evenings from 8th to 11th September, following plenary deliberations, and this morning to prepare the report. Discussions in the Committee were conducted with a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect, and I wish to express my profound gratitude to all the members of the Committee.

I also wish to express my gratitude and appreciation to all delegates for their constructive participation, and I thank them for the confidence they placed in me to fulfil the role of the chairperson. The Committee's work was enriched by the helpful contributions and the flexibility exhibited by all delegations during the discussions. The Committee has now prepared a provisional summary report of the Sixty-Third Annual Session, reflecting the discussion and consensus views of all delegations on both the organisational and substantive matters.

As a result of the meetings of the Drafting Committee, the following report have been prepared, which are to be presented by the Secretary-General shortly to the plenary. We have a provisional Summary Report, and we have draft resolutions on organisational matters. These are five.

The first one is a Report of the Secretary-General on Administrative and Organisational matters. We have a resolution on the Budget for the year 2026, and there's a resolution on the Report on the Regional Arbitration Centres, which has just been discussed. And there is a resolution on the Reappointment of the Secretary-General, and then the draft Report on the Subcommittee on the Revision of Scale of Assessed Contributions.

The Committee has also prepared a message of thanks on behalf of all AALCO Member States to the host government, which is the Republic of Uganda, and this will be delivered by the Secretary-General. Mr. President, the preparation of the daily drafts and documentation by the Secretariat was invaluable to the Committee's progress, and for this matter, I wish to extend sincere gratitude to the members of the Drafting Committee and the Secretariat for their dedicated support and professionalism throughout the exercise. I thank you all for your attention.

President: Thank you very much, Chairperson, for your report. We appreciate the work, and we thank you. Thank you very much.

Okay, now that we have just finished that session, now we have quickly gone through the presentation of the Report of the Drafting Committee. Now I think it is a good time for us to take a break.

We shall take a break at this time and resume the session at 11.30 A.M. At that session, Observers and other are welcome to join us during that session. People of the Republic of China, you have an intervention? Yes, thank you very much, Mr. President. Yes, sorry to take the floor right before the key break.

The Delegate of the People's of the Republic of China: I just wish to seek your clarification because we just heard the Chair's brief introduction on the work of the Drafting Committee in relation to the preliminary Provisional Summary Report for the Session of AALCO. So I was wondering, after the tea break, whether Member States will have a chance to take the floor to express their comments and suggestions about the Provisional Summary Report? Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Yes, thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from China. China, yes, the Secretary-General is going to go through all those. What the Committee was informing us is that they have got all these documents ready and I think they have been circulated and so Members will have an opportunity to make comments as we get along before we go into the actual adoption of those documents. Okay, thank you very much. So we take a break, 11.30 A.M., we reconvene and proceed with the rest of the proceedings. Thank you.

The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

**XIX. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SIXTH
GENERAL MEETING OF THE AALCO MEMBER
STATES AND CONCLUDING SESSION**

XIX. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SIXTH GENERAL MEETING OF THE AALCO MEMBER STATES AND CONCLUDING SESSION ON FRIDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2025 AT 11:45 AM

Hon'ble Kiryowa Kiwanuka, the Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda and the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session in the Chair.

President: Members, distinguished delegates, we now come to the concluding session. I also welcome observers to join the Session. First and foremost, we will have the following items to be considered.

The adoption of a Message of Thanks to the Host Government, adoption of resolutions on organizational, administrative, and financial matters, venue of AALCO's Sixty-Fourth Annual Session, adoption of Summary Report of the Session, vote of thanks by Asian Member States, vote of thanks by African Member States, vote of thanks by observer States, vote of thanks by observer international organizations, and closing remarks by the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO.

So now, I will now request first and foremost a Message of Thanks to the Host Government on behalf of the participating delegations shall be read out by Dr. Kamalinne, the Secretary-General. Secretary-General, you have the floor.

Secretary-General: We, the Member States of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, AALCO, express our profound appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Uganda for their exceptional warmth, generosity, and unparalleled hospitality we have experienced throughout our time here in Kampala. As the AALCO's Annual Session returned to Kampala for a second time, we, the delegates of the Sixty-Third Session, wish to place on record our sincere thanks for the full cooperation and support extended by the Government of the Republic of Uganda.

From the very beginning, the unwavering commitment of the host country to ensure the success of this Session has been evident. We extend our heartfelt thanks to His Excellency General Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, for honouring us on our Session as a chief guest and to the Rt. Hon. Anita Annet Among, the Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, for delivering the President's Inaugural Address that set the tone for the Annual Session. We are also grateful to the Honourable Kiryowa Kiwanuka, Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda and President of the Sixty-Third Session for his steadfast support and exemplary leadership. His efforts have been instrumental in guiding our deliberation and making this gathering a resounding success.

Uganda's historical ties to the principle of AALCO are deep-seated, as it was among the first African countries to join our Organization. Its contribution to the progressive governance of international law and its commitment to legal cooperation are well-documented and highly appreciated. We are particularly proud to note the significant role Uganda has played in shaping legal discourse within our Organization, including its election as Vice-President of the Sixty-Second Annual Session last year.

The Sixty-Third Annual Session has seen robust participation from 27 Member States, 1 observer State, and 8 international organizations. This strong show of support underscores the enduring significance of AALCO as a pivotal platform for dialogue and cooperation in international legal issues. Our discussions on the substantive topics have been both active and insightful, reflecting our collective commitment to addressing global legal matters through collaboration and shared legal frameworks.

Our sincere thanks are also extended to all the Government officials and staff members who have worked tirelessly to ensure the smooth conduct of this Session. The hospitality and logistical support provided by the Government of Uganda have greatly facilitated our work, and we are deeply appreciative of this support. Finally, let us once again express our deepest thanks to the Government of the Republic of Uganda for their unwavering commitment to the success of our Annual Session.

Your efforts have transformed this gathering into a true celebration of cooperation, diversity, and the shared pursuit of common goals.

Excellency, please accept the assurance of our highest respect and consideration as we recall the abundant spirit of solidarity, friendship, and cooperation that underpins our shared objective. We thank you very much.

President: Thank you very much, Secretary-General, for this message. This message shall be duly communicated to the authorities of the host Government. We thank you all for this.

The next item pertains to the adoption of resolutions on Organizational, Administrative, and Financial Matters, namely the Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization on Financial Matters of AALCO. That's RES/DFT/63/ORG1.

Two will be the budget for the year 2026. That is RES/DFT/63/ORG2.

The third one will be regional arbitration centres, RES/DFT/63/ORG3.

And then the fourth one will be the reappointment of Secretary-General, RES/DFT/63/ORG4.

Revision of Scales of Assessed Contributions, RES/DFT/63/ORG5.

The draft resolutions I have just mentioned were annexed to each organizational brief circulated to Member States.

The draft resolutions on the re-appointment of Secretary-General reflects the decision taken by us in the Second Meeting of Delegations on the first day of the Annual Session. I hope that every delegation has had sufficient time to go through the items and to conduct informal consultations. We shall now proceed to adopt the resolutions one by one.

The first resolution is for the reports of the Secretary-General on the Organizational, Administrative, and Financial Matters. Are there any comments on this resolution? If none, RES/DFT/63/ORG is adopted. Thank you very much.

The second one is for AALCO Budget for the Year 2026, does any Member want to make a comment? Silence means consent. If none, RES/DFT/63/ORG2 is adopted.

As for the Report on AALCO Regional Arbitration Centres, does anyone want to make a comment on this resolution? If there are no comments, RES/DFT/63/ORG3 is adopted.

Concerning the Reappointment of the Secretary-General of AALCO, does any Member wish to make a comment from the floor at this point? If none, RES/DFT/63/ORG4 is adopted.

As for the Report on Scales of Assessed Contribution, are there any Members who would like to make a comment at this point? If none, RES/DFT/63/ORG5 is adopted. Thank you very much, distinguished delegates.

We will now move to the next item, which is the Venue for AALCO's Sixty-Fourth Annual Session. Now the floor is open to any Member wishing to host the Annual Session of AALCO. And this one, I'll give you more time to think about it.

And as is our usual practice, Africa, Asia, Africa, Asia. So I am looking at the Asian partner States with hope. Okay, if there are no self-nominations at this point, and if we so agree, we will task the Secretary-General and the Secretariat to consult with Member States on the matter.

Are there any objections? If there are no objections to that, it is so decided.

We will now move to the adoption of the Provisional Summary Report of the Session.

Colleagues, we now come to the adoption of the Summary Provisional Report of the Sixty-Third Annual Session for adoption.

A draft Summary Report of the Session has been circulated by the AALCO Secretariat. I would like to remind delegates that a period of 30 days from today is given to Member States to go through the Summary Report carefully and revert to the Secretariat, thereafter, the Summary Report will stand finalised. That said, if any Member has any comments or corrections to the draft at this point, please feel free.

On my list, I have the distinguished delegate from the People's Republic of China who would like to have an intervention at this point. Distinguished delegate from the People's Republic of China, you have the floor.

The Delegate of the People's Republic of China: Thank you, Mr. President. At the outset, China would like to express its appreciation for the hard work and the fruitful outcome of the Drafting Committee in presenting the Provisional Summary Report of the Sixty-Third Session of AALCO. It is a wonderful work.

At this point, I wish to specifically raise one issue, which is under the agenda item Seventh meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on International Law in Cyberspace. Considering that this Session commenced only about one hour ago, the Provisional Summary Report, as it currently stands, reflects only the brief introduction from Mr. Chair and Mr. Special Rapporteur of the Working Group. And in relation to the comments and suggestions from the Member States, we understand that the Drafting Committee held its final meeting early this morning, just before the commencement of the morning session, so they have no chance to prepare the language to reflect the comments and suggestions from Member States. Considering that we have conducted very successful and fruitful discussions in the format of Working Group, if you allow me, I would like to take this opportunity to present the specific language suggestion under this sub-item.

The suggestion from China pertains to paragraph 8.23bis. A copy of the language suggestion has been submitted to the Secretariat early today, and if I may, I would like to request the Secretariat's kind assistance in circulating it. And I would like to read as follows, Mr. President, if you allow me, on the suggestion from China. Under paragraph 8.23bis, it could be read as follows.

“On the consensual basic principles of international law applicable in cyberspace and the explanatory note annexed to the report of the Special Rapporteur for the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO, all Member States have been invited to provide their input to it before and at the Sixty-Fourth Annual Session. The consensual basic principles should be considered for possible adoption at the Sixty-Fourth Annual Session of AALCO, taking into account the input by Member States.

The Open-ended Working Group has been kindly requested to further its studies on AI from both the legal and the practical aspects. To this end, all Member States have been invited in submitting their documents and the papers on their respective domestic laws, regulations,

policies, and the practice on AI by the first half of 2026. The Special Rapporteur has been requested to further his studies on the issue of AI.

The Secretariat of AALCO has been kindly requested to compile the above-mentioned information and the materials to be submitted by AALCO Member States and the Special Rapporteur for its onward transmission for the Working Group's consideration. The Working Group could then deliberate and proceed with the work on the issue of AI in the next Annual Session in the year of 2026.”

So, I would like to clarify that China’s proposal is based on the deliberations of the morning session of the Working Group. We propose that this paragraph be included in the Provisional Summary Report for consideration by Member States. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the People’s Republic of China. Any comments from the members? Distinguished delegate from Japan.

The Delegate of Japan: Thank you, Mr. President. Yeah, I carefully heard the intervention made by our colleague of the People’s Republic of China. So I understand that one country, you know, requested this proposal. We see no consensus so maybe we will make a comment later on this Summary Report. Thank you very much.

President: Distinguished delegate from Iran.

The Delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you for and congratulations for coming to an end of this event and this Session in a very successful manner. Thank you, Mr. President. Also, thank you, the Secretary-General and his capable team.

The difficulty that was arising I think was a technical one because the last meeting of the Drafting Committee was convened prior to the Seventh Meeting of the Working Group and I hope this will be taken into consideration for the next Session that the Working Group on Cyber Space will be convened in due time so as to be able to reflect its deliberation on the Summary Report in due time. This is the first one.

The second point is that in my capacity as the Chairperson of the Working Group, while I understand the comments of the distinguished representative of Japan based on the discussion that I have had during the last couple of days, I think there is a general understanding and common understanding on the future work of the first and the continuation of the work of the Working Group and to address the emerging issues including particularly AI.

I think we have two options, either to summarise what the distinguished representative of China has proposed which we fully support in our national capacity or to streamline it in a way to compromise and remove the misunderstanding or concerns that other delegation may have.

These two points were raised but in my national capacity I fully support the suggestion made by China and in my capacity as Chair of the Working Group, I concluded in my remark in the Seventh Meeting that there is a common understanding about the continuation of the work of the Working Group and to touch upon the emerging issues including in particular AI. I thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from Iran. Any other comments? Türkiye?

The Delegate of the Republic of Türkiye: Thank you very much. I just received also this Summary Report. Of course it’s a summary and everything which has been told during all these meetings cannot be reflected. That’s understandable.

I propose that I cannot see right now in the paper, maybe there can be a reference to the Verbatim 2025 records in the paper. If someone would like to have more information and what has been told, I think it would be better if we can add a reference to Verbatim 2025. Thank you so much.

President: Thank you, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Türkiye. Any other comments before I make a ruling? Yes, distinguished delegate from People's Republic of China.

The Delegate of the People's Republic of China: Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor again. I also thank the distinguished delegate from Japan for his inputs and if I may, I would like to make some explanation regarding the suggestion from China.

First of all, I wish to echo the remarks made by the distinguished delegate from Iran because the suggestion from China is based on the discussions that took place in the Working Group's Meeting early this morning.

It's unfair to say that China's proposal is submitted too late since the Working Group meeting has just concluded. Moreover, when China took the floor during the morning session to introduce its suggestion, we heard no objection; on the contrary, we received support from Member States. Against this background, we presented our proposal, in response to the discussions held earlier today.

