

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY
AMBASSADOR DR. WAFIK Z. KAMIL, SECRETARY-GENERAL, ASIAN-
AFRICAN LEGAL CONSULTATIVE ORGANIZATION AT THE SIXTY-FIRST
SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON 20 OCTOBER
2006, NEW YORK**

1. Madam President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates and observers, Ladies and Gentleman, Madam President, allow me at the outset, being from the Arab Republic of Egypt, to address few words to an Honorable sister in Arabic- our common language - and then I will proceed in English to official language of the Organization that I lead-the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (referred to as AALCO).

2. Madam President, the item on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization is placed on the agenda of UN General Assembly on biennial basis, and although we participated as an Observer in the Sixtieth Session, we did not have the occasion to be accorded floor, therefore, we take this opportunity to convey our cordial greetings to the United Nations on its Sixtieth Anniversary. The wide-ranging reform measures set in motion by global political leaders at 2005 World Summit, in the areas of development; peace and collective security; human rights and the rule of law; strengthening the United Nations have been path breaking. Equally important achievement of the Sixtieth Session, which we welcome, has been the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council.

3. We also wish to pay cordial tribute to H. E. Mr. Jan Eliasson, President of the 60th Session of the UN General Assembly. My appreciation also goes to His Excellency Kofi Annan and his staff for their continuous hard work and commitment. This being his last year of second term, on behalf of AALCO and my own behalf I extend to Mr. Kofi Annan our best wishes in all his future endeavors.

4. On behalf of the AALCO and my own behalf, I extend our heartiest congratulations to the UN Secretary-General designate His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki Moon, Hon'ble Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea. We assure him that we would extend our full cooperation and support to him in the discharge of his mandate.

Madam President,

5. We the peoples of the United Nations are increasingly being confronted with several challenges that threaten global security and require collective efforts to confront and resolve them. Multilateralism is the only way out to effectively tackle such global challenges. I do hope and wish all success to this Sixty-first Session of the General

Assembly in effectively attaining significant advancement on the issues of particular concern to developing countries such as the follow-up of the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals, prevention of armed conflict, an international convention on terrorism, protection of environment, revitalization of the General Assembly, and the reform of the Security Council. This Session would also provide an opportunity to assess the real impact made by the newly established Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council. We hope that the United Nations would continue to remain a beacon of hope, peace and prosperity for the people of the world.

Madam President,

6. I invite your kind attention to the Report of the Secretary-General on the agenda item “Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations”. This excellent Report clearly demonstrates that the partnership between the United Nations and the regional organizations is of particular importance for the achievement of common goals of peace, stability, development, advancement of rule of law, and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

7. The complexity of global problems has turned the United Nations into a special setting for developing fruitful cooperative relationships with regional organizations. The UN could benefit from the experiences and capacity of regional organizations on issues of common interest. They could also contribute to managing issues at regional and national levels. Therefore, such cooperation between the United Nations and the Regional Organizations needs to be enhanced and promoted.

Madam President,

8. The Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization or AALCO is a common platform and a forum to bring together the Asian-African States, with a view to strengthening their participation in the process of development of international law and to enabling them to realize effectively their goals and aspirations. With a sense of pride and deep satisfaction, I am honoured to inform this august body that the AALCO is commemorating its golden jubilee this year. The organization, considered to be a tangible outcome of the historic 1955 Bandung Summit of Asian-African leaders has traversed a long journey in promoting Afro-Asian solidarity, particularly on international law matters. It remains a unique body not only to develop Asian-African perspectives of international law but also acts as a bridge between the world’s two most populous continents. Our Annual Sessions, well-recognized and respected in international law circles, play an important role in facilitating the interaction of people of the two continents and to deliberate on all important issues of international law with the aim to reach to a common position on them.

9. Establishment of an equitable and just world order, an order that serves the interest of the people of the world without discrimination, on the basis of sovereign equality among all States respecting their independence and territorial integrity is the *raison d’etre* of International Law. Issues concerning peace and security, human rights, international

humanitarian law, accountability for international crimes, environmental issues, equitable trading regimes etc., are addressed by the international community through the progressive development and codification of international law.

