



Statement of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO)

General Debate of the 19th Session of the Assembly of State Parties

14-16 December 2020, The Hague

Mr. President of the Assembly

Mr. President of the International Criminal Court

Madam Prosecutor

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO), I convey my deep gratitude to the ASP for inviting our organization and providing me with the opportunity of addressing this august gathering in the capacity of an observer.

The Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) is an intergovernmental organization comprising 48 Member States from Asia and Africa. Constituted in 1956 as a tangible outcome of the Bandung Conference, the Asian Legal Consultative Committee (as it was then called), expanded its Membership in 1958 to include African States. In 2001, the name of the Committee was changed to Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) to reflect the growing significance of the Afro-Asian worldview in international law and relations. Over the years, we have played a key consultative role in facilitating the codification and progressive development of international law and in the process have highlighted the particular importance of incorporating Afro-Asian perspectives in such an exercise.

Mr. President,

The challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic have impacted one and all in unimaginable ways. International law is no exception in this regard. A meeting of this nature is reflective of the hazards posed by the global pandemic and the need to follow all necessary safety protocols while we pledge to commit ourselves once again to the noble task of strengthening international law in these difficult times. In doing so, we reaffirm our resolute commitment to an international order rooted in the values of rule of law, which is integral to AALCO's vision of Afro-Asian friendship and solidarity.

'Rule of Law' is the ethico-legal paradigm of global multilateralism. The work of the International Criminal Court and the mandate of the Assembly of State Parties are fundamentally linked to a global order governed by international law and the values of cooperative multilateralism. As an inter-governmental organization of Asian and African States, AALCO has consistently endeavored to promote and strengthen the values of the ICC and the Rome Statute framework by sensitizing our stakeholders to the importance of a rules based international order committed to order and harmony. Likewise, in AALCO, our approach to international law is informed by this position which we seek to broad base and contextualize in light of our value orientation rooted in the 'Bandung Spirit'.

AALCO has been a strong supporter of the ICC over the years. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between AALCO and ICC was signed in 2008, seeking to give practical orientation to our shared commitments on strengthening international rule of law. We remain open to all forms of cooperation and partnerships that mutually reinforce our shared values. One of our earlier initiatives, the "Round Table Meeting of Legal Experts on the Review Conference of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court", organized by AALCO in Putrajaya, Malaysia in March 2010 was widely appreciated by the Afro-Asian community as a decisive effort in articulating the legal significance of the Kampala Review Conference keeping in mind the aspirations of our Member States.

Our most recent endeavor involved co-hosting a seminar on 'Operational Functioning of the International Criminal Court and International Judicial Education: Emerging Paradigms' in January 2019 in New Delhi aimed at selectively training Judicial Officers of AALCO Member

States on the practical dimensions of international criminal law . It is these events that define our commitment to international law and fostering a world order that seeks to end impunity.

As in the past, the International Criminal Court should carry forward its legacy guided by a strong commitment to multilateralism in international rule of law. It is my hope that the ASP will continue to play a stellar role as a management and oversight body of the ICC and help the Court in fulfilling its mandate in the best traditions of global peace and cooperative harmony.

Thank you.