The second point I wish to clarify is that the suggestion from China is quite neutral. Nothing has been decided yet. We just seek to draw the attention of Member States and the Secretariat. Following the end of this year's Working Group's meeting, there are some further work to be conducted. The first is that in the report from the Special Rapporteur, there is a document entitled *Consensual Basic Principles of International Law Applicable in Cyberspace*. We understand that this document exists because the Working Group received a mandate from AALCO nearly ten years ago. It is the result of a decade of joint efforts and hard work by all participants in the Working Group. We should not overlook this achievement. Therefore, we hope to give AALCO Member States an opportunity, perhaps during the intersessional period, to consider and digest this outcome document, as this is the first time it has been formally presented to Member States by the Working Group. Our suggestion is intended to provide that opportunity, so that at the next AALCO Annual Session, Member States may consider the possible adoption of this outcome, which is of great importance. We have already heard many valuable comments on this topic earlier this week.

AALCO is a very unique platform in the area of international law, bridging Asian and African States. It's very necessary for AALCO to work together to make its voice heard by the international community in particular in relation to this very hot issue.

It means that the suggestion from China is to keep all options open, nothing has been excluded. Every Member State is entitled to present its comments and suggestions on the outcome documents presented by the Special Rapporteur. So this is the substance of the suggestion from China.

And the second point goes to the continuation of the Working Group. And in the previous And the second point goes to the continuation of the Working Group. In the previous interventions, we heard no objection, no one expressed the view that this Working Group is no longer needed. We do support and appreciate the outcomes from the Working Group. So the second suggestion from China is to allow the Working Group to continue its work, including further study on the use of AI from both legal and practical aspects. This is a very neutral suggestion.

We understand that Member States have had limited time to review the written suggestion because we just finalised our discussions half an hour ago. So having said that, we sincerely hope that Member States could consider the suggestion from China in a spirit of cooperation, as it is put forward for the benefit of AALCO as a whole. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from China. I think I will make a comment at this point. I did have a consultation with the People's Republic of China on this issue before I allowed them to raise it. I did raise the concern. My concern was always allowing Members an opportunity to develop absolute consensus on the issue of documents that are going to be adopted by them. I am of the view that we allow the matter as raised by China and the intervention to be noted in our record and be noted in our Summary Report but take solace in the guidance given by the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Türkiye where we shall also add a note that all the Verbatim proceedings of the Session will be included in this document. This should allow Members an opportunity again to comment on this issue within the 30-day window and I will ask the Secretariat to take careful note of the views and recommendation raised by both by the People's Republic of China and the comments of both the Japan and the Republic of Türkiye in this matter and all the issues addressed in this Session. I hope that will address all our concerns.

Okay? So for clarity, the comments raised by China are going to be noted in this provisional Summary Report. Allow Members to comment on the same within the 30-day window and then the Secretariat will take note of all the comments raised and note those in the Report. Okay? Yes, please. Thank you.

The Delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Thank you, Mr. President. Sorry to interrupt you. I will leave it to your capable leadership.

Since it was the Seventh Meeting of the Working Group, I humbly request to add one sentence because I, at the end of the Meeting of the Working Group, I summarised some part of the discussion in my capacity as Chair, not as an agreement by Member States. And that was this statement that was clearly stated when I was in that seat. And it was this sentence: Based on the suggestions that the Member States represented during the Seventh Meeting, the Working Group has now a better understanding about the future work of the Working Group, including in particular on consideration of AI.

This will be attributed to me as the chair, so there will be no agreement that I'm saying. It could be some sort of Summary Report of the Chairperson to be reflected on the Summary Report of the Session. I think this could be a compromise solution in addition to what you have said and summarised regarding the taking note of the comments from China. I thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you very much, distinguished delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran. I think the reason why we set up a Drafting group was to avoid exactly this, where we are drafting on the go. I have made a ruling and I request that Members respect that. The comments of China are noted and will be included in the Provisional Summary Report. Members are invited to make a comment on the report and specifically on that item within the 30-day window. I thank you. So, yes, distinguished delegate from the Republic of Sudan.

The Delegate of the Republic of Sudan:¹ Thank you, Mr. President. Following the Summary Report, we wish to express our appreciation to the Drafting Committee for its efforts. However, we have a few observations. On page 5, where the Rapid Support Force (RSF) is mentioned, the term "Militia" has been omitted. We request that the term "Rebel Militia" be added to every

¹ Statement was delivered in Arabic. This is an unofficial translation done by the Secretariat.

item in which this Militia is mentioned. RSF shall be described as a “Rebel Militia.” Therefore, we request that this recommendation be taken into consideration.

Furthermore, on page 21, in paragraph 8.21, it is stated that one country condemned the violations committed by the rebel Rapid Support Forces Militia. We would like to request that this statement be amended to read: “The Republic of the Sudan submitted this report to your esteemed Council.”

Accordingly, I kindly request that the delegation of the Republic of the Sudan be mentioned in paragraph 8.21 on page 21.

President: Thank you very much, distinguished delegate from the Republic of Sudan. I’ll just read for Members, for purposes of clarity, just to give you guidance on where my ruling is coming from.

Rule 12(16), a Verbatim Record of the deliberations and discussions on the plenary shall be maintained and furnished to the Member States within a period of four months from the date of conclusion of the Annual Session.

A Summary Record of the discussions and decisions taken in the plenary shall be prepared by the Secretariat and furnished as soon as possible to the Member States and also other States and international organizations. So, I’m going to request the Secretariat to follow through on this and ensure that every Member has got a Verbatim Record of what we discussed in this proceeding today. I hope that covers all our concerns.

Thank you. Okay, so, Members, thank you very much for your intervention. You’re also reminded that the work plan of AALCO Secretariat for the coming year will be prepared and in accordance with AALCO Statutory Rule, paying due regard to the recommendations expressed during this Session in close consultation with the Liaison Officers of the Member States, also bearing in mind the available resources.

So, as we work on the work plan, distinguished delegates, let us ensure that the concerns and the continuity of our Working Groups etc. are all addressed so we can make sure that our work is not left unattended. So, I think we now have that matter closed. We shall adopt the Provisional Summary Report with the comments made during these proceedings.

I will now move to the next item, which is a Vote of Thanks by Asian Member States, distinguished delegates. Now, we come to the concluding meeting of the Sixty-Third Annual Session. I wish to invite the distinguished delegate from Syria to present their remarks. Thank you.

The Delegate of Syrian Arab Republic:² Mr. President, Madam Vice-President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. It is a profound honour to deliver this Vote of Thanks on behalf of the Asian Member States of AALCO at the successful conclusion of our Sixty-Third Annual Session. To gather here in the Pearl of Africa has been both a privilege and a source of pride for all of us.

Over the past days, our deliberations have been rich, insightful, and forward-looking. We have addressed pressing issues of international law with openness and mutual respect. What makes these exchanges truly remarkable is that the collective voice of Asia and Africa, rooted in our shared history, continues to shape international law in ways that reflect justice, inclusivity, and

² Statement was delivered in Arabic. This is an unofficial translation done by the Secretariat.

universality. Afro-Asian state practice, as reaffirmed in this Session, has inspired confidence and offered fresh perspectives to the wider international legal community.

Excellencies, our unity is founded not only on geography, but on the shared history and convictions that bind our two continents. The Bandung Spirit of independence, equality, solidarity, and mutual respect, continues to inspire Asia and Africa across generations. By returning to African soil after six years, this Session has revived that same spirit which first brought our forefathers together in Bandung in 1955 to lay the foundations of enduring cooperation and friendship.

On behalf of the Asian Member States, I wish to convey our deepest appreciation to His Excellency, Kiryowa Kiwanuka, the Honourable Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda and President of this Session, for presiding over our deliberations with admirable wisdom and exemplary leadership. Likewise, I extend our heartfelt thanks to Her Excellency, Ms. Marie Charlotte G. Tang, Vice-President of this Session, for her dedication and thoughtful support in the smooth conduct of our proceedings.

We also express our sincere gratitude to H.E. Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, Secretary-General of AALCO, whose vision and determination have ensured the success of this Annual Session. Under his stewardship, supported ably by the Deputy Secretaries-General and the entire Secretariat team, AALCO continues to grow in relevance and credibility as the united voice of Asia and Africa. Their tireless work, both seen and unseen, reflects a spirit of devotion and professionalism that we deeply value.

Finally, I wish to thank all distinguished delegates, observers, and all for their active participation. Your thoughtful contributions and diverse perspectives have greatly enriched our deliberations and will guide AALCO's work in the years ahead.

As we conclude, let us carry forward the Bandung Spirit with renewed vigour, strengthening the bonds between Asia and Africa, and ensuring that AALCO remains a beacon of solidarity and cooperation in advancing international law. Thank you very much.

President: Thank you very much the distinguished delegate from Syria, we appreciate that, thank you. Now I invite the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Djibouti to present the remarks on behalf of the African Member States. And Djibouti is our newest member. Welcome. Thank you.

The Delegate of the Republic of Djibouti: Thank you. Mr. President, Madam Vice-President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is a distinct honour and privilege for me to deliver this vote of thanks on behalf of the African Member States of AALCO at the successful conclusion of the Sixty-Third Annual Session. Over the course of this Session, our deliberations have been substantive, forward-looking, and enriched by the spirit of cooperation that defines our organization. The discussions have reflected the shared commitment of Asia and Africa to uphold justice, equality, and the rule of law in the true spirit of Bandung.

I wish to place on record my sincere appreciation and gratitude to His Excellency Kiryowa Kiwanuka, the Honourable Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda and President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO, for the distinguished manner in which he has guided our proceedings and for the commitment he has shown to the success of this Session. His leadership has been a source of inspiration and pride for all African Member States. I would also like to extend warm thanks to Her Excellency Ms. Marie Charlotte G. Tang, Vice-President of this Session, for her valuable support and gracious contribution in ensuring the smooth conduct of our deliberations.

On behalf of the African Member States, I also wish to place on record our deepest appreciation to the host country for the generous hospitality and excellent arrangements that ensure the smooth conduct of this Session. We are especially delighted to be back in the Pearl of Africa, Uganda, returning to this continent after six years and meeting here once again since the Annual Session held in 2019. This moment is therefore not only historic, but also deeply symbolic as it revives the same Bandung spirit which in 1955 first brought our forbearers together to lay the foundations of Afro-Asian solidarity. The warmth and dedication with which we have been received stands as a testament to those enduring bonds.

Excellencies, I would further like to express our profound gratitude to His Excellency Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, Secretary-General of AALCO, whose vision, dedication and tireless efforts have been central to the success of this Annual Session. Under his guidance, AALCO continues to grow in strength and relevance, giving voice to the collective aspirations of our two continents.

Our sincere thanks also go to the Deputy Secretaries-General and the entire Secretariat team, whose professionalism, hard work and behind-the-scenes efforts have made this Session a resounding success. Their service embodies the best traditions of AALCO and deserves our highest commendation.

Finally, I extend heartfelt thanks to all the distinguished delegates, observers and partners for their active participation and valuable contributions. Your insights and perspectives have greatly enriched our deliberations and will guide the work of AALCO in the years to come. As we conclude, let us reaffirm our commitment to the Bandung spirit and to the continued solidarity of Asia and Africa in advancing international law for the benefit of all nations. I thank you.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the Republic of Djibouti for those remarks. I now invite the Russian Federation to present the vote of thanks on behalf of the Observer State.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: Mr. President, Madam Vice-President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is a distinct honour to deliver this remark on behalf of the non-Member State Observer.

At the conclusion of this landmark Session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to the Governments and people of the Republic of Uganda for their generous hospitality to the AALCO Secretariat for its dedicated effort and to Member States for graciously welcoming our participation in this important deliberation. We also wish to express our sincere gratitude to the President and Vice-President of this Session for their able leadership and guidance. Their stewardship has greatly contributed to the smooth and successful conduct of our proceedings and has fostered an atmosphere of inclusivity and constructive engagement.

The comprehensive agenda and inclusive discussion of this Session have once again underscored AALCO's leadership in addressing the pressing legal issue of our time. The range of subject and the depth of exchange have provided invaluable insights into the evolving landscape of international law, reaffirming AALCO's pivotal roles in strengthening the legal foundation of cooperation between Asia and Africa.

We particularly commend the host Government and the AALCO Secretariat for their exceptional organization and meticulous preparation which have ensured the smooth and

successful conduct of this Session. Their commitment has fostered an environment of openness, dialogue, and mutual respect and to bring all participants to contribute meaningfully.

In conclusion, we extend our best wishes to AALCO and its Member States, focussing on success in advancing international law and promoting greater understanding between Asia and Africa. We look forward to deepening our engagement and to supporting AALCO's vital mission in the years to come. Thank you.

President: Thank you very much, Secretary-General, for those kind remarks. I now request the distinguished delegate from the Permanent Court of Arbitration to present their remarks on behalf of the international organizations.

The Delegate of the Permanent Court of Arbitration: Mr. President, Madam Vice-President, Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, the Permanent Court of Arbitration is deeply honoured to deliver this Vote of Thanks on behalf of the international organizations represented here at the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO. This year's Session has demonstrated AALCO's commitment to amplifying the voices of Asia and Africa in favour of the progressive development of international law. All the international organizations have been privileged to participate in daily enlightening deliberations, to engage in discussions with AALCO and its Member States, and to be highlighted during the side events. These discussions will contribute to deepened cooperation and practical partnership to address the important legal and policy issues of our time. We, the international organizations, extend our sincere thanks to the President and Vice-President of this Session for their leadership and guidance which have ensured the productive and successful outcome of our work.

We also wish to express our profound appreciation to the Secretary-General of AALCO and the Secretariat for the support provided to observer international organizations.

We are equally grateful to the Government and people of the Republic of Uganda for their warm welcome and gracious hospitality here in Kampala. The excellent arrangement and seamless organization of this Session have provided an environment conducive to constructive dialogue and meaningful collaboration. To conclude, we look forward to strengthening the bonds of partnership from here and to working alongside AALCO and its Member States in pursuit of a just, equitable and inclusive international legal order. On behalf of the international organization, I thank you very much.

President: Thank you very much, the distinguished delegate from the PCA, for your remarks, the most appreciated. I now have the duty to invite myself to make the closing remarks.

Honourable Ministers present, the Vice-President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session, the Secretary-General of AALCO and the entire Secretariat, High Commissioners present, heads of delegation, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

As we come to the close of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, an international organization here in Uganda, the Pearl of Africa, I extend our profound gratitude to all Member States, observers and international organizations that have attended and actively participated in the deliberations of this Sixty-Third Session. You all took time off your busy schedules and dedicated this week to AALCO. For this, I thank you most sincerely.

