

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY AMB. DR. WAFIK Z. KAMIL,  
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF AALCO, ON THE OCCASION OF  
THE 50TH CONSTITUTION DAY OF AALCO ON 15<sup>TH</sup>  
NOVEMBER 2006**

His Excellency Mr. Hansraj Bharadwaj, Minister for Law and Justice,  
Government of India,

His Excellency Mr. Narinder Singh, the President of the Forty-Fifth Session  
of AALCO,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to profoundly thank our Chief Guest H. E. Mr. Hansraj Bharadwaj, Minister for Law and Justice, Government of India for very graciously and kindly agreeing to be the Chief Guest on this momentous occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> Constitution Day of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO). Excellency, your inaugural address at our Forty-Fifth Golden Jubilee Session, on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2006, had set the tone and tenor for very fruitful and productive deliberations.

Our gathering today marks the culmination of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of AALCO. The celebratory spirit of the moment does not permit to dwell in detail on the tremendous achievements of AALCO during

the course of this period, but I would take few moments from your precious time to briefly tell you about the achievements of our Organization.

It is with a sense of pride, I recall that in 1956, on this very day, seven countries of our region, which had freed themselves from the bondage of colonialism, decided to join hands to create a forum through which they would forge a common position on international law matters and present it in various negotiating fora. Evident is its success in the last fifty years, as it has grown from just 7 States to now 48 strong, encompassing nearly all the major countries of our two regions of Asia and Africa in a spirit of friendly cooperation and brotherhood. As envisaged by its founding fathers, it has in this period contributed in the codification and progressive development of nearly all-important topics of international law. From an initial temporary deliberative Committee, to perhaps the only permanent regional Inter-governmental Organization serving in international law matters, the humanity of two of the most populous continents of the globe, the AALCO has traversed a long way in five decades.

From the beginning itself, AALCO had been found by its Member States to be a very useful forum for exchange of ideas on international law matters, in an apolitical manner, with objectivity, reflecting the concerns of Asian-African region. It helped some of its Member Governments in enacting legislations. Another important activity carried out under the auspices of AALCO, to promote peaceful settlement of disputes, has been the establishment of Regional Arbitration Centres. Four such Centres, which are accorded diplomatic privileges and immunities by the respective host

governments are functional in Kuala Lumpur, Tehran, Abuja and Cairo. The fifth one would start its activities in Nairobi, Kenya.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, in view of its significant contribution to the codification and progressive development of international law, by participating in various fora, AALCO was accorded the status of Permanent Observer in 1980 by the United Nations General Assembly. This one move by the UN gave an impetus to forging more and more collaborative agreements with sisterly Inter-governmental Organizations. Today, we have 18 such agreements, which enable us to jointly organize many activities with these Organizations. With the support and the mandate of Member Governments, we have in the past, together with our sisterly organizations, organized seminars and conferences on various topics of contemporary relevance in international law and since a decade it has now become a customary practice at our annual sessions to devote one-day to a special meeting with one of our sisterly IGOs. As we will be equipped with state of the art facilities in the permanent headquarters building, we are planning, in collaboration with our sisterly organizations, training programme for international lawyers from the Member States. An outline has already been prepared for this purpose and we hope to have this programme once we shift to the Permanent headquarters.

Excellencies, publications are the face of an Organization. Over the years, AALCO has been consistently striving to improve the content and quality of its publications. As of now, we publish AALCO Yearbook and a monthly Newsletter, which reflects in detail the activities of the AALCO as well as a Quarterly Bulletin, which publishes important research papers on

international law issues. With confidence, I can say that all these publications command a significant respect in international law circles. In addition to this, in this information technology driven global village, we have a presence on the World Wide Web, which regularly attracts visitors from different countries and we regularly receive queries, which are promptly answered.

All these achievements would not have been possible but for the continuous support and guidance of all our Member Governments. On this occasion, I would like to convey my deep gratitude to all our Member States. As Secretariat, we look forward for their continued support and guidance to take AALCO to greater heights.

{Under the able and energetic leadership of my illustrious predecessors, namely Mr. B. Sen of India, Prof. Frank Njenga of Kenya and Mr. Tang Chengyuan of the People's Republic of China the Organization has proved its worth and has come to stay on the international horizon.}

I take this opportunity also to express our deep sense of gratitude to our host, since inception of the Organization in 1956, the Government of India. It has provided encouragement and guidance to AALCO in all its activities and takes a very active interest in promotion of Asian-African solidarity on international law matters. In our Golden Jubilee year, the Government of India has very graciously provided us with a magnificent headquarters building, comprising of an Office block and residence of the Secretary-General equipped with all modern facilities, in the prestigious Chanakya Puri Diplomatic Enclave of this city. H. E. Mr. Anand Sharma,

Minister of State for External Affairs, Government of India inaugurated the permanent headquarters of AALCO on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2006. We earnestly hope to commence our activities from our permanent abode very soon. On behalf of all Member States and on my own behalf, I thank very much the Government and people of India for this very warm gesture as well as for their continued support and guidance to AALCO in all its activities.

Excellencies and distinguished guests, it is an achievement for an organization to turn fifty years. But it also means that the Organization should prepare itself to face newer challenges. Therefore, while being celebratory without being euphoric, AALCO looks forward to expand its activities in its permanent headquarters. Efforts are afoot towards designing new activities and programmes. As ever, we also look forward to the suggestions of the Member States for the creative channelisation of AALCO's experience and resources.

With these words, I would like now to conclude. Thank you very much. May I request now our Chief Guest His Excellency Mr. Hansraj Bharadwaj to deliver his address.