



**Statement of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) to be
delivered at the Twenty-First Session of the Assembly of State Parties**

05-10 December 2022, The Hague

Madam President of the Assembly of State Parties Silvia Fernández de Gurmendi,

Honorable President of the International Criminal Court Judge Piotr Hofmański,

Honorable Prosecutor Mr. Karim Khan KC,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO), I convey my deep gratitude and appreciation to the ASP for inviting our organization to the Twenty-First Session of the ASP being held in the historic city of The Hague. AALCO had the occasion to previously participate in the ASP and has always been a strong well-wisher of the ASP and its mandate.

AALCO is an intergovernmental organization comprising 47 Member States from Asia and Africa. Established 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, the Organization has played a seminal role in facilitating the codification and progressive development of international law from an Afro-Asian perspective and in doing so has brought forward the views and position of its Member States in various international forums. This, we believe, has

enriched the moral foundations of international law and is helping carve a new narrative of international law rooted in fairness, justice and good conscience.

Madam President,

I note that the mandates of the Assembly of State Parties and the International Criminal Court are deeply connected to creating a world order where the most serious “crimes of concern to the international community as a whole” are dealt with according to well-accepted principles of international law. Fighting impunity and holding the perpetrators of such heinous crimes accountable is a task that requires strong multilateral cooperation and support of the international community at large. In this regard, I wish to state that AALCO’s engagement with international criminal law, is rooted in the ‘Bandung Spirit’ which believes in solidarity, harmony and cooperative multilateralism. In other words, we hold the strengthening of the principles of international criminal law to be of critical importance in creating a fair and equitable world free of impunity where respect for human rights and accountability are important tenets of the international community. AALCO has consistently endeavored to strengthen and promote the values of the ICC and the Rome Statute framework by sensitizing our stakeholders to the importance of a rule-based international order. **At the same time, we are also of the view that legitimate concerns of Asian and African States must be safeguarded by the Court and all efforts must be made to strike a judicious balance between criminal accountability and sovereign equality.**

AALCO has been a strong supporter of the ICC since the early days of the Court. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between AALCO and ICC was signed in 2008, seeking to give practical impetus to our shared commitments towards strengthening international rule of law. As always, we remain open to all forms of cooperation and partnerships that mutually reinforce our shared goals and 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.

In January 2019, AALCO co-hosted a seminar on ‘Operational Functioning of the International Criminal Court and International Judicial Education: Emerging Paradigms’ in New Delhi aimed at training Judicial Officers of AALCO Member States on the practical

dimensions of international criminal law. Such events define our commitment to international criminal law and fostering a world order that seeks to end impunity.

We have been closely following the topic of ‘Immunity of State Officials from Foreign Criminal Jurisdiction’, which is on the agenda of the International Law Commission for its close interface with principles of international criminal law. We hope that work on this topic will culminate in a manner acceptable to all stakeholders, while appreciating the significance of this topic for the progressive development of international law.

As I conclude, I would like to state that the ASP should carry forward its legacy guided by a strong commitment to multilateral cooperation and harmony. 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 finest traditions of global peace, justice and accountability.

Thank you.