I also want to extend my appreciation to my colleagues in Government, on the Government of Uganda, for their warm hospitality and impeccable organization to this Annual Session of AALCO. I thank you. Like I said earlier on in the week, for everything that went well, please

congratulate me and thank me. If anything did not go well, I showed you the people who are in charge.

I also want to commend the AALCO Secretariat for its tireless efforts in facilitating this important gathering, which continues to serve as a vital platform for dialogue and cooperation among Asian and African States on matters of international law. Over the past six days, we have not just engaged in deliberations, but witnessed the reaffirmation of solidarity, equality and the rule of law which bind our continents together.

We commend the robust discussions on topics such as the Law of the Sea, Environment and Sustainable Development, Asset Recovery, Outer Space and the evolving frameworks in International Trade And Investment that have taken place over the course of this Session. The emphasis placed by several delegations on the need for equitable access to maritime and outer space resources resonates deeply with all Member States, given that the sea and outer space is a common heritage for mankind.

The call by Member States for a rules-based international order that respects the sovereignty and developmental aspirations of all nations, particularly those in the Global South, was prominent in the course of the Session. The deliberations on the climate change and sustainable development have been compelling, particularly the need to address the disproportionate impact of climate change on developing nations. The call for strengthened partnerships, legal frameworks and urgent need for the implementation of the principle of common but differentiated responsibility stands out.

The discussion on International Trade and Investment have highlighted the importance of balancing economic growth with social justice and environmental protection. The delegations strongly advocated for reforms to global trade systems that promote fairness and inclusivity, ensuring that developing nations are not marginalised in the global economic order.

Throughout the deliberations of this Session, we have had a rich tapestry of perspectives from Member States, reflecting our shared commitment to addressing pressing global challenges through the lens of international law. All delegations have closely followed the insightful statements and contributions made by fellow Member States, observers and international organizations. These statements have enriched our collective understanding and have underscored the importance of solidarity in tackling issues of mutual concern.

AALCO continues to embody the Bandung spirit of friendship, solidarity and cooperation, ensuring that the voices of Asia and Africa resonate in multilateral institutions. At a time when the global governance is under strain from fragmentation, unilateralism and protectionism, AALCO serves as a unifying platform that strengthens South-South cooperation and upholds the principles of the UN Charter.

Through its close cooperation with the International Law Commission and other UN organs, AALCO provides a channel for Member States to influence the codification and progressive development of international law. It works on topics such as immunity of State officials, sea-level rise, cyber-crime, outer space law, International Trade and Investment Law, climate change and governance. It demonstrates its ability to connect regional priorities with global legal processes.

By commissioning studies, convening expert meetings and publishing legal analysis, AALCO equips Member States with intellectual tools to engage effectively in negotiations and litigation before international tribunals. Through training programmes, webinars and publications such as the Yearbook of AALCO, the AALCO Journal of International Law, the Organization

enhances the legal capacity of its Member States, particularly smaller and developing nations. This capacity-building role enables Member States to engage on more equal footing in global negotiations and dispute resolution mechanisms.

AALCO has remained a consistent voice on issues of justice and decolonisation, including the long-standing agenda on Palestine and other occupied territories. AALCO provides a collective space for Member States to reaffirm adherence to fundamental norms such as prohibition on the use of force, the right to self-determination and accountability for grave breaches of international humanitarian law and human rights law.

AALCO's contributions are reflected in landmark developments such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the BBNJ Agreement, the UN Convention on Cybercrime and the ongoing efforts to frame a Model Investment Treaty. These illustrate how AALCO is not only a forum for dialogue but an incubator of legal norms and institutions with global reach.

By bringing together Member States, observers, international organizations including ICJ, ITLOS, UNCITRAL, UNIDROIT, ICRC, AALCO provides a unique diplomatic space for consensus-building across diverse legal traditions. It enables Asia and Africa to consolidate positions, mediate differences and project a common voice in global negotiations.

In this way, AALCO's evolving role on the global legal and diplomatic landscape is one of continuity and innovation. Continuity in safeguarding the Bandung principles and the collective interests of Asia and Africa and innovation in addressing new global challenges through law. The AALCO's strength lies in being both a custodian of past struggles for sovereignty and self-determination and a forward-looking forum that equips Member States to shape legal architecture of today's and tomorrow's world.

Indeed, the discussions we have had on the pressing issues from climate change and environmental governance to human rights, trade, migration, cyber security and emerging technologies have underscored AALCO's relevance in our time. Our deliberations have reaffirmed that AALCO is not just a consultative body, but a bridge. A bridge between Asia and Africa, a bridge to the United Nations and other international institutions and a bridge to the future of a fairer and more just international legal order. We have shown that when Asia and Africa speak with one voice, our message cannot be ignored.

Beyond the Session's deliberations, this Annual Session has provided an opportunity for Member States to renew and nourish their relationships through various bilateral meetings held between themselves. The bilateral meetings have also been held with heads of international organizations and Member States, which have, to some members, provided an entry point to collaboration, while with other Members, it has been an opportunity for continued relationship.

The Session also marked by specific subjects on international law in side events held. The side events are complementary to the plenary Session and have proved to be invaluable. They provided specialised forums on a diverse range of subjects, ranging from the necessity to sign the UN Convention against Cybercrime, UNIDROIT's cooperation with AALCO, the presentation on instruments of access to credit, the understanding of the Hague Conference on Private International Law, ISDS reform on UNCITRAL laws, the pathways of interstate of investment disputes hosted by the PCA.

This provided a platform for informal networking, information sharing, and capacity-building, thus enabling participants to exchange perspectives and forge new partnerships. In so doing, they enriched our deliberations and ensured that the outcomes of the Session are not only

inclusive, but are grounded in practical experience and shared wisdom. For this, I thank all organizations and Member States that have hosted side events. Thank you very much.

I cannot conclude without extending heartfelt appreciation for the gracious hospitality we have enjoyed through this Session. We have especially been grateful to the People's Republic of China, the Republic of India, the Republic of Korea, and our host delegation for generously hosting us to memorable dinners and reception. Your warmth and generosity have not only nourished us, but have strengthened our bonds of friendship and solidarity that unite our nations. Your Excellencies and distinguished delegates, as you return to your respective countries, I urge you to carry forward the resolutions adopted here. Let them not remain words on paper, but become instruments of action, guiding our legal systems, strengthening our institutions, and ensuring that international law reflects the realities and aspirations of our continents and our peoples.

The path ahead will not be without challenge. Yet, with purpose, unity, solidarity, dialogue, and cooperation, we shall continue to transform challenges into opportunities. Let us therefore leave Kampala with a renewed sense of purpose, strengthened solidarity, and a firm commitment to build a future defined by peace, prosperity, and justice for the peoples of Asia and Africa through the pursuit of AALCO's objectives.

May AALCO continue to grow from strength to strength, and may the spirit of Bandung remain alive in all our endeavours. Let me take this opportunity to invite you to take some time to explore the beautiful country before you return to your respective country. Uganda is blessed with breath-taking beauty from the majestic River Nile, the snow-capped Rwenzori Mountains, the serene shores of Lake Victoria, which you have all shared with us this week, the world-renowned national parks that are the home of mountain gorillas and diverse wildlife and vibrant bird species. This is punctuated by a rich cultural heritage and warm hospitality. This blend will certainly give you unforgettable experiences that truly reflect the spirit of Africa. We encourage you to discover these treasures and carry the lasting memories of Uganda's beauty and generosity with you.

Like I said earlier, if you have not seen Uganda, you have not lived yet. So do not leave Uganda without living. You must live.

I thank you all for the participation and wish you safe journey back home. It is actually interesting when you are the President, the clock does not even come up. The whole week the clock has been coming up. Today, I told them, please, no clock, this is my time. I thank you all for the participation and I wish you a safe journey back home. It is now my singular pleasure and profound honour to declare the Sixty-Third Session of AALCO closed.

I thank you for God and my country.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, with those very few words, I formally declare the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO adjourned. Thank you once again. Please enjoy the rest of your stay in Uganda and safe journeys back home. We will remain available to you. The Government of Uganda remains available to you throughout your stay. If you want to stay for another month, we are happy to remain available to you. Thank you very much and enjoy the rest of your stay. God bless.

The Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO was, thereafter, concluded.

**XX. TEXT OF THE DOCUMENTS ADOPTED AT
THE SIXTY-SECOND ANNUAL SESSION**

A. RESOLUTIONS

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

The Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization at its Sixty-Third Session,

Recalling the purposes and functions of the Organization as stipulated in Article 1 of the Statutes of AALCO,

Having considered the Report of the Secretary-General on Administrative and Organizational Matters pursuant to Rule 19 (7) of the Statutory Rules as contained in Document No. AALCO/63/KAMPALA/2025/ORG 1,

Having heard with appreciation the introductory statement of the Secretary-General on above Report,

Also having heard with keen interest and appreciation the statements of the Heads of Delegations of AALCO Member States on the Report of the Secretary-General,

Recognizing the enduring relevance of the Bandung Spirit in addressing the evolving international legal challenges facing Asia and Africa,

Appreciating the efforts of the Secretary-General in strengthening the activities of the Organization and in implementing its work programme as approved at the Sixty-Second Annual Session, held in Bangkok, Kingdom of Thailand, from 9 to 13 September 2024,

Also appreciating the continuing practice of rationalizing the work programme, including through the structured consideration of agenda items during Annual Sessions,

Reiterating the mandate of the Putrajaya Declaration on Revitalizing and Strengthening the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, and the Action Plan adopted by the Extraordinary Session of Member States held on 1 December 2008 in New Delhi, India (Document No. AALCO/ES (NEW DELHI)/2008/ORG.1),

Recalling also the reaffirmation by the Member States of their commitment to AALCO's purposes and functions in the Krungthep Declaration,

Welcoming the initiatives of the Secretary-General aimed at revitalizing and strengthening the Organization,

Noting with satisfaction the enhanced cooperation between AALCO and the United Nations and its specialized agencies, as well as other international and regional organizations and academic institutions,

Resolves as follows:

1. **Approves** the work plan of the Organization as set out in the Report of the Secretary-General, and urges Member States to extend their full support for its implementation;
2. **Encourages** Member States to make voluntary contributions in support of the capacity-building activities under the approved work plan of the Organization;
3. **Requests** the Secretary-General to continue efforts to enlarge the Membership of AALCO, with particular emphasis on increasing representation from African and Central Asian States;
4. **Also requests** the Secretary-General to consult with African and Arab Member States with a view to encouraging the secondment of at least one senior official from each region to serve in the Secretariat as Assistant Secretary-General or Deputy Secretary-General;
5. **Further requests** the Member States, in their bilateral relations, to encourage Non-Member States to join AALCO;
6. **Requests** the Secretary-General to take appropriate actions in accordance with the Action Plan adopted on 20 August 2009;
7. **Directs** the Secretary-General, in consultation with Liaison Officers, to ensure the active participation of all Member States in AALCO's activities, irrespective of their financial contributions;
8. **Approves** the proposal of the Secretary-General for streamlining the Administrative, Financial and Staff Regulations of AALCO; and
9. **Further requests** the Secretary-General to report on the activities of the Organization at its Sixty-Fourth Annual Session.

AALCO'S BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 2026

The Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization at its Sixty-Third Session,

Having heard with appreciation the introductory statement of the Secretary-General on the Proposed Budget for the Year 2026 as contained in the Document No. AALCO/63/KAMPALA/2025/ORG 2,

Taking note of the comments of the Member States on the Proposed Budget,

Noting further that the Proposed Budget for the year 2026 was placed before the 367th and 368th Meetings of Liaison Officers held on 5th December 2024 and 12th February 2025 respectively at the Headquarters, New Delhi and submitted to the Sixty-Third Annual Session for final approval,

Considering that the Proposed Budget for the year 2026 is a realistic budget depending on the actual contributions to be received,

Acknowledging the need to replenish the Reserve Fund of the Organization, with the objective of ensuring that it always has a six-month operational fund for the functioning of the Organization,

Considering all the above-mentioned reasons to place the Organization on a firm financial footing,

1. **Approves** the Budget for the year 2026 as proposed;
2. **Requests** Member States who have not paid their annual contribution for the year 2025 to do so at the earliest in order to ensure the effective functioning of the Organization;
3. **Strongly** urges Member States, who are in arrears, to fulfill their financial obligations in accordance with the Statutes and Statutory Rules of AALCO, in order to expeditiously clear the same and directs the Secretary-General to report on the status thereon in the next Annual Session;
4. **Encourages** Member States to make voluntary financial contributions in order to improve the financial situation of AALCO;
5. **Mandates** the Secretary-General to explore ways and means of raising funds by additional sources in accordance with the Statutes and Statutory Rules of AALCO; and

6. **Decides** to place AALCO's budget for the year 2027 on the provisional agenda of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Session.

REPORT ON THE AALCO'S REGIONAL ARBITRATION CENTRES

The Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization at its Sixty-Third Session,

Considering the Report on the AALCO's Regional Arbitration Centres contained in Document No. AALCO/63/KAMPALA/2025/ORG 3,

Noting with appreciation the introductory remarks made by the Secretariat and the report of the Directors of the Regional Arbitration Centres,

Reaffirming the commitment by the Governments of the Member States towards enhancing the role of the Regional Arbitration Centres,

Recalling the decision relating to the Integrated Scheme for the Settlement of Disputes in Economic and Commercial Transactions adopted at its Doha Session in 1978,

Expressing satisfaction over the increasing use of the facilities and the opportunities offered for both domestic and international arbitrations under the auspices of its Regional Arbitration Centres,

Appreciating the efforts and contributions of the Governments of Malaysia, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kenya and the People's Republic of China for hosting the respective Regional Arbitration Centres,

Further appreciating the promotional activities undertaken by the Directors of the Centres, including organization of seminars and training programmes, to promote international commercial arbitration in the Asian and African regions,

Reiterating the earlier decision of the AALCO on the necessity for the Governments of the Member States to promote and support the use of the Regional Arbitration Centres,

Further reiterating its proposal, after consultation with the Directors of the respective Regional Arbitration Centres, for the holding of International Arbitration Conference biennially, by rotation in each of the Centres, with the support of the Member States,

1. **Requests** the Member States to continue their support to the Regional Arbitration Centres and use the AALCO's Regional Arbitration Centres for resolving their disputes and in particular to consider in their contracts, the inclusion of such Arbitration Clauses;
2. **Urges** the Regional Arbitration Centres to consider to the extent possible, among themselves, the formation of a common system both administratively and financially between the Centres and common standards for the qualification of arbitrators;

3. **Directs** the Regional Arbitration Centres to meet at every AALCO Annual Session to enable an exchange of ideas and to report the outcome to the Organization; and
4. **Decides** to place this item on the provisional agenda of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Session.