Madam President

10. In fifty years of its existence AALCO directly or indirectly, has been part of the every major development in the field of international law. The purpose of establishment of AALCO has been to provide a forum for evolving alternative perspectives of international law particularly keeping in view the specific interests of the developing countries and the membership of the AALCO is testimony to it. AALCO has considerable success in the last fifty years in fulfilling all what have been mandated to her by its Member States. More than ever international law today is influencing the national policies and laws that design and define the economy, polity and social life. It is also an apparent fact that international law making process involves contending positions being taken by various groups of states. Thus it is a bitter reality that international law making process reflects the uneven economic and social development at the international level. In these circumstances, the role of AALCO continues to be significant both for making international law as a catalyst for development and do so with an egalitarian approach to international relations. Therefore AALCO believes in uniting with like-minded organizations and institutions in strengthening the United Nations system for the purpose of achieving even development of peoples in all respects.

Madam President,

11. Thus, from a modest membership of 7, in 1956, our strength today is 48, which represents 2/3 (two-third) of world population. We are confident that the number of Member States would continue to grow. With the full support and cooperation of its Member States, the Organization follows a dynamic work programme that has always been kept in tune with the needs of the time and gets suitably oriented to meet challenges posed in contemporary international society in general and the needs of an expanding membership encompassing the two continents of Asia and Africa.

12. In the Golden Jubilee year of the Organization, a new chapter in the history of our Organization has opened. The new building of the Permanent Headquarters of AALCO was inaugurated in conjunction with our Forty-Fifth Golden Jubilee Session in New Delhi on 6 April 2006. With the magnanimity of our generous hosts-the Government of India-the AALCO in its fiftieth year has now its permanent abode. The Organization would very soon start functioning from its new premises and I visualize that this would mark the commencement of a new era in AALCO activities with a much wider dimension.

Madam President,

13. AALCO's last two Annual Sessions, held respectively in Nairobi in 2005 and at our Headquarters in New Delhi in 2006 had occasion to consider in-depth our agenda items, such as the work of the International Law Commission, the Law of the Sea, International Terrorism, Establishing Cooperation Against Trafficking in Women and

Children, International Criminal Court, Human Rights in Islam, Deportation of Palestinians and other Israeli Practices among them the Massive Immigration and Settlement of Jews in all Occupied Territories in Violation of International Law particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and Expressions of folklore and its International Protection. This listing is indicative of the wide-ranging topics of international law, which the AALCO considers as also its ability to reorient its agenda with the changing times.

14. A unique feature of our Sessions is the special meetings organized in collaboration with friendly International Organizations, on a topic of contemporary relevance in international law. At Nairobi, the Kenyan Government, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and AALCO joined hands to organize a special meeting on “Environmental Law and Sustainable Development” and addressed issues pertaining to Asian-African perspective of international environmental law, Compliance with and enforcement of environmental law; and Entry into force of Kyoto Protocol: Problems and Prospects. The New Delhi Session, being the Golden Jubilee Session and thus a momentous occasion for our Organization, we organized three such special meetings, namely on “Legal Identity and Statelessness” with the Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), “Universal Jurisdiction and its Role in the Enforcement of International Humanitarian Law” with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and on “International Migration Law” with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). All these meetings turned out to be highly successful and saw extensive exchange of ideas between the subject experts and the delegates. I take this opportunity to thank our partners in those endeavors the UNEP, UNHCR, ICRC and IOM for their valuable help and cooperation in making these meetings a grand success.

15. Inter-sessional activities also continue to represent an important part of our work programme. One such important meeting that took place in May 2006 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia was the Meeting of International Experts on Human Rights in Islam (MIEHRI). It was organized by the Governments of Malaysia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and AALCO Secretariat. The main theme of the Meeting was “Understanding Human Rights as Understood in Islam”. Based on this theme, MIEHRI highlighted, inter alia, the basic principles of human rights as enshrined in Islam; to examine how the concepts of human rights have been adopted and integrated into national laws and practices; to investigate how these universal principles have been applied in consonance with Islamic teachings and in the context of particular societies; and also to serve as a platform for experts from various fields to examine Islamic principles on human rights with the main purpose of dissuading misunderstanding of Islam and the Muslims. A Galaxy of Experts from all over the world attended and presented their views during the Conference.

