

STATEMENT OF AMB. DR. WAFIK Z. KAMIL, SECRETARY-GENERAL, ASIAN - AFRICAN LEGAL CONSULTATIVE ORGANIZATION, AT THE INDIAN INTERNATIONAL CENTER NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 10, 2007 – CONGRESS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Nagaland, Mr. Neiphiu Rio, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Rahul Rai, Excellencies, young student friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I am profoundly thankful for having been invited as the Guest of Honour for the human rights day celebrations organized by the Indian Institute of Human Rights. I have immense pleasure in presenting the Gold Medal to Mr. E. Prabhu, who stands first in the two-years Post Graduate Diploma in Human Rights conducted by this prestigious Institute, as I believe that the commitment to promote the awareness on human rights is only through Education and Dissemination at different Levels of the National as well as International Communities. In pursuance of this believe and my humble desire to encourage more and more students into studying human rights that I had the urge to establish this award and present a Gold Medal to the topper of the human rights course. It is my firm belief that human rights which constitute “a common language of humanity and the most important corner stone for its Dignity” has now become the primary site of People's struggle's against injustice and tyranny. This award is conferred on him for his outstanding performance and I sincerely hope that it will motivate fellow students to pursue human rights education that would promote and entrench a culture of human rights in India.

10th December marks the Human Rights Day in commemoration of the adoption of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 1948. The adoption of the Charter of United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights then, reveal that protection and guaranteeing human rights

was the legitimate concern of the international community, which ensured that States do not violate the basic human rights of their citizens. This initiative by the United Nations the Unique Forum of the International Community marked the beginning for the adoption of various other International legal instruments and covenants that emphasized on the protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms / to every vulnerable and minority groups throughout the world. The two most notable are the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, together with UDHR constitute what is called the International Bill of Rights.

Similarly in 1996, the General Assembly declared that Eradicating Poverty is an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of mankind [UNGAR 51/178 (1996)]. It could also be easily discerned from the fact that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted in 2000 at the historic Session of the General Assembly // lists eradication of extreme Poverty as its prime goal among its 8 goals.

This brings us to the theme of this year's Congress "Human Rights for Poverty Reduction", my view is straight forward and deceptively simple one - poverty will only cease when it is recognized as a serious violation of human rights and is *prima facie* abolished. Poverty, which is one of the worst human rights problem of the world today results among many others facts in the denial of the full range of rights for billions of people of both their economic and social rights. It deprives this disadvantaged horde of Human Beings : decent standard of living, education, adequate housing and access to food and water and to the minimum standard of health. Even their civil and political rights are also not always met according to the rule of LAW etc...

Despite the existence of a number of international legal instruments and a long list of Proclamation and Programme of Actions, a **SNAPSHOT VIEW** of the ground reality - presents a dismal picture, not only against Individuals but again States. I see the existence of two worlds: a world of incredible human and financial resources, technologies and know how // and at the same time a world of unspeakable poverty, insecurity regression and injustice. Even when there is an overall increase in economic development within a country unequal distribution... means that poor households do not share in the economic growth. The poor remains the poorer and the rich the richer. Virtually, all the energy of the extremely poor is devoted to the struggle for survival, leaving little room for an enriching cultural and social life.

Equally pertinent is the enormous gap between rich States with tremendous Economic growth and LDC's which are much behind Decent Economic Development.

I don't want to be more negative on this issue as we are here to celebrate and award our topper. But we all are fully aware of the tragic impact of Poverty on world populations and we all are fully aware that without concerted efforts, on the "National and International levels" no improvements what so ever could be achieved in order to reduce – I did not say to solve – this IMPACT.

Mr. Chairman, the task of eradicating poverty is so imperative that with Schiller we must say:

"What is left undone one minute is restored by no eternity".

Dear Friends and Colleagues, the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO), the organization where I am privileged to serve as the Secretary-General, is remarkably involved in addressing various issues of human rights at various international fora like: Combating Trafficking in Persons especially Women and Children, Migration, Status and Treatment of Refugees, and combating Terrorism and Corruption etc.. AALCO takes pride in the fact that over the years through its studies on many aspects of human rights, it has contributed partly towards dissemination and promotion of human rights, urging its Member States, to Adhere and/or to Ratify all Human Rights Instruments at the earliest.

Before I conclude I would like to reiterate my deep appreciation for the Indian Institute of Human Rights for imparting training of human rights to students who are the torch bearers of human rights in the future. I would also like to assure you that I will spare no efforts in my personal capacity or through AALCO in extending the utmost cooperation to them in the promotion and protection of Human Rights. My special appreciation is also due to Shri Rahul Rai for steering the institute in a very professional manner and in striving to enhance its activities in a manner, which will reflect more on the education of Human Rights and the respect for human beings.

Thank you.