

**ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF ASIAN-AFRICAN LEGAL CONSULTATIVE ORGANIZATION PROF. DR. RAHMAT MOHAMAD AT THE THIRD WORLD SUMMIT OF PROSECUTORS GENERAL, ATTORNEYS-GENERAL, AND CHIEF PROSECUTORS**

**(Bucharest, Romania, 23-25 March 2009)**

*Theme: “Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO): An Avenue for enhancing cooperation and capacity-building for ensuring criminal justice in the Asian-African region”*

Hon’ble Ms. Laura Codruta Koveri, General Prosecutor of Romania,  
Prosecutors General, Attorneys-General, and Chief Prosecutors,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a matter of privilege and honour for me to get an opportunity to address this august assembly. As this is the first occasion for me to take the floor, at the outset, I would like to congratulate the Government and people of Romania for hosting the Third World Summit of Prosecutors General, Attorneys-General and Chief Prosecutors, on the very appropriate and timely theme of “The Prosecutor General – Pillar of the Contemporary Criminal Justice System”. I also take this opportunity to profoundly thank the Organizers for their warm hospitality and excellent arrangements.

Madam Chair, with your kind permission, may I now take this opportunity to familiarize this august assembly about the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO), which has in fifty-two years of its work served as an avenue for enhancing cooperation and capacity building, particularly on international law matters, for the countries of the two of the world’s most populous regions. Some of the topics that have been considered by the Organization in pursuance of its work progarmme have a significant relationship with the criminal justice system, both at national and international levels.

In doing so, I am highly motivated by an enlightened self-interest that is to solicit the membership of esteemed Governments from the Asian-African region to this Organization. Our Membership presently comprises Forty-seven States of Asia and Africa and nearly all-important countries of the two continents are members of AALCO.

AALCO is considered to be the institutional outcome of the 1955 historic Bandung Conference of Asian-African States. It was established on 15 November 1956 by seven participating countries, based on the core principles of solidarity, friendship and cooperation amongst Asian-African states. The AALCO as a dynamic body has been for the last fifty-two years providing an opportunity to a large number of Asian and African countries to actively contribute to the prevalence of rule of law in international relations. It has played a momentous role in harmonizing the positions of Asian and African countries with regard to international law issues and contributed towards transforming international law- a universal international law, from its original Euro-centric roots.

The hallmark of AALCO's activities are its Annual Session, which is also the plenary organ of the Organization. All over the world, in international law circles it is well-known and respected for the balanced nature of the items on the agenda as well as the quality of its deliberations. These Annual Sessions are attended by high-level representatives of the Governments of Member States, including the Ministers of Law and Justice, Attorneys-General, Solicitors General and the Legal Advisers to the Foreign Ministries, and takes place alternatively in Asia or Africa. In addition, many Observer delegations representing governments and international organizations from all regions also participate in the deliberations. Over the years, the Organization has been able to forge close links with the International Court of Justice [The Hague], International Law Commission [Geneva], International Criminal Court [The Hague] and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea [Hamburg] and it has become a regular practice that some of the judges of these international judicial bodies and members of ILC actively participate in Organization's Annual Sessions. Till date, forty-seven such Annual Sessions have taken place. It is also now an established practice that a one-day Special

Meeting on a topic of contemporary relevance in international law in association with a sister international organization is also organized at the Annual Sessions.

The Organization has at present fifteen topics on its substantive agenda. Some of these topics, namely, the “Legal Protection of Migrant Workers”; “Establishing Cooperation Against Trafficking in Women and Children”; “International Criminal Court” and “An Effective International Legal Instrument Against Corruption”, include the element of criminal justice, and in our own way, we are engaged in enhancing international cooperation and capacity-building on these items. I would just flag, in view of time constraints, some of the important elements of our work programme on these topics.

On the topic of Migrant Workers, the AALCO has in association, with the International Organization of Migration, after in-depth consideration at its Annual Sessions has prepared a “Model Agreement for Cooperation Among Member States on Issues related to Migrant Workers”. This agreement if adopted could serve as a Model Regional Cooperation Agreement between Member States of AALCO and also could be used as a framework for establishing bilateral agreements between Member States on issues concerning the protection of human rights of migrant workers.

Prosecution for offences relating to the trafficking in Women and Children poses a severe challenge to the law-enforcement machinery of a State. The item pertaining to “Establishing Cooperation against Trafficking in Women and Children” is one of the keenly debated items at our Annual Session. A Model Legislation against Trafficking in Women and Children is in the process of elaboration, and seeks to address the issue from a gender-rights based approach.

Two Secretariat Studies, entitled *Combating Corruption: A Legal Analysis* and *Rights and Obligations under the United Nations Convention against Corruption* prepared in pursuance of our work programme on “An Effective International Legal Instrument Against Corruption” and both have been found to be a useful tool by the Member States in their efforts for crafting their respective national strategies and legislations to tackle

the problem posed by corruption, as also to give effect to the UN Convention against Corruption.

Combating terrorism is integral to the work of the Office of the Prosecutor. Thousands of innocent citizens are victims to the menace posed by international terrorism. It constitutes an assault on the principles of law and order, human rights, peaceful settlement of disputes, and runs counter to the principles of international law. Although, there is a sufficient body of international legislation, yet in the absence of an agreement on the definition of “international terrorism”, the adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism under the auspices of United Nations is hindered. However, this should not impinge upon the perpetrators of international terrorism from being brought to justice and the AALCO, while considering the topic of “International Terrorism”, is working to enhance the international cooperation for the adoption of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

To conclude, I would like to emphasize that the Prosecutors General, Attorneys-General and the Chief Prosecutors have a significant role to perform in the field of international law along with their overarching role in domestic affairs.

I consider my participation at this gathering with this esteemed group of legal luminaries as an avenue for future cooperation on areas of mutual interest between our two legal bodies. I would also like to emphasize that the AALCO is possessed with the necessary capacity and resolve to contribute positively to the collective efforts aimed at tackling new challenges facing the international community. I once again thank the organizers for giving me the opportunity to share my thoughts with this distinguished group of people.

Thank you.