



6th China-AALCO Exchange and Research Programme

Inaugural Address by

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***Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Greetings.***

It is of immense pleasure and honour for me as the Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) to address this august gathering at the Forum on Developing Countries and International Law and the Sixth Session of the China-AALCO Exchange and Research Programme on International Law (CAERP) which is now resuming after the breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic. The last Session of the China-AALCO Exchange and Research Programme or the Fifth Session was organized in 2019. During the 60th Annual Session of AALCO last year in New Delhi, one of the key messages in the Opening Remark of the Chinese Government as the President of the Fifty-Ninth Annual Session of AALCO was ***“China would like to resume, whenever possible, the China-AALCO Exchange and Research Program on International Law”***. In this regard, the AALCO Secretariat and I myself are very pleased that the Sixth Session of the China-AALCO Exchange and Research Programme on International Law is again being held in Beijing and in Hong Kong SAR, the People’s Republic of China this year. On behalf of the AALCO Secretariat, I take this opportunity to profoundly thank the Government of China, especially the Department of Treaty and Law of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to make

this Programme happen again. My sincere thanks also go to the other co-organizers, as the Asian Academy of International Law, the Wuhan University Institute of International Law for all your efforts and support for this Programme. I also would like to convey my heartfelt thanks and warm welcome to the representatives of the AALCO Member States, Ambassadors, Distinguished guests, eminent international law academics, practitioners and all participants for joining and providing valuable experience and knowledge at this event. Many of you will be attending this Session for the first time. Also, this session happens to be my first since assuming the office of the Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) in 2022.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) is a unique Organization, as perhaps, it is the only legal consultative body of its kind in the family of inter-governmental organizations. It was established in 1956, as a tangible outcome of the historic “**Bandung Conference**”, held in Indonesia, in 1955. The lessons of the Conference can be summarized in three key words - **friendship, solidarity and cooperation**. These came to be known as the **Bandung Spirit**. The conference had a profound effect on how Asian-African States saw international legal order as well. Established a year after the Bandung Conference, the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO), the organization that I serve, is considered to be a tangible outcome of this Conference.

AALCO consists of a body of legal experts, advisory in nature, aimed at dealing with problems pertaining to international law that were referred to it by its Member States. Further, it also aims at promoting exchange of views and information on matters of international law, which were of common concern to the Member States. Today it has a membership of 47 Member States from Asia and Africa. It has a rich history of 67 years behind it in addressing the international law concerns of Asian-African States and promoting the realization of Afro-Asian perspective in the codification and progressive development of international law.

Currently, AALCO has 18 topics on its Agenda/Work Programme. AALCO is also evolving its agenda and activities according to the needs of its Member States. Here are some important topics :

- Matters Relating to the Work of the International Law Commission

One of the functions assigned to the AALCO under its Statute is to study the subjects which are under the consideration of the ILC and thereafter forward the views of the Member States on them to the Commission. Last week on 18 July, I had the opportunity to represent the Organization at the 74th Session of the International Law Commission at the United Nations Office at Geneva and to summarize the views of the Member States of AALCO on some selected agenda items of ILC articulated at the Fifty-Ninth and Sixtieth Annual Sessions of AALCO held in Hong Kong SAR in 2021 and in New Delhi in 2022 respectively.

Other Topics include :

- The Law of the Sea
- The Environment and Sustainable Development
- Expressions of Folklore and its International Protection
- The Status and Treatment of Refugees
- Violations of International Law in Palestine and Other Occupied Territories by Israel and Other International Legal Issues related to the Question of Palestine
- Legal Protection of Migrant Workers
- Extraterritorial Application of National Legislation: Sanctions Imposed Against Third Parties
- Violent