

STATEMENT OF HON'BLE SENATOR KANU G.AGABI, SAN, ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF UNITED NATIONS ON 21ST OR 22ND NOVEMBER 2002

Thank you Mr.President for giving me the floor. I take this opportunity, as the current President of AALCO, to introduce the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization" as well as to speak briefly on the activities of AALCO on behalf of my Government, Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Mr.President, the role of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) as an inter-governmental organization comprising of 45 countries from Asia and Africa in the field of international law needs no introduction. Delegates would vividly recall the significant contributions the AALCO had made in the shaping of the international legal regime relating to law of the sea, law of treaties and arbitration. It would not be an exaggeration to state, with justified pride, that there is almost no aspect of international law which the AALCO had not taken up at some point of time during the 46 years of its existence.

The AALCO's current programme includes several issues of great relevance for our Member States which are discussed at its annual sessions and meetings and seminars convened during the inter-sessional period. My Government hosted the 41st Session of AALCO in Abuja in July this year. It was a memorable session not only in terms of high level participation but also for in-depth consideration of issues such as human rights, protection of migrant workers, trafficking in women and children, international terrorism, environment and sustainable development, establishment of the International Criminal Court, ongoing WTO negotiations and issues related to globalization.

Mr.President, since the last time when this item was considered by the General Assembly, the AALCO has accomplished the following tasks. With a view to expand the knowledge base of our Organization, the AALCO has signed Cooperation Agreements with the World Intellectual Property Organization; the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees; the United Nations University and the International Organization for Migration. Under the able leadership of its Secretary General Amb.Dr.Wafik Z.Kamil, issues relating to trafficking in women and children, migration, corruption and intellectual property rights – matters hitherto considered peripheral, have now been accorded a place of priority and receive substantial focus within the work programme.

Given the transnational character of the globalization process, the AALCO is conscious of the fact that it would be increasingly difficult to deal with international law in isolation and divorced from the political and social realities that dictate the response of States to these issues. The historic, cultural and developmental differences among States have obviously to be taken into account in creating norms for a global society. It is against this backdrop, that the AALCO, as a body of mostly developing and least developed countries, strives for a balanced, flexible and responsible approach towards international law. The resolutions and studies of AALCO on elimination of terrorism and root causes; the responsibilities of States towards arresting the

emission of green-house gases and the issue relating to using trade as a tool for promoting environmental goals attest to this unique approach.

As regards technical assistance and capacity-building, AALCO plans to reinvigorate its training programme for the officials of the Member States under its Centre for Research and Training. It has also embarked upon a programme for dissemination of information on international law matters and proposes to bring out an annual publication "Asian-African Yearbook on International Law".

Mr. President, time does not permit me to elaborate more on the specific activities of AALCO. I would like to say that over the last 46 years, AALCO has provided a useful forum for exchange of views and arriving at common positions on crucial international law issues. It has a great potential to meet new challenges posed in the context of the development of new rules and framework of international law in the twenty-first century. The comprehensive work programme on its agenda demonstrates the interest of Member States to further strengthen its activities. Its resolve to make concerted efforts together with the United Nations, its Agencies and other intergovernmental organization is the right approach and deserves full support.

With that objective in view, I would like to commend to your consideration the adoption of a draft resolution contained in Document No. A/57/..... pertaining to "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization".

The draft resolution, very rightly, makes reference to the close cooperation accomplished between AALCO and the United Nations agencies. The draft resolution also notes with appreciation AALCO's work aimed at strengthening the efforts of the UN on issues relating to combating corruption, eliminating international terrorism and trafficking, as well as the promotion of human rights .

In the light of the legal work carried by AALCO, it is important to promote close interaction between AALCO and the Legal (Sixth) Committee of the General Assembly. Therefore, paragraph 6 of the resolution recommends that the consideration of the agenda item relating to "Cooperation between the United Nations and AALCO" during the 59th Session be fixed to coincide with the schedule of the General Assembly's Sixth Committee during its deliberations on the work of International Law Commission. This also would facilitate AALCO Legal Advisers and the Members of International Law Commission to come together and exchange views within the forum of the Meeting of AALCO's Legal Advisers which is usually held in conjunction with the schedule of the Sixth Committee.

I thank you for your attention.