16. AALCO has consistently sought to develop its synergy with the United Nations, given the two Organizations’ common objectives, complementary mandates and respective comparative advantages. It has been supportive of the United Nations and our work has been aimed at rendering assistance to the AALCO Member Governments in their

consideration of the agenda items before the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly. Preparation of extensive studies to assist its Member Governments for participation in international legal conferences convoked under the auspices of the United Nations and on the selected items on the agenda of the General Assembly is part and parcel of the regular activities of the AALCO Secretariat. The contribution of AALCO in bringing together the countries of Asia and Africa, with a view to effectively coordinating the position of developing countries in codification conferences under the auspices of the United Nations, especially during the negotiations leading to the Vienna Convention on the Law of the Treaties and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea is well-recognized.

17. In recognition of its role, the according of permanent observer status to AALCO by the UN General Assembly was a turning point in the history of the Organization. The inclusion of certain items and topics, under consideration by the United Nations in the work programme of AALCO is reflective of its contribution towards the fulfillment of the purposes and the principles of the United Nations.

Madam President,

18. AALCO and the International Law Commission share a mutually supportive relationship. Follow-up of the work of the International Law Commission is our statutory obligation and hence is regularly supported by in-depth Secretariat studies on the item. Substantive deliberations on this topic also take place at our Annual Sessions. ILC Chairman or his nominated Member addresses our Annual Session and explain the progress of work achieved. Later, I present before the Commission the crux of the statements made by AALCO Member States at the AALCO Annual Session. The relationship between our two Organizations has been further strengthened by the convening of Joint AALCO-ILC meeting in conjunction with the meeting of AALCO Legal Advisers, which takes place on the sidelines of the annual General Assembly Session.

19. It has been my constant endeavor to strengthen the relationship between AALCO and other Inter-governmental Organizations. Our organization has concluded formal agreements with a number of UN bodies and specialized agencies, such as IAEA, IMO, IOM, ITLOS, UNHCR, UNEP, UN OHCHR, UNIDO, UNITAR, UNU, and WIPO. We value our relationship with the UN family of Organizations and we shall continue to strive to fortify this cooperation towards the strengthening of the international legal order. In this context, it is worth mentioning here that AALCO has initiated dialogue with several Specialized Agencies to conduct training programmes/workshops in several areas of International Law. Successful attainment of this objective, I believe would help in the capacity-building in International Law of particularly Asian-African States.

Madam President,

20. The scourge of international terrorism continues to plague us. It is a stark reality of our times that no part of the world is immune from the horrendous acts of terrors perpetrated on innocent civilians by terrorists. This horrible crime affects world's peace

and prosperity and hampers the development process. Addressing the phenomenon of terrorism is a complex and challenging task. Terrorist activities by any individuals, groups, non-state entities or states have to be checked by all possible means. In this regard, we welcome the recent adoption of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy by the United Nations General Assembly. Although, this Strategy is an important step ahead, we look forward and work diligently with our Member States to see further momentum on the draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism which is being discussed by Member States of the United Nations and when adopted would reflect the views of the whole international community.

Madam President,

21. This Sixty-first Session commenced with two-day high-level dialogue on International Migration and Development. It is coincidental that in April this year at our Annual Session, we deliberated on International Migration Law. This once again reflects the supportiveness of AALCO to UN agenda. The dialogue was certainly a milestone in the journey to find ways to maximize the benefits of migration for development and minimize its challenges. In this regard, we appreciate the establishment, pursuant to the proposal of Secretary-General, of Global Forum on Migration and Development. We look forward to its first meeting in Belgium next year and believe that this consultative forum would be able to exchange best ideas and practices on the issue.

Madam President,

22. I shall conclude my statement, with the hope and expectation of further enhancing the cooperation between our two organizations. Madam President, as head of an International legal body, I stress mainly on the full respect, enhancement and implementation of the Rule of Law in all areas, in order to keep our international community within the boundaries of a civilized world where only justice, equity and one standard criteria prevail and then only we could expect a tremendous drop in evils around us.

23. I thank you Madam President for giving me the floor and I also thank the distinguished Delegates and Excellencies for the patient hearing that they have given to me. Thank you very much.