

**Opening Remarks by H.E. Mr. Rauff Hakeem, Minister of
Justice, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka &
President of the 50th Annual Session of AALCO**

**AALCO Meeting
Monday, 31st October 2011 (3.00PM-6.00PM)
UN Headquarters, New York**

A very good evening to you all

H.E. Prof. Dr. Rahmat Mohamad, Secretary-General, AALCO;

Mr. Maurice Kamto, Chairman, International Law Commission ;

Ms. Patricia O'Brien, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Legal
Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel;

Ambassador Christian Wenaweser, President of the Assembly of State
Parties of the ICC;

Hon'ble Members of the International Law Commission;

Distinguished Legal Advisers;

Distinguished Members of the Panel;

Dr. S. Roy Lee,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is my honour and privilege to welcome you all to this important meeting. The annual meeting of AALCO on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly Session has always evoked excellent response from the Member States. It gives an opportunity for the legal advisers of AALCO Member States and Non-Member States to have a detailed exchange of

views on the contemporary topics of international law and also an interaction with the Members of the International Law Commission.

Three important topics on the agenda of the ILC are discussed here this evening, namely, Expulsion of Aliens; Responsibility of International Organizations; and Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters. We are very privileged to have the Special Rapporteurs of these topics: Mr. Maurice Kamto, Mr. Giorgio Gaja, and Mr. Eduardo Valencia-Ospina, to lead the discussion. Two distinguished members of the International Law Commission, Dr. A. Rohan Perera and Mr. Mahmoud D. Hmoud would be the discussants in the panel.

We have a very distinguished panel to talk on the contemporary legal issues. We have amongst us, Ms. Patricia O'Brien, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel to speak on the topic, "Institutional Legal Issues". We also have amongst us, Ambassador Christian Wenaweser, President of the Assembly of State Parties of the ICC to speak on the topic, "Crime of Aggression". On behalf of AALCO and on my own behalf, I welcome you all to this panel.

I also take this opportunity to welcome the distinguished legal advisers, member of the International Law Commission and representatives from the permanent missions in New York to this meeting.

Excellencies,

AALCO plays a crucial role in the progressive development of international law and also highlighting the views of the Asian-African States at the international level. It has made significant contribution in the field of Law of the Sea, Refugee Law, Rights of the Migrant Workers, International Criminal Court, Trafficking in Women and Children so on and so forth. AALCO is involved in channelising the views of the Asian-African States through Legal Experts Meeting and Workshops. Just to mention one such initiative, the AALCO has organized three meetings in field of International Criminal Court in the last few years. First being the Seminar on The International Criminal Court: Emerging Issues and Future Challenges Jointly Organized by AALCO and the Government of Japan on 18 March 2009 in New Delhi; second being the Round Table Meeting of Legal Experts on the Review Conference of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court held from 30-31 March 2010 in Putrajaya, Malaysia, jointly organized by the Government of Japan, Malaysia and AALCO; third being the Meeting of Legal Experts on the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court: Issues and Challenges, held in Putrajaya, Malaysia from 19-20 July 2011 jointly organized by AALCO and the Government of Malaysia. These meetings have largely benefited the member States and give an in-depth understanding of the position of our member States on various issues related to ICC. It is also actively involved in the field of publications and capacity building exercise.

Regional Arbitration Centres of AALCO plays a crucial role in the Alternate Dispute Resolution. Presently four Member States are hosting the arbitration centres, namely, Arab Republic of Egypt, Malaysia, Islamic

Republic of Iran and Nigeria. Fifth one is in the process of establishing in Nairobi, Kenya. In the past two decades the inflow of foreign investment has multiplied considerably in Asian-African states, and notably the AALCO arbitration centres gives a window for dispute resolution.

Excellencies,

Sri Lanka is one of the founding members of AALCO and always attaches great importance to the work of AALCO. Since its inception, the Government of Sri Lanka has actively participated in the activities of AALCO. This is evident from the fact that Sri Lanka has hosted four Annual Sessions of AALCO, last being the historic 50th Annual Session of AALCO which was held in Colombo from 27th June to 1st July 2011. In this context, I would like to thank H.E. Prof. Dr. Rahmat Mohamad, Secretary-General of AALCO and AALCO staff for their excellent support and cooperation which made the 50th Annual Session a successful one. Thirty two Member States of AALCO participated in the Session. Representatives from three non-Member States and eight international organizations/agencies attended the Session as Observers. The Session was inaugurated by the H. E. Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. Important resolutions and decisions were adopted by the Session which would be implemented depending on the availability of resources.

Expanding the membership of the organization, particularly from the Central Asian region and Francophone countries in Africa and strengthening the financial base of the organization are the priorities of the organization.

Excellencies,

Concerted efforts are required to raise the profile of AALCO and upholding the relevance of AALCO in the 21st century. This is a necessity in the contemporary world as the relevance of international law and the role of Asian-African states in the drafting of international law has tremendously increased today. In this regard, I seek the support of Member States, non-Member States from the Asian-African region and international organizations, including the International Law Commission to meet the aspirations of continents of Africa and Asia.

With these words, I invite H.E. Prof. Dr. Rahmat Mohamad, Secretary-General of AALCO to deliver his introductory remarks.

Thank you.