REAPPOINTMENT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

The Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization at its Sixty-Third Session,

Having heard the statement of H.E. Mr. Kiryowa Kiwanuka the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO,

Recalling Rule 19 (1) of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization Statutory Rules, 2024,

Recalling also that, at its Fifty-Ninth Annual Session held in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (2021), the Member States confirmed and affirmed the appointment of H.E. Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol as Secretary-General of AALCO for a four-year term commencing on 1 January 2022 and concluding on 31 December 2025,

Also taking note of the communication of the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand, conveyed, through its Note Verbale dated 5 August 2025 support for the re-appointment of the current Secretary-General,

Considering that, in accordance with Rule 19 (1) of AALCO's Statutory Rules, 2024 the Secretary-General is eligible for re-appointment for only one further term of four years (2026-2029),

Taking note of the unanimous response of the Member States to the invitation of the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session to endorse the re-appointment of Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol by acclamation,

1. **Acknowledges with appreciation** the significant contribution made by the current Secretary-General in strengthening the profile, role, and activities of the Organization, in expanding the scope of its work programme, in enlarging its membership, and in ensuring the orderly and effective administration of the Organization, particularly through prudent financial management; and
2. **Decides** to re-appoint Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol as Secretary-General of AALCO for a second and final term of four years, with effect from 1 January 2026 until 31 December 2029.

DRAFT REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE SCALE OF ASSESSED CONTRIBUTIONS

The Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization at its Sixty-Third Session,

Recalling Article 7 of the Statutes of AALCO that provides that the expenditure incurred for the purposes of the Organization, including the expenditure on the Secretariat shall be met by the Member States in such proportions as may be agreed upon and the contributions shall be paid annually in advance and deposited in the account or accounts to be maintained in the name of the Organization,

Also recalling that the Sixtieth Annual Session of AALCO held in New Delhi vide AALCO/RES/60/ORG 1 dated 28 September 2022 mandated the Secretariat to constitute an open-ended Sub-Committee of Liaison Officers to comprehensively review the scale of assessed contributions,

Noting with appreciation that the Sub-Committee on the Scale of the Assessed Contributions has since its establishment on 15 February 2023, held eleven meetings until 27 August 2025,

Having considered the Draft Report of the Sub-Committee on the Scale of the Assessed Contributions as contained in Document No. AALCO/63/KAMPALA/2025/ORG 5,

Having heard with appreciation the Report of the Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on the Scale of the Assessed Contributions,

Also having heard with keen interest and appreciation the statements of the Heads of Delegations of AALCO Member States on the Draft Report of the Sub-Committee on the Scale of Assessed Contributions and on the Report of the Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on the Scale of Assessed Contributions,

Recognizing the need to place the AALCO on a firm financial footing,

Appreciating the efforts of the Sub-Committee on the Scale of Assessed Contributions,

Resolves as follows:

1. **Welcomes** the Draft Report of the Sub-Committee on the Scale of Assessed Contributions and adopts the timelines as stipulated in Annexure II without prejudice to the final decision on the Scale of Assessed Contributions which should be made by Member States by consensus; and
2. **Requests** the Sub-Committee to continue its work and report to the next Annual Session.

B. SUMMARY REPORT

SUMMARY REPORT*



**AALCO
Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization
Sixty-Third Annual Session
8 to 12 September 2025
Kampala, the Republic of Uganda**

**SUMMARY REPORT
OF THE SIXTY-THIRD ANNUAL SESSION OF THE
ASIAN-AFRICAN LEGAL CONSULTATIVE ORGANIZATION**

1. Introduction

- 1.1. 27 Member States of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) participated in the Sixty-Third Annual Session (hereinafter “the Session”) namely, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Republic of Djibouti, the Federal Republic of Somalia, the Republic of India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Japan, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, the Republic of Mauritius, Nepal, the State of Palestine, the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, the People’s Republic of China, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the Republic of South Africa, the Republic of the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Kingdom of Thailand, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Türkiye, the Republic of Uganda, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the United Republic of Tanzania.**
- 1.2. Representatives of the following Regional Arbitration Centres of AALCO were also present: the Cairo Centre for International Commercial Arbitration (CRCICA), the Nairobi Centre for International Arbitration (NCIA), the AALCO-Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre (AALCO-HKRAC)**
- 1.3. In accordance with Rule 17(1) of the Statutory Rules, the following Observers were admitted to the Session:**

I. Representatives from the following Observer States: the Russian Federation

* The Summary Report of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO was provisionally adopted at the Concluding Session on 12 September 2025. Pursuant to Rule 12(16) of the Statutory Rules of AALCO, 2024, it was thereafter furnished to the Delegations present and to the Embassies/High Commissions of the Member States of AALCO in New Delhi vide Note Verbale No. 223/2025/63AS/AALCO dated 24 September 2025 for comments and observations to be received within a period of thirty days. Subsequent to the expiry of the thirty days period, and after incorporating comments and observations received from the Member States the final Summary Report dated 27 October 2025 is circulated to the AALCO Member States.

- II. Representatives from the following International Organizations: the **Asian Academy of International Law (AAIL)**, the **Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH)**, the **Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT)**, the **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)**, the **International Development Law Organization (IDLO)**, the **International Organization for Migration (IOM)**, the **Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)**, the **United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)**

2. Inaugural Session

- 2.1.** The Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO commenced on 8 September 2025.

- 2.2.** **H.E. Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, Secretary-General of the AALCO**, thanked the Government and people of Uganda for their warm hospitality and recalled Kampala's historic role in 1993, when the Kampala Declaration on Human Rights contributed to the Vienna Declaration and the creation of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. He stressed the importance of returning to Kampala at a crossroads for international law, where Member States will, over five days, deliberate on ten substantive topics, including the ILC, law of the sea, Palestine, environment, trade and investment, asset recovery, outer space, migrant workers, and two new items proposed by Iran and Sudan. He noted that 2025 marks the 70th anniversary of Bandung and precedes AALCO's own 70th anniversary, milestones that invite reflection on the Organization's legacy and its future. Looking ahead, he urged Members to ensure that AALCO@70 adapts to new realities such as cyberspace, AI, climate governance, and global trade, while upholding sovereignty, solidarity, and justice. Emphasizing that today's challenges, conflict, inequality, pandemics, climate change, and rapid technological shifts, require cooperation and respect for international law, he reaffirmed AALCO's role as a neutral platform for Asia and Africa to articulate shared positions. Concluding, he thanked Uganda, all delegates, and partners, expressing confidence that this Session will reaffirm AALCO's role as the collective voice of Asia and Africa, preparing the Organization for the next seventy years.

- 2.3.** Marking the seventieth anniversary of the Bandung Conference, the Secretary-General underscored the need for both collective reflection and forward-looking action to ensure that AALCO remains responsive and adaptable in addressing emerging challenges such as cyberspace, artificial intelligence, climate change, and evolving international trade norms, while steadfastly upholding the enduring principles of sovereignty, solidarity, and justice. He emphasized that overcoming global challenges, including armed conflict, inequality, and technological disruption, requires unity among States and an unwavering commitment to international law. Expressing his gratitude to all dignitaries and partners in attendance, he concluded with confidence that the Session would further consolidate AALCO's role as the principal platform for Afro-Asian legal cooperation and help shape the Organization's contributions in the decades ahead.

- 2.4.** **Mr. Songchai Chaipatiyut, Deputy Director-General, Department of Treaties and Legal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Kingdom of Thailand** on behalf of the **President of the Sixty-Second Annual Session of AALCO**, expressed deep gratitude to the Republic of Uganda for its hospitality and to the AALCO Secretariat for its hard work. He highlighted AALCO's legacy as a platform for Asia and Africa to share their

views on international law, stressing its continued importance in addressing contemporary global challenges, fostering dialogue, and advocating the rule of law over force. In his address, he noted the historical engagement of the Kingdom of Thailand with AALCO, including hosting the Sixty-Second Annual Session and the contribution of Dr. Sompong Sucharitkul and Dr. Vilawan Mangklatanakul who served as members of the International Law Commission. He commended Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol's leadership as the first Thai Secretary-General of AALCO and supported his re-appointment. As the Kingdom of Thailand handed over the presidency to the Republic of Uganda, Mr. Chaipatiyut outlined three key aspects: continuity with the Krungthep Declaration's principles, enhanced cooperation among Member States, and practical outcomes promoting legal norms and capacity-building. He reaffirmed and renewed commitment to multilateralism and the rule of law, wishing all participants success in advancing a just and inclusive international legal order for the benefit of future generations.

- 2.5. **Honourable Norbert Mao, Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs of the Republic of Uganda** in his opening remarks underscored the role of the Republic of Uganda in promoting Asian and African solidarity. He recalled the important role the Republic of Uganda has played in peacekeeping efforts in the region. He remarked that the Annual Session is the largest gathering of States on legal issues since the Review Conference of the Rome Statute held in 2010. In this regard, he emphasized the importance that the Republic of Uganda has accorded to the implementation of international criminal law by establishing the International Crimes Division that has been focusing its attention on the prosecution of terrorism.
- 2.6. **Rt. Hon. Anita Annet Among, the Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda**, welcomed delegates, observers and partners of the Asian–African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) to Uganda and delivered the inaugural address on behalf of **H.E. the President, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni**. H.E. the President said it was a profound honour for Uganda to host the Sixty-Third Session of AALCO, noting that it was the second time the country had hosted the Organisation, the first being in 1993. H.E. the President reaffirmed Uganda's commitment to AALCO's objectives and highlighted the Annual Session as the organization's highest decision-making body, where Member States shaped ideas, built consensus, and charted a shared path forward.
- 2.7. H.E. the President emphasised AALCO's important role as an advisory body, a platform for dialogue, and a bridge to global institutions, and commended the Secretary-General for maintaining strong partnerships with international organisations, keeping AALCO visible on the global stage. H.E. the President pointed to pressing global challenges such as climate change, insecurity, economic inequality, and rapid technological changes including artificial intelligence and cybersecurity, and urged AALCO to ensure that Asia and Africa not only respond to but also shape legal frameworks that reflect their shared priorities of sustainable development, sovereignty, and justice.
- 2.8. H.E. the President called on the AALCO Secretariat to base its work on four strategic pillars: strengthening member engagement to promote inclusivity and diversity; enhancing legal capacity to build expertise and robust institutions; advancing inclusivity in global governance to amplify Afro–Asian perspectives; and addressing emerging issues by creating forward-looking legal frameworks. In conclusion, H.E. the President encouraged delegates to renew the Bandung Spirit, reaffirm solidarity, and strengthen

their collective voice, wishing them productive deliberations and a memorable stay in Uganda.

- 2.9. H.E. Mmamoloko Kubayi, Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development of the Republic of South Africa** and Vice-President of the Sixty-First Annual Session, delivered the Vote of Thanks. She conveyed appreciation to the Chief Guest, Rt. Hon Anita Annet Among, the Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, who delivered the inaugural address on behalf of the President of the Republic of Uganda. In her address she thanked the Government and people of the Republic of Uganda for their hospitality and excellent arrangements. She acknowledged the leadership of Dr. Kamalinne Pintipuvadol, Secretary-General of AALCO, commending his dedication to strengthening AALCO's standing as the principal legal advisory body for Asia and Africa. Reflecting on AALCO's institutional development, she noted that the Sixty-First Annual Session under Indonesia's presidency introduced Asset Recovery Expert Forum and Legal Issues in Outer Space into the work programme of AALCO. She recalled that South Africa previously hosted the Forty-Sixth Annual Session in Cape Town in 2007. She underlined AALCO's importance in addressing pressing challenges such as cyber law, climate change, Investor-State Dispute Settlement reform, asset recovery and anti-corruption. She concluded by commending the leadership of the Kingdom of Thailand and urged continued active participation to ensure AALCO remains a unified voice for Asia and Africa.

3. First Meeting of the Delegations of AALCO Member States

- 3.1. Mr. Songchai Chaipatiyut, on behalf of the President of the Sixty-Second Annual Session of AALCO**, called the Meeting to order.

- 3.2.** The following agenda was unanimously adopted.

3.3. Agenda

I. Organizational Matters

1. Consideration and Adoption of the Agenda and Tentative Schedule of Meetings
2. Election of the President and the Vice-President
3. Admission of New Members
4. Admission of Observers
5. Opening Address of the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO
6. Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of AALCO
7. Release of AALCO Publications
 - Yearbook of AALCO Vol. XXI (Year 2024)
 - AALCO Journal of International Law Volume 13, 2025
 - Report on the AALCO Webinar on Space Law for Emerging Actors
 - Report on the AALCO Webinar on Immunity of State Officials from Foreign Criminal Jurisdiction
 - Report on the AALCO Webinar on Shaping International Investment Law: The International Law Commission's Past Contributions and Future Potential
 - The Gaza Conflict and International Law: Examining Recent Developments and Legal Analysis

- Understanding the UN Cybercrime Convention: A Legal Study for the Benefit of AALCO Member States
- 8. AALCO's Draft Budget for the year 2026
- 9. Re-appointment of the Secretary-General
- 10. Report on the AALCO's Regional Arbitration Centres
- 11. Report of the Sub-Committee on the Review of the Scale of Assessed Contributions of the Member States
- 12. Venue of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Session

II. Substantive Matters

1. Report on Matters relating to the work of the International Law Commission at its Seventy-Sixth Session
2. The Law of the Sea
3. Violations of International Law in Palestine and Other Occupied Territories by Israel and Other International Legal Issues related to the Question of Palestine
4. Environment and Sustainable Development
5. International Trade and Investment Law
6. Asset Recovery Expert Forum
7. Legal Issues in Outer Space
8. Legal Protection of Migrant Workers
9. Prohibition of Aggression and Use of Force in International Law
10. Violations of International Law by the Rapid Support Forces in Sudan*

III. Any Other Matter

Seventh Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on International Law in Cyberspace

IV. Side Events

1. "UNIDROIT's cooperation with AALCO and on Instruments on Access to Credit" jointly hosted by International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT), the Republic of Uganda and the AALCO Secretariat
2. "The Road to Hanoi: Opening for Signature of the UN Convention against Cyber Crimes" jointly hosted by the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the Republic of Uganda, the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation and the AALCO Secretariat
3. "HCCH: Global Law in action – Serving AALCO States" jointly hosted by the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH), the Republic of Uganda and the AALCO Secretariat
4. "ISDS Reform at UNCITRAL" jointly hosted by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), the Republic of Uganda and the AALCO Secretariat

* The Republic of the Sudan vide its Note Verbale dated 21 September 2025 sought to amend the title of the topic to "Violation of International Law by the Rapid Support Militia in Sudan" and requested that the amended title to be reflected wherever it appears in the Summary Report. The Secretariat respectfully states in this regard that any modification in the title can only be made by the Heads of Delegations at the subsequent Annual Session.

5. “Pathways of Inter-State and Investment Disputes” jointly hosted by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), the Republic of Uganda and the AALCO Secretariat
- 3.4. **Admission of New Members:** the **Republic of Djibouti** was welcomed as the forty-ninth Member State of AALCO. The Head of Delegation of the Republic of Djibouti thanked the AALCO Member States for their admission to the membership of AALCO.
- 3.5. **Admission of Observers:** the **Russian Federation** was admitted as a non-Member State Observer while the following international organizations, namely the **Asian Academy of International Law (AAIL)**, the **Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH)**, the **International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT)**, the **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)**, the **International Development Law Organization (IDLO)**, the **International Organization for Migration (IOM)**, the **Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)**, the **United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)** were admitted as Observer international organizations.
- 3.6. **Mr. Songchai Chaipatiyut, on behalf of the President of Sixty-Second Annual Session**, invited the Member States to propose candidates for the posts of the **President** and the **Vice-President** of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO. The Head of Delegation of **Japan** proposed the nomination of **Honourable Kiryowa Kiwanuka, the Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda** as the **President** of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO. The proposal was seconded by the Head of Delegation of **the Arab Republic of Egypt** and thereafter the President was unanimously elected. The Delegation of the **Republic of Mauritius** proposed the nomination of **H.E. Ms. Marie Charlotte G. Tang, Ambassador Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Philippines to the Republic of Uganda, with residence in the Republic of Kenya** as the **Vice-President** of the Sixty-Third Annual Session. The proposal was seconded by the Head of Delegation of the **Republic of India** and thereafter the **Vice-President** was unanimously elected. Thereafter **Mr. Songchai Chaipatiyut on behalf of the President of Sixty-Second Annual Session** invited the **President** and the **Vice-President** of the **Sixty-Third Annual Session** to assume their positions on the dais.
- 3.7. **Hon. Kiryowa Kiwanuka, the Attorney-General of the Republic of Uganda and the President of the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO**, welcomed delegates to the Republic of Uganda for the Sixty-Third Annual Session of the AALCO. He expressed gratitude for the honour bestowed upon the Republic of Uganda for being elected as the President of AALCO. He emphasized AALCO’s historical roots in the 1955 Bandung Conference and its evolution from seven founding members to forty-nine Member States. He highlighted the organization’s significant contributions to the development of international law including the Bangkok Principles on the Status and Treatment of Refugees, development of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, and representation of developing nations during the negotiations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III). He outlined the current pressing challenges requiring AALCO’s attention including climate change, cybersecurity, international trade, and peace and security, while stressing that emerging cyber threats and technological advances demanded updated legal frameworks and collaborative responses. He concluded by calling for full engagement from Member States in

multilateral cooperation, emphasizing that constructive collaboration promoted stability, equity and inclusivity.

4. Second Meeting of the Delegations of the AALCO Member States

Agenda Item: Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization

- 4.1. H.E. Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, Secretary-General of AALCO** presented his report to the Sixty-Third Annual Session in Kampala, expressing gratitude to the Government of Uganda for its warm hospitality. He observed that the Session held special significance as it coincided with the seventieth anniversary of the Bandung Conference of 1955, which continues to inspire Afro-Asian solidarity. The report was structured in two parts. Part One reviewed AALCO's administrative and organizational matters since the Bangkok Session, highlighting six Liaison Officers' Meetings in New Delhi, engagement with the UN Sixth Committee and other international bodies, major capacity-building programmes in Asia, the expansion of the six Regional Arbitration Centres, and updates on AALCO's financial situation. Part Two outlined flagship initiatives during his first tenure (2022-2025), including deepening engagement with international legal bodies, raising AALCO's profile as a credible advocate for the Global South, expanding capacity-building and knowledge-sharing activities, broadening the work programme to new topics, forging strategic partnerships, reviving the Drafting Committee, strengthening publications, implementing institutional reforms, and advancing digital transformation. He concluded by noting that as AALCO approached its seventieth anniversary in 2026, the Organization must continue to adapt to emerging challenges while ensuring that Asian and African voices remain central to the development of international law in the Bandung Spirit of solidarity and equality.

Agenda Item: Re-appointment of the Secretary-General

- 4.2.** The President invited the attention of delegations to Rule 19 of the AALCO's Statutory Rules, 2024 that provides for eligibility for re-appointment for one further term of four years for the office of the Secretary-General.
- 4.3.** The Member States approved the re-appointment of H.E. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol for a further term of four years.
- 4.4.** The Delegations of the **People's Republic of China**, the **Republic of South Africa**, the **Republic of Mauritius**, the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, the **Republic of the Philippines** and the **Republic of India** congratulated the Secretary-General on his re-appointment for his second term and expressed their hope that he will continue to enhance the profile and visibility of AALCO.
- 4.5.** H.E. Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, Secretary-General of AALCO, expressed profound gratitude on the occasion of his re-appointment for a second term (2026-2029) at the Sixty-Third Annual Session in Kampala. He extended sincere thanks to the Kingdom of Thailand for his nomination and to all Member States for the confidence and support they had entrusted to him. Acknowledging the complex contemporary challenges confronting the Organization, including artificial intelligence, digital sovereignty, climate change, biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction, and the peaceful settlement of disputes in an increasingly fragmented world, he underscored that AALCO must continue its evolution

from a forum for consultation into a proactive and credible contributor to the progressive development of international law. He presented his Strategic Vision for 2026-2029, under the theme “*AALCO@70: Advancing Asia–Africa Legal Cooperation Towards a Credible, Inclusive, and Forward-Looking Organization*”, grounded firmly in the Bandung Spirit. This vision, he noted, would focus on enhancing AALCO’s visibility, safeguarding its neutrality, deepening Member State participation, delivering practical legal tools, embracing digital transformation, investing in future generations, and bridging diverse legal traditions. He concluded with a pledge that his second tenure would be dedicated to strengthening AALCO as a credible, united, and impactful organization, worthy of its seventy-year legacy and responsive to the aspirations of Asia and Africa.

5. First and Second General Meeting

- 5.1. Release of AALCO Publications:** The following AALCO publications were released: Yearbook of AALCO Vol. XXI (Year 2024), AALCO Journal of International Law Vol. 13 (2025), Report and Verbatim Record of the Webinar on Immunity of State Official from Foreign Criminal Jurisdiction, Report and Verbatim Record of the Webinar on Space Law for Emerging Space Actors, Report and Verbatim Record on Shaping International Investment Law: The International Law Commission’s Past Contributions and Future Potential, The Gaza Conflict and International Law: Examining Recent Developments and Legal Analysis and Understanding the UN Cybercrime Convention: A Legal Study for the Benefit of AALCO Member States.
- 5.2.** At the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO, the following delegations delivered general statements: the **Socialist Republic of Viet Nam**, the **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**, the **Republic of India**, the **Republic of Uganda**, the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, the **Syrian Arab Republic**, the **Republic of Türkiye**, the **Republic of the Sudan**, the **People’s Republic of China**, the **Republic of South Africa**, the **Kingdom of Thailand**, the **Islamic Republic of Pakistan**, the **Republic of Kenya**, the **People’s Republic of Bangladesh**, the **Republic of Korea**, **Japan**, the **Republic of the Union of Myanmar**, **Nepal**, **Malaysia**, the **United Republic of Tanzania**, the **Republic of the Philippines**, the **State of Palestine**, the **Kingdom of Bahrain**, the **Republic of Mauritius**, the **Federal Republic of Somalia** and the **Republic of Djibouti**.
- 5.3.** The following Observers delivered General Statements: the **Russian Federation**, the **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)**, the **Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH)**, the **International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT)** and the **Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)**.
- 5.4.** The delegations expressed their gratitude to the Republic of Uganda for graciously hosting the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO and for the excellent arrangements. They extended their congratulations to the President and Vice-President and assured of their full support for the smooth and efficient conduct of the Annual Session. A number of Member States congratulated the Secretary-General on his re-appointment. The efforts of the AALCO Secretariat in preparing the background documents for the Annual Session were also acknowledged and its capacity building initiatives and publications were commended by various Member States. Member States also welcomed the Republic of Djibouti as the most recent Member State of AALCO.

- 5.5.** The delegations expressed their support for the substantive topics being deliberated at the Session and welcomed the inclusion of the two new agenda items to the work programme of AALCO. The delegations noted their importance and timely relevance for international law. Many delegations recognized the need to collectively combat pressing global challenges of climate-change, cybercrimes, sea-level rise, degradation of marine biodiversity, protectionist tendencies in trade and investment, corruption and asset recovery and armed conflicts. A number of delegations expressed their support for the Palestinian cause and condemned the illegal occupation of the Palestinian Territories.
- 5.6.** Several delegations emphasized the need for the voices of Africa and Asia to resonate more strongly at multilateral forums while underscoring their efforts at promoting international cooperation in global governance, including the Global Governance Initiative put forward at the recent meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Many Member States reaffirmed the timeless nature of the Bandung Spirit of friendship, solidarity and cooperation and expressed their commitment to the principles and purposes of the UN Charter. The role of international judicial institutions like the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) was underscored in light of the recent advisory opinions relating to climate-change. Member States by their active participation reaffirmed their belief in the unique role of AALCO as the only international legal forum covering legal issues of significance to the Asian and African regions.
- 5.7.** Several delegations welcomed the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime. They stated that they look forward to the signing ceremony of the Convention in Hanoi, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, on 25 and 26 October 2025 and called for the early signing and ratification of the Convention.

6. Third General Meeting

Agenda Item: Report on matters related to the work of the International Law Commission (ILC) at its seventy-sixth session

- 6.1.** **H.E. Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, Secretary-General of AALCO**, underscored the longstanding and substantive cooperation between AALCO and the International Law Commission (ILC), and provided an overview of the topics considered by the ILC at its seventy-sixth session (28 April-30 May 2025). These included: Immunity of State Officials from Foreign Criminal Jurisdiction, Succession of States in respect of State Responsibility, General Principles of Law, Subsidiary Means for the Determination of Rules of International Law, Non-Legally Binding International Agreements, Settlement of Disputes to which International Organizations are Parties, Prevention and Repression of Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea, and Sea-Level Rise in Relation to International Law. He further noted that two new topics had been added to the ILC's future programme of work, namely Due Diligence in International Law and Compensation for Damage Caused by Internationally Wrongful Acts. He expressed appreciation to ILC members Prof. Bimal Patel and Prof. Dapo Akande for delivering statements in person at the Session, as well as to those members who shared pre-recorded video presentations. In conclusion, he encouraged Member States to engage actively in the deliberations.
- 6.2.** ILC Members **Prof. Bimal N. Patel and Prof. Dapo Akande delivered their statements in person**, while **Prof. Nilüfer Oral, Prof. Masahiko Asada, Amb.**

Xinmin Ma and **Prof. Mārtiņš Paparinskis** delivered their statements via pre-recorded videos.

- 6.3. Prof. Bimal N. Patel, Member, ILC** presented an appraisal of the Commission's work at its seventy-sixth session. He noted that the Commission considered eight topics, but owing to financial constraints could only finalize the report on "Sea-level rise in relation to international law". This, together with recent advisory opinions of international courts and tribunals, was described as a valuable body of legal material to guide States in addressing the challenges of climate change. He highlighted progress and ongoing debates on topics such as "Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction" and "General Principles of Law", stressing the need for broader inputs from Asia and Africa to ensure geographical balance. He also addressed other topics including "Non-legally binding international agreements", "Subsidiary means for the determination of rules of international law", "Piracy and armed robbery at sea", and "Succession of States in respect of State responsibility". He welcomed the inclusion of new topics such as "Compensation for damage caused by internationally wrongful acts" and "Due diligence in international law". He concluded by emphasising the importance of AALCO's continued engagement in capacity-building initiatives to ensure the broader evolution of international law.
- 6.4. Prof. Dapo Akande, Member, ILC** expressed regret over the shortened seventy-sixth session of the ILC which limited the Commission's ability to complete its work on multiple topics noting that "Sea-level rise in relation to international law" was the only topic to be finalized. He focused his remarks on the topic of "Immunity of state officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction". He explained that the ILC distinguishes between immunity *ratione personae*, which applies to the limited group of high-ranking state officials known as the "*troika*" (Head of State, Head of Government, and Foreign Minister) and grants immunity from all foreign criminal jurisdiction during their term in office, and immunity *ratione materiae*, which protects all State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction only in respect of their official acts. He explained that the Commission debated whether exceptions to functional immunity should be retained, deciding to keep the exception for international crimes, expanding the list of those crimes to include aggression, slavery, and the slave trade, without tying the definitions to the ICC Rome Statute but applying them as they exist under international law. He noted that the Commission intended its work to serve as the basis for a future treaty on the topic, while procedural guarantees related to these exceptions would be addressed in the next session due to time constraints.
- 6.5. Prof. Nilüfer Oral, Member, ILC** presented the ILC's work on the topic "Sea level rise in relation to international law". She explained that the study group, comprised of five co-chairs covering different aspects including protection of persons, statehood, and law of the sea, conducted a mapping exercise of existing international law and its gaps. She highlighted that from 2020 to 2024, the co-chairs produced individual reports on subtopics before consolidating them into a final report in 2025 that addressed cross-cutting issues and included draft conclusions, which were unanimously adopted by the Commission with only minor revisions. She noted agreement among States on key issues of the Law of the Sea, including that sea level rise does not require changing existing baselines, that maritime boundaries and zones once lawfully established should remain in place, and that boundary treaties are not affected by changes in circumstances. She noted that these conclusions, grounded in predictability and stability, have already

influenced international law with the ICJ's recent advisory opinion on climate change obligations referring to the Commission's work and supporting its views on baselines and the impact of sea level rise on statehood.

- 6.6. Prof. Masahiko Asada, Member, ILC** focussed his presentation on obligations *erga omnes*, recently added to the Commission's long-term work programme. He explained that these obligations are owed to the entire international community, allowing any State, not only the injured one, to act when they are breached. He distinguished between obligations *erga omnes* under customary international law and obligations *erga omnes partes* under treaties. Prof. Asada highlighted the ICJ's recognition of climate-related obligations as *erga omnes* in its 2025 advisory opinion and underlined the need to define clearly which obligations fall into these categories and what legal consequences follow. He stressed that clear criteria would strengthen the rule of law while ensuring stability in international relations, and he encouraged active engagement from Asian and African States in this important work.
- 6.7. Amb. Xinmin Ma, Member, ILC** discussed the Commission's recent work and future priorities. He emphasized the shared mission of AALCO and the ILC in advancing international law and highlighted Asia and Africa's vital contributions, including the development of the concept of Exclusive Economic Zone, among other aspects. Reviewing the ILC's seventy-sixth session, he noted that financial constraints curtailed the session but the Commission nonetheless advanced work on eight topics. He noted that key achievements included the final report on "Sea-level rise in relation to international law" and the adoption of 12 draft conclusions on General Principles of Law. He highlighted the ILC's significant progress on the topic of "General Principles of Law" noting the adoption of 12 draft conclusions on the topic in second reading clarifying their scope, functions, and relationship with treaties and customary international law as well as the existence of regional principles with limited application. He emphasized that these developments mark an important advancement in understanding the sources of international law and provide valuable guidance for States. He urged stronger engagement from Asian and African States to ensure that international law reflected universal practice and diverse traditions.
- 6.8. Prof. Mārtiņš Paparinskis, Chair, ILC** outlined the Commission's recent work at the seventy-sixth session of the Commission. He noted that the UN liquidity crisis had reduced the session from twelve to five weeks, significantly constraining the Commission's programme. He remarked that despite this limitation, the ILC achieved progress. With respect to the topic "Sea-level rise in relation to international law", he noted that the Commission adopted the final report of the Study Group on Sea-level rise in relation to international law, addressing issues of the law of the sea, statehood, and protection of persons. On the topic "Immunity of State officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction", he noted that the Drafting Committee concluded work on Draft Articles 7-9, including the highly debated Draft Article 7. He noted that substantial progress was also made on "General Principles of Law" and "Subsidiary means for the determination of rules of international law", though final commentaries were deferred. He further noted that other topics, including "Non-legally binding international agreements", "Piracy and armed robbery at sea", and "Succession of States in respect of State responsibility" received only limited discussion. He highlighted that the Commission added two new topics to its programme namely, "Due diligence in international law" and "Compensation for damage caused by internationally wrongful acts" and three topics to its long-term

agenda. He encouraged Member States to provide comments on pending issues before the 1 December 2025 deadline.

- 6.9. The following delegations presented their statements on the topics under discussion: the **Republic of India**, the **Republic of Türkiye**, the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, **Japan**, **Malaysia**, the **Kingdom of Thailand**, the **Socialist Republic of Viet Nam**, the **Republic of Korea**, the **People's Republic of China** and the **United Republic of Tanzania**.
- 6.10. Member States expressed appreciation for the AALCO Secretariat's comprehensive report and demonstrated strong support for the ILC's work on codification and progressive development of international law. Several delegations expressed concern over the negative impact of the UN's liquidity crisis on the seventy-sixth session of the Commission and emphasized the need for sufficient resources to safeguard its continued effectiveness.
- 6.11. Member States emphasized the importance of the topic of "Sea-level rise in relation to International Law" and commended the adoption of the final report of the ILC Study Group. Member States also expressed support for the protection for small island developing states facing existential threats from climate change. Member States supported the Commission's position that established maritime zones should remain stable despite physical changes from sea-level rise. One Member State, non-party to the UNCLOS, referring to provision of UNCLOS referred to on this topic in the ILC Report, stated that the UNCLOS is not the only legal framework regulating all activities in the oceans and seas and in this context, due consideration should also be given to the relevant *acquis*.
- 6.12. Member States shared views on the topic of "Immunity of State Officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction", generally advocating for a balanced approach that maintains sovereign equality while ensuring accountability for serious international crimes. On the topic "General Principles of Law", Member States generally expressed support for the Draft Conclusions reached by the Commission. Some Member States expressed concerns about the category of principles formed within the international legal system as noted by the Special Rapporteur in his fourth report, stating that their existence and content remained contested and difficult to distinguish from customary international law. Some Member States expressed concerns about limited geographical representation in State practice assessment by the Commission in its work on the various topics. Member States supported the inclusion of the three new topics "the principle of non-intervention in international law", "Identification and legal consequences of obligations *erga omnes* in international law" and "legal aspects of accountability for crimes committed against United Nations personnel serving in peacekeeping operations" in the Commission's long-term program.

7. Fourth General Meeting

Agenda Item: The Law of the Sea

- 7.1. **Mr. Yong Zhu, Deputy Secretary-General of AALCO** delivered an introductory statement for the agenda item "The Law of the Sea". He underscored that the topic was

first introduced to AALCO's agenda in 1970, and remains a central theme of its work, with the Organization contributing significantly to concepts later incorporated in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). He observed that the Secretariat's brief prepared for the Sixty-Third Annual Session addressed three clusters of contemporary issues: Marine Environment Protection, Maritime Safety and Security, and Capacity-Building for Developing States. It was observed that the discussions were aimed to strengthen AALCO's continuing role in the codification and progressive development of the international law of the sea.

- 7.2. The following Member States delivered statements on the agenda item: the **United Republic of Tanzania**, the **Socialist Republic of Viet Nam**, the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, the **Republic of India**, the **Republic of Türkiye**, the **Kingdom of Bahrain**, the **Kingdom of Thailand**, **Malaysia**, **Japan**, the **Syrian Arab Republic**, the **Republic of the Sudan**, the **Republic of South Africa**, the **Republic of Kenya**, the **Republic of the Philippines**, the **Republic of Uganda**, the **Republic of Korea**, and the **People's Republic of China**. Member States highlighted the importance of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as the foundational legal framework guiding peaceful, equitable, and sustainable use of oceans and marine resources including its significance in the backdrop of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14. Delegations highlighted the importance of national implementation, adherence to international conventions, and regional and global cooperation. While recognizing diverse national circumstances, States emphasized the rule of law, maritime security, and the prevention of piracy, illegal fishing, and maritime crimes as essential for safeguarding the oceans and promoting stability and prosperity.
- 7.3. Delegations emphasized the urgency of protecting the marine environment and addressing challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and overexploitation of resources. Capacity building, technology transfer, scientific research, and financial support were underscored as critical for enabling developing States and Small Island Developing States to effectively implement sustainable ocean governance. States welcomed the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement and other multilateral instruments, stressing the principles of equity, benefit-sharing, and the sustainable use of marine resources as integral to collective global action. Several delegations welcomed advisory opinions by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) and the ICJ on climate change, which reaffirm States' obligations under international law to prevent harm and promote environmental protection. Sea-level rise was also identified as an important concern, with potential implications for States.
- 7.4. Member States highlighted the importance of multilateral and regional cooperation, including engagement with, International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Seabed Authority (ISA), ITLOS, and other relevant institutions, to enhance implementation of international maritime law. Several States noted their active participation in initiatives promoting safe navigation, capacity-building, and compliance with environmental and security standards. Member States underscored the shared commitment of States to uphold UNCLOS principles, strengthen ocean governance, and ensure that the seas and oceans remain a source of sustainable development for present and future generations. Few Member States emphasized that UNCLOS, while widely ratified, is not exhaustive or universal and country specific objections to UNCLOS continue to remain valid.

Agenda Item: Environment and Sustainable Development

- 7.5. **Mr. Yong Zhu, Deputy Secretary-General of AALCO**, introduced the topic, focusing on the ongoing negotiations for a global plastics treaty and the international legal regime on climate change. He highlighted AALCO's longstanding engagement with environmental law since 1974 and emphasized the historic significance of the ICJ's 2025 Advisory Opinion on the Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change. He also underscored the active participation of AALCO Member States in the proceedings and the evolving challenges in climate finance and plastic pollution. He urged Member States to contribute to shaping just and ambitious legal frameworks for sustainable development. He encouraged Member States for their active participation on this topic, urging the sharing of valuable insights, experiences, and effective strategies on international environmental law.
- 7.6. The following Member States delivered their statements: the **Republic of India**, the **United Republic of Tanzania**, the **Kingdom of Bahrain**, the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, **Malaysia**, the **Republic of the Sudan**, the **Republic of South Africa**, the **Republic of Kenya**, the **Republic of the Philippines**, the **Republic of Uganda**, the **Kingdom of Thailand**, the **Socialist Republic of Viet Nam**, the **Republic of Mauritius**, the **People's Republic of China**, **Japan**, the **Syrian Arab Republic** and the **Republic of Türkiye**. The **Asian Academy of International Law (AAIL)** delivered a statement as an Observer.
- 7.7. Member States emphasized their commitment to addressing plastic pollution and expressed regret that, despite active engagement and efforts to find common ground, significant divergences prevented the negotiations from reaching a consensus during the second part of the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution (INC5.2). Member States reaffirmed their resolve to remain constructively engaged in the ongoing discussions with a view to the successful conclusion of the plastics treaty. Several delegations highlighted the importance of the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities, with Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC). One Member State expressed the view that CBDR should not apply to plastic pollution, stressing that it stems from inadequate waste management and must be addressed collectively by all countries.
- 7.8. Member States underscored the centrality of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), its Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement for combating climate change. Several Member States welcomed the International Court of Justice's Advisory Opinion of 23 July 2025, clarifying States' obligations under treaty and customary law. Concerning the international legal framework on climate change, Member States welcomed the key outcomes achieved at the Baku Climate Change Conference (COP 29). Member States stated that the principle of CBDR-RC serves as a fundamental cornerstone of international environmental law, guiding Member States' obligations and the balance of responsibilities in addressing climate change. Member States called for equitable climate finance, technology transfer, and capacity-building to support mitigation and adaptation efforts. Member States also emphasized the importance of operationalizing the Loss and Damage Fund in alignment with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

- 7.9. One Member State expressed that the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on climate finance agreed on in COP 29 fell short of developing countries' expectations. One Member State requested the Secretariat to strengthen its focus on environmental law, potentially by establishing a dedicated working group. Such a group would foster the exchange of best practices, promote the harmonization of environmental legislation across our regions, and bolster collective ability to negotiate and implement multilateral environmental agreements.

Agenda Item: Violations of International Law in Palestine and Other Occupied Territories by Israel and other International Legal issues related to the Question of Palestine

- 7.10. **Dr. Ali Hasankhani, Deputy Secretary-General of AALCO** delivered introductory remarks on the agenda item and highlighted AALCO's historical engagement with the subject over course of thirty-seven years, stating the same to touched upon various legal aspects including the law of armed conflict, international human rights law, refugee law, the law relating to diplomatic and consular relations as well as international criminal law. He stated that on several occasions, the Organization has also requested the Secretariat to prepare special studies addressing contemporary legal issues relating to the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. He recalled the special studies prepared by the Secretariat in the past on key legal issues related to the topic and the recent special study titled the "The Gaza Conflict and International Law: Examining Recent Developments and Legal Analysis" released at the Sixty-Third Annual Session. He noted that the discussions reflected the importance attached by Member States to this agenda item, which continued to highlight AALCO's role in reaffirming respect for fundamental principles of international law. While expressing hope for the full implementation of cease-fire in Gaza, he invited the Member States to deliver statements on the issues identified in the Secretariat brief that covered the reports of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry as well as the advisory proceedings before the ICJ in "Obligations of Israel in relation to the Presence and Activities of the United Nations, Other International Organizations and Third States in and in relation to the Occupied Palestinian Territory."
- 7.11. The following Member States delivered statements on the agenda item: the **State of Palestine**, the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, the **Republic of Mauritius**, the **Republic of Uganda**, the **Kingdom of Thailand**, **Japan**, the **Arab Republic of Egypt**, the **Republic of India**, the **Republic of Türkiye**, the **Republic of South Africa**, **Malaysia**, the **Republic of the Sudan**, the **Syrian Arab Republic**, the **Socialist Republic of Viet Nam**, the **People's Republic of China**, the **Republic of Korea**, the **Republic of Djibouti** and the **Kingdom of Bahrain**¹.
- 7.12. Several delegations condemned the recent attacks by Israel in the State of Qatar, and violation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Some delegations highlighted that due to the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, instability had spread to the entire region leading to undermining of the fundamental principles of the UN Charter including the prohibition on the acquisition of territory by the use of force and the right to self-determination. Member States condemned the systematic violations of international law including international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth

¹ A copy of the statement was provided to the Secretariat for inclusion in the Verbatim Record.

Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict and applicable human rights obligations found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights having a disproportionate effect on women and children.

- 7.13. Some delegations also affirmed that employing starvation as a method of war, denial of access to humanitarian aid, indiscriminate attacks on the civilian, medical and reproductive facilities and journalists revealed the commission of the crime of Genocide. Some Member States also called upon all States to comply with their obligations under the Genocide Convention of 1948 and support the efforts of the Republic of South Africa at the ICJ to ensure accountability. States' participation at the ICJ proceedings is pivotal in demonstrating a common understanding of the laws and their application in the context of the Israel-Palestine issue, in an endeavour to compel respect and full adherence of Israel to the rule of law and the principles of international humanitarian law and human rights, particularly those enshrined in the Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Many States affirmed their support for the two-State solution. Some Member States also highlighted their efforts in providing development and humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people. Member States expressed solidarity with the State of Palestine, supported the continuation of the deliberations on the topic and commended AALCO for its key focus on the topic over the years. A Member State also expressed its strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Agenda Item: Legal Issues in Outer Space

- 7.14. **Dr. Ali Hasankhani, Deputy Secretary-General of AALCO** introduced the agenda item, noting that the topic was first introduced at the Sixty-First Annual Session in Bali in 2023 upon a proposal by the Republic of India. He mentioned that the inclusion of this topic highlights the increasing importance of addressing legal challenges posed by the rapid expansion of outer space activities. He emphasized that while the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and related frameworks provide a foundation, gaps have emerged due to technological advances, private sector involvement, and potential competition for celestial resources, raising concerns over sustainability, militarization, and equitable access. He also made reference to the Webinar on "Space Law for Emerging Space Actors" organized by AALCO in November 2024 which emphasized on capacity-building and expert engagement for AALCO Member States. He highlighted that the current Secretariat brief on the topic largely focuses on orbital debris mitigation, examining foundational treaties, the recent UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UN COPUOS) deliberations, and the evolution of international norms, aimed at contributing to the progressive development of space law to keep outer space safe, sustainable, and accessible for all.
- 7.15. The following Member States delivered statements on the agenda item: **Japan, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the Republic of Türkiye, Malaysia, the Republic of South Africa, the Republic of Uganda, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and the People's Republic of China.** The Asian Academy of International Law delivered a statement as an Observer.
- 7.16. Delegations appreciated the work of the AALCO Secretariat and underscored the importance of space debris mitigation, especially adherence to the Space Debris

Mitigation (SDM) Guidelines. Delegations supported the Outer Space Treaty as the foundational legal framework. Member States emphasised the importance of multilateralism and international and regional cooperation for the peaceful and sustainable use of outer space, with recognition of space as a domain for the benefit of all humankind. Delegations acknowledged the critical role of UN COPUOS and United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and highlighted the significance of space technology in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Several Member States called for the establishment of legally binding rules on space debris mitigation and emphasized the need for effective space traffic management. Many Delegations urged the need for capacity-building and technology sharing, particularly for the Global South.

- 7.17. Many Delegations stressed on the use of outer space as a shared domain benefiting all humankind, addressing technology gaps, and promoting the rule of law in the progressive development of space law. Some Delegations discouraged the deployment of “mega constellations” for their potential violation of the non-appropriation principle enshrined in the Outer Space Treaty. A Member State raised concerns about possible duplication of work between AALCO and the UN COPUOS Legal Subcommittee adding that they valued AALCO's contributions to the topic nonetheless. A Member State emphasized on the prohibition of an arms race and the equitable sharing of benefits in outer space as key principles for global cooperation and governance. Delegations also highlighted their national initiatives for space debris mitigation and peaceful and sustainable use of outer space.

8. Fifth General Meeting

Agenda Item: International Trade and Investment Law

- 8.1. **H.E. Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, Secretary-General of AALCO** delivered an introductory statement on the topic and noted that International Trade and Investment Law brought together two important regimes of international law that have long been central to AALCO's deliberations. He recalled that “international trade law” was first considered under the agenda item “The World Trade Organization (WTO) as a Framework Agreement and Code of Conduct for World Trade,” while issues concerning investment were taken up under agenda items such as “The Treatment of Aliens,” “Regional Cooperation in the Context of the New International Economic Order,” and “The Work of UNCITRAL and Other International Organizations in the Field of International Trade Law.” He noted that since the Fifty-Seventh Annual Session held in Tokyo in October 2018, these topics had been considered jointly under the consolidated title “International Trade and Investment Law” reflecting the increasing interrelationship and close correlation between trade and investment regimes and their significance for the Member States of AALCO. Referring to the Secretariat's brief that reported on recent developments in trade and investment law, also contained the Proposal for the Development of a Model Investment Treaty. In this regard, he recalled that deliberations in the 1980s had led to the adoption of a Model Investment Treaty and informed the Member States that the United Republic of Tanzania had proposed that AALCO revisit this issue. Accordingly, he stated that the Secretariat had engaged with the United Republic of Tanzania on the proposal that aims to provide a balanced framework that encourages investment while ensuring that host countries retain the ability to regulate sustainable economic growth.

- 8.2. The following Member States delivered statements on the agenda item: the **Republic of the Philippines**, the **Republic of India**, the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, the **United Republic of Tanzania**, the **Kingdom of Thailand**, **Japan**, **Malaysia**, the **Republic of the Sudan**, the **Republic of Kenya**, the **People's Republic of China**, the **Socialist Republic of Viet Nam**, the **Republic of Uganda** and the **Kingdom of Bahrain**². The **United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)** delivered a statement as an Observer.
- 8.3. A number of delegations took note of the progress achieved at fifty-eighth session of the UNCITRAL, welcomed its outcomes particularly on draft convention on negotiable cargo documents, the toolkit and background notes on asset tracing and recovery in insolvency proceedings and draft toolkit on dispute prevention and mitigation of international investment disputes. Several Member States acknowledged that these developments contributed significantly to the harmonisation and unification of international trade law along with other areas such as voluntary carbon credits and rules for Limited Liability Enterprises. Further, a number of delegations expressed support for continuing work of the Working Group III of the UNCITRAL on the standing mechanism as well as the operationalization meetings of the Advisory Centre on International Investment Law and welcomed the instruments adopted by it including the code of conduct for arbitrators, the Statute of the Advisory Centre on International Investment Disputes and the Toolkit on the Prevention and Mitigation of International Investment Disputes. Some delegations also noted the important mandates of the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH), the United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) in harmonising the international law relating to trade and commerce and expressed the concern of overlapping obligations for developing States.
- 8.4. Regarding international trade law, several Member States called for the ratification of the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies allowing for its entry into force and looked forward to the Ministerial Conference (MC) 14 to be held in Yaoundé, the Republic of Cameroon, from 26-29 March 2026. They also welcomed progress on WTO dispute settlement reform and looked forward to meaningful outcomes including restoration of the Appellate Body which was noted as critical to ensuring access to impartial adjudication and preserving the rule of law in global trading relations. Member States generally supported AALCO's engagement with the various international organizations dealing with international trade law and supported training and capacity building initiatives. Several Member States provided detailed examples of their national practice regulating trade, investment and commerce that promoted a streamlined, transparent and stable legal regime.

Agenda Item: Asset Recovery Expert Forum

- 8.5. **Mr. Yong Zhu, Deputy Secretary-General of AALCO**, introduced the agenda item on "Asset Recovery Expert Forum" noting that the item was first proposed by the **Republic of Indonesia** at the Sixty-First Annual Session in 2023. He emphasized its importance for Asian and African nations, noting AALCO's long-standing commitment to combating corruption in all its forms and fostering cooperation among Member States. He reiterated the complexity of cross-border asset recovery and the need for enhanced cooperation. He stated that in April 2025 a template was circulated by the Secretariat to

² A copy of the statement was provided to the Secretariat for inclusion in the Verbatim Record.

the Member States to collect details of national authorities responsible for asset recovery, and nine Member States had responded to date. He urged Member States to submit the requested information and engage actively to strengthen asset recovery efforts.

- 8.6. The following Member States delivered statements on the agenda item: the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, the **Republic of India**, the **United Republic of Tanzania**, **Japan**, the **Republic of South Africa**, the **Republic of Kenya**, the **People's Republic of China**, the **Socialist Republic of Viet Nam**, **Malaysia**, the **Republic of the Sudan**, the **State of Palestine** and the **Kingdom of Bahrain**³. The **Asian Academy of International Law (AAIL)** delivered a statement as an Observer.
- 8.7. Member States appreciated the efforts and initiatives of the Secretariat on the topic of asset recovery. Several Member States demonstrated support for the establishment of the Asset Recovery Expert Forum within AALCO's framework, recognizing asset recovery as a cornerstone of international anti-corruption efforts. Member States emphasized their commitment to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) as the primary legal foundation, while highlighting the critical importance of international cooperation and mutual legal assistance in corruption. Many Member States highlighted the need for capacity building and experience sharing among practitioners. Some Member States also suggested strengthening information sharing mechanisms and harmonizing laws to accelerate asset recovery and repatriation. Some Member States emphasized on the importance of avoiding duplication with existing international mechanisms such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), various Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Networks (ARINs), and other regional platforms.
- 8.8. A Member State invited the Secretariat to consider the models, rules and procedures, as well as the interplay of stakeholders in various international and regional fora of Asset recovery. A Member State suggested that the proposed Forum should develop guidelines on expert nomination requiring proven experience in asset recovery, international cooperation, and financial investigations. The Member State suggested that detailed operational procedures for the Forum should be developed with full consultation of Member States, with the Secretariat focusing on administrative and knowledge-support roles while operational cooperation remaining with national authorities. A Member State stated that since corruption is a global challenge, asset recovery must be addressed not only among Asian and African countries but with all regions.

Agenda Item: Legal Protection of Migrant Workers

- 8.9. **Dr. Ali Hasankhani, Deputy Secretary-General of AALCO** delivered an introductory statement for the agenda item "Legal Protection of Migrant Workers", noting that the topic was introduced to the work programme of AALCO in 1996. He emphasized on the critical role migrant workers play in economies and societies despite their vulnerabilities to exploitation and discrimination. He highlighted the special responsibility of the Asian-African region as both a source and destination of migrant labour to ensure fair and humane migration governance grounded in human rights. He informed Member States that the topic was reintroduced due to its growing relevance amidst increased migration flows, ongoing vulnerabilities, and emerging challenges such as climate change-induced displacement.

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A copy of the statement was provided to the Secretariat for inclusion in the Verbatim Record.

- 8.10. Dr. Ali Hasankhani outlined that the current Secretariat brief provided a basis for deliberations and focussed on foundational international instruments like the International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICMW) and key International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions, as well as recent developments in migrant worker protection. He stressed AALCO's role in fostering dialogue and solidarity among Member States and expressed anticipation for sharing national experiences and proposals to enhance the protection and dignity of migrant workers.
- 8.11. The following Member States delivered statements on the agenda item: the **Republic of Türkiye**, the **People's Republic of China**, **Japan**, the **Republic of the Philippines**, the **Syrian Arab Republic**, **Malaysia**⁴ and the **Kingdom of Bahrain**⁵.
- 8.12. Member States emphasized the importance of upholding the human rights and dignity of migrant workers. Some Member States recognized the vital economic and social contributions of migrant workers to both sending and receiving countries. Several Member States highlighted their commitment to the ICMW. Many Member States also emphasised on the importance of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) particularly with respect to migrant workers. Member States underscored national initiatives and ongoing efforts to align domestic legislation with standards maintained in ratified conventions.
- 8.13. A few Member States drew attention to the gendered dimensions of migration, calling for gender-responsive policies and support services tailored to women migrant workers, who often constitute the majority of the migrant workforce. Several Member States also acknowledged emerging challenges such as climate change-induced displacement and technological transformations, stressing the need for adaptive and inclusive migration governance.
- 8.14. A Member State advocated for the establishment of specialized institutions or ministries dedicated to migration management which would reflect the growing need toward comprehensive migration governance and coordinated support mechanisms. A Member State expressed support for enhanced regional cooperation through forums like AALCO to share best practices, strengthen bilateral and multilateral negotiations, and improve crisis response mechanisms. A Member State underscored the devastating impact of conflict-driven irregular migration stressing on non-criminalization of irregular migrants and advocated for family reunification and integration in host states. Member States demonstrated a shared commitment to advancing protection frameworks for migrant workers across the Asian-African region.

Agenda Item: Prohibition of Aggression and Use of Force in International Law

- 8.15. **Dr. Ali Hasankhani, Deputy- Secretary General of AALCO** made the introductory statement for the agenda item "Prohibition of Aggression and Use of Force in International Law". He noted that the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO approved the inclusion of the agenda item "Prohibition of Aggression and Use of Force in International Law" as well as its inclusion in the Work Programme of the Organization following Iran's proposal and deliberations by the Heads of Delegations.

⁴ A copy of the statement was provided to the Secretariat for inclusion in the Verbatim Record.
⁵ Ibid.

8.16. The following Member States delivered statements on the agenda item: the **Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, the People's Republic of China and Malaysia**⁶.

8.17. Member States emphasized that the prohibition of aggression and use of force is a peremptory norm under international law, firmly enshrined in the UN Charter, General Assembly resolutions, and affirmed by the ICJ. Member States objected to fabricated justifications for the use of force that were violative of Article 51 of the UN Charter such as pre-emptive self-defence, stressing that self-defence was lawful only in response to an actual armed attack.

8.18. One Member State underscored the importance of rule of law in international relations, rejecting territorial acquisition or changes to the status quo by force or coercion. The Member State highlighted that coercive control, even without destruction, violates Article 2(4) of the UN Charter further emphasizing that self-defence must meet proportionality under both *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. One Member State, noting the backdrop of the UN's 80th anniversary, reaffirmed its commitment to international rule of law, peaceful solutions and cooperation with AALCO members to safeguard global peace and stability.

Agenda Item: Violations of International Law by the Rapid Support Forces in Sudan

8.19. **Dr. Ali Hasankhani, Deputy Secretary-General of AALCO** made the introductory statement for the agenda item "Violations of International Law by the Rapid Support Forces in Sudan". He noted that the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO adopted the agenda item based on Sudan's proposal which was subsequently approved by the Heads of Delegation and the Plenary. It was noted that the conflict, which began in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, had led to serious breaches of international law. He invited Member States to engage in constructive deliberations on the topic.

8.20. The following Member States delivered statements on the agenda item: the **Republic of the Sudan, the Republic of Türkiye and the People's Republic of China**.

8.21. One Member State denounced the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) for attempting to seize power by force, with foreign backing, and committing grave violations of international law since April 2023. It also provided clarifications on the item, supported by legal grounds in accordance with international law. These include mass killings, forced displacement, arbitrary arrests, executions of prisoners, destruction of infrastructure, sexual violence, child recruitment, and starvation tactics, all amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Some Member States urged unequivocal condemnation of these atrocities, noting the importance of classifying the RSF as a terrorist group and holding its leaders accountable under international law. Member States stressed the importance of unity, territorial integrity, protection of civilians and the negative impact of the conflict for regional stability and expressed support for regional and international efforts to solve the crisis.

Third Meeting of Delegations of the AALCO Member States

⁶ A copy of the statement was provided to the Secretariat for inclusion in the Verbatim Record.

Agenda Item: Seventh Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on International Law in Cyberspace

- 8.22. H.E. Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, Secretary-General of AALCO**, delivered opening remarks which was followed by a brief overview of the previous OEWG proceedings by H.E. Dr. Abbas Bagherpour Ardekani of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on International Law in Cyberspace. Subsequent thereto, the Special Rapporteur, Prof. Zhixiong Huang delivered a presentation on his final report titled “Recent Developments in the Field of International Law in Cyberspace.”
- 8.23.** The following Member States delivered statements: **Japan**, the **Socialist Republic of Viet Nam**, **Malaysia**, the **People’s Republic of China**, the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, the **Republic of Türkiye** and the **Republic of Korea**.
- 8.23.** A Member State made the following observations: On the “Consensual Basic Principles *bis* of International Law Applicable in Cyberspace” and the explanatory note annexed to the report of the Special Rapporteur for the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO, all Member States have been invited to provide their input to it before and at the Sixty-Fourth Annual Session. The “Consensual Basic Principles” should be considered for possible adoption at the Sixty-Fourth Annual Session of AALCO, taking into account the input by Member States. The Open-ended Working Group has been kindly requested to further its studies on Artificial Intelligence (AI) from both the legal and practical aspects. To this end, all Member States have been invited in submitting their documents and papers on their respective domestic laws, regulations, policies and practices on AI by the first half of 2026. The Special Rapporteur has been requested to further his studies on AI. The Secretariat of AALCO has been kindly requested to compile the above-mentioned information and materials to be submitted by AALCO Member States and the Special Rapporteur for its onward transmission for the Working Group's consideration. The Working Group could then deliberate and proceed with the work on the issue of AI in the next Annual Session in 2026.
- 8.24.** One Member State reaffirmed that existing international law, including the UN Charter, applied to cyberspace and stressed the need for deeper discussion on its application to cyber operations. It urged participating Member States to make their national positions public to build common understanding. The Member State also highlighted the importance of aligning AALCO’s work with the UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) and UN Open-ended Working Group discussions, cautioning against placing excessive focus on sovereignty and emphasized the need for careful, balanced and gradual deliberations, rather than reaching rushed conclusions. It was noted that as currently developed, the principles appeared to place a greater emphasis on sovereignty. In addition, the need to avoid legally binding terms in the “Consensual Basic Principles” was also noted.
- 8.25.** One Member State noted the importance of international cooperation in governance of cyberspace so as to ensure a peaceful, safe, secure, friendly, open and human-centred cyberspace at the national, regional and global levels. The adoption of the Draft United Nations Convention against Cybercrime was welcomed as a landmark achievement as it sought to establish the first global treaty for cyberspace affirming a global approach to combatting cybercrime. It was noted that the Convention had recognized the sovereignty

of States in cyberspace as a cornerstone for international cooperation that would provide a robust foundation for countries to work together on the challenges posed by cybercrime. The Member State noted that it was honoured to host the Signing Ceremony of the Convention in Hanoi in October 2025. The successful culmination of the four-year mandate of the UN OEWG and the unanimous adoption of its draft final report, which contained elements for the establishment a global mechanism on Information Communications Technologies were also welcomed. The Member Stated also suggested the AALCO OEWG study in-depth the concept of cyber-sovereignty as recognized in the UN Cybercrime Convention and applied in practice by AALCO Member States.

- 8.26.** One Member State noted the application of international law in cyberspace including principles like sovereignty, non-intervention, peaceful settlement of disputes, prohibition of the use of force and the promotion and protection of human rights as guiding standards for responsible State behaviour in the digital domain. The establishment of a permanent, UN lead single-track mechanism to carry forward the work of the UN OEWG to advance responsible State behaviour in the use of ICTs was also welcomed. The importance of this mechanism being inclusive, transparent and reflecting the voices of developing countries was also noted. The importance of capacity-building efforts in the field of international law in cyberspace to enable developing States to effectively participate in global cyberspace governance was also noted. The ASEAN regional mechanism of cyber cooperation, especially the ASEAN Regional Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) was also noted as a suitable model for regional cooperation in dealing with cyber-threats. The consideration of new and emerging technologies including AI within the framework of international law was welcomed.
- 8.27.** One Member State noted the importance of the AALCO OEWG as a convenient platform for Member States to deliberate on the topic from a legal perspective. It was noted that ICTs have become an integral part of global communication, business and governance offering numerous opportunities while at the same time introducing evolving threats. It was observed that the primary responsibility for maintaining secure, safe and trustworthy ICTs lay on individual States and States must act in accordance with international law. The importance of the AI and its regulation was deemed significant for the global community. It was noted that the AALCO OEWG had the necessary potential to be a significant platform for sharing best practices and experiences at the national level in terms of laws, regulations and policies on AI. Any cooperation or assistance in this regard to the AALCO OEWG was extended.
- 8.28.** One Member State welcomed the “Consensual Basic Principles” and noted its valuable contributions to fostering a shared understanding on the topic while reflecting the perspectives of Asian and African States. The importance of an open, secure, robust, effective, resilient, stable, accessible and peaceful ICT environment. It was observed that discussions on the same would contribute to developing international norms and principles for responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. It was noted that any future binding UN instrument on this subject should not contradict existing regional commitments or limit national jurisdictions. It was observed that joint efforts should be undertaken to prevent the militarization of cyberspace. In this backdrop, it was observed that Member States had the sovereign right to develop necessary defensive capacities to safeguard their national security and principles being developed in this domain should not be interpreted as constraining such defensive efforts. On the issue of State Responsibility, it was noted by the Member State that States should not allow their

territories to be used for malicious cyber operations. Differences in national capacity should be taken into account while developing principles as Member States may not have the technical capacity to deal with all cyber threats. The importance of international cooperation and assistance was also noted as significant in this regard. The importance of supply chain security, data governance and bridging the digital divide was also noted. The importance of preserving the central role of States in this exercise was pointed out. It was also noted that the Verbatim Record of the deliberations of the Sixty-Third Annual Session may reflect the proceedings of the Seventh OEWG.

- 8.29.** One Member State, while welcoming the report of the Special Rapporteur noted that international law in its entirety including the UN Charter applied in cyberspace. It was observed that work in this domain must focus on developing existing law rather than creating a new convention. In this backdrop, it was observed that the Member State would take the OEWG report back for a domestic review by concerned ministries and agencies so that constructive opinions on the same could be generated. It was hoped that discussions at the AALCO OEWG would lead to an outcome that was in line with the consensus of the international community.
- 8.30.** Member States expressed their deep appreciation to Prof. Zhixiong Huang and the AALCO Secretariat for the updated report of September 2025 titled “Recent Developments in the Field of International Law in Cyberspace”. Divergent views were expressed by Member States on the substantive aspects of the “Consensual Basic Principles of International Law Applicable in Cyberspace of AALCO” drafted by the Special Rapporteur, taking into account of inputs from Member States during previous discussions. In line of the suggestions received at the Seventh OEWG, the Special Rapporteur was requested to further his work on the report including the “Consensual Basic Principles of International Law Applicable in Cyberspace of AALCO” accordingly for the next OEWG.
- 8.31.** The Chair of the OEWG thanked the delegates for their active participation and concluded that, in line with the suggestions received at the Seventh OEWG, stated that there seemed to be a general understanding on the future work of the OEWG to consider the issue of AI. To that end, the Chair proposed that the Member States send their national overview on this topic to the AALCO Secretariat. Against this background, the OEWG has been kindly requested to further its study on the issue of AI from both the legal and practical aspects.

Agenda Item: Report on the work of the AALCO’s Regional Arbitration Centres

- 8.32.** H.E. Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, Secretary-General of AALCO, delivered an introductory statement on the agenda item, recalling the establishment of AALCO’s Regional Arbitration Centres, which continue to provide arbitration and alternative dispute resolution services, including online and hybrid mechanisms to Member States across the region. He highlighted this initiative as one of the Organization’s most successful undertakings, commended the dedication and leadership of the Directors of the Centres, and expressed deep appreciation to the Governments of the Host States for their steadfast support. He further informed Member States that the Centres maintain rosters of highly experienced arbitrators and possess expertise to address a wide range of subject matters, thereby reinforcing their credibility and value for the region.

- 8.33. **Ms. Millicent Shitakha**, presented a report on the activities of the Nairobi Centre for International Arbitration (NCIA), while **Mr. Dennis Cai** presented the report on the activities of the AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre (AALCO-HKRAC). **Mr. Tarek Badawy** presented a report on the activities of the Cairo Regional Centre for International Commercial Arbitration (CRCICA). In their reports, they presented the subject matter, volume and nature of the disputes administered by their respective centres as well as other key statistics in respect thereof.
- 8.34. The following Member States delivered statements on the agenda item: the **People's Republic of China** and the **United Republic of Tanzania**.

Agenda Item: Report on the Sub-Committee on Review of Scale of Assessed Contributions

- 8.35. **Ms. Melissa Anne Telan of the Republic of the Philippines and Chair of the Sub-Committee on Review of Scale of Assessed Contributions** presented the draft report to the Member States. She gave brief history of the proceedings of the Sub-Committee and was pleased to inform the Member States that the work of the Sub-Committee was proceeding in a satisfactory manner and all efforts were being made to solicit diverse viewpoints on how the scale of assessed contribution should be fixed in the most appropriate manner acceptable to all Member States. Noting the consensual nature of the process she sought the mandate of the plenary to continue the progress on its work in the coming year.
- 8.36. The following Member States delivered statements on the agenda item: **Japan** and **Malaysia**.

Agenda Item: Report of the Chairperson of the Drafting Committee

- 8.37. **Ms. Elizabeth Nakkungu, Commissioner Legal Advisory Services, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, the Republic of Uganda and Chairperson of the Drafting Committee** delivered the report of the Drafting Committee. She expressed gratitude to the Member States who participated in the deliberations of the Drafting Committee. She informed the Member States that the committee met on all the days of the session and considered the provisional summary report and the draft of resolutions to be considered for adoption by the Member States. The Committee carried out its work in a constructive manner with flexibility exhibited by all delegations during the discussions. The Drafting Committee successfully accomplished its assigned mandate.
- 8.38. A Member State made certain observations about the Provisional Summary Report. It was observed that on page 5 of the document, the word "Rapid Support Force" may be replaced with "Rapid Support Militia". Likewise, on page 21, explicit reference may be made to the Republic of the Sudan as the Member State making the observations instead of the generic reference "One Member State".

9. Sixth General Meeting and Concluding Session

Agenda Item: Adoption of Message of Thanks to the Host Government

- 9.1.** H.E. Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, Secretary-General of AALCO conveyed, on behalf of all Member States, a message of sincere appreciation to **H.E. General Yoweri Kaguta Museveni**, President of the Republic of Uganda, for graciously hosting the Sixty-Third Annual Session of AALCO in Kampala. He acknowledged the warm hospitality of the Government and people of Uganda, as well as the excellent arrangements made, which contributed greatly to the success of the Session.

Agenda Item: Adoption of Resolutions

The following resolutions on organizational matters were adopted on 12 September 2025.

1. AALCO/RES/63/ORG 1
Report of the Secretary-General on Administrative and Organizational Matters
2. AALCO/RES/63/ORG 2
AALCO's Budget for the year 2026
3. AALCO/RES/63/ORG 3
Report on AALCO's Regional Centres for Arbitration
4. AALCO/RES/63/ORG 4
Re-appointment of the Secretary-General
5. AALCO/RES/63/ORG 5
Draft Report of the Sub-Committee on the Scale of Assessed Contributions

XXI. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS FROM THE MEMBER STATES OF AALCO
AT THE 63RD ANNUAL SESSION OF AALCO**

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Mr. Mohamed Abdo
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2. Kingdom of Bahrain

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3. People's Republic of Bangladesh

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Mr. Shabbir Ahmed
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4. People's Republic of China

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Mr. Xi Yang
First Secretary, Deputy Director
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Ms. Yan Liu
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- Mr. Li Yan
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- Mr. Xinwei Yi
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- Mr. Neeraj Agrawal
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Colonel Ngoc Ky Huynh
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Ms. Anastasiia Kostechko
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Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
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2. United Kingdom

Mr. Steven Bickers
Second Secretary
British High Commission, Uganda

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. UNCITRAL

Dr. Jae Sung Lee
Senior Legal Officer

2. Hague Conference on Private International Law
(HCCH)

Dr. Christophe Bernasconi
Secretary General

3. International Committee of the Red Cross

Mr. Kedir Awol Omar
Head of Regional Delegation

4. International Organization for Migration

Ms. Carl Sarah
Head of Programmes

5. UNIDROIT

Prof. Anna Veneziano
Deputy Secretary General

6. International Development Law Organisation (IDLO)

Ms. Jennipher Achaloi
Programme Coordinator

Ms. Barbara Kilei
Country Manager

7. Asian Academy of International
Law (AAIL)

Prof. Jiefang Huang
Secretary-General

Dr. Yue Zhang
Associate Professor

8. Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)

Mr. Karim M'ziani
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ARBITRATION CENTERS

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Manager Business Development

Mr. Timothy Mabeta Kambuni
Manager
Corporate Support Services

2. AALCOHKRAC

Mr. Dennis Cai
Deputy Director

3. CRCICA

Mr. Tarek Badawy
Partner

EXPERTS

1. Prof. Jin-hyun Paik

ILC MEMBERS

1. Prof. Dapo Akande
2. Prof. (Dr.) Bimal Patel

SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR

1. Prof. Zhixiong Huang

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2. Mr. Yong Zhu
Deputy Secretary-General
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Legal Officer
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Legal Officer

8. Ms. Nuzhat Nasreen Islam
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13. Prof. Zubair Ahmad Farooqi
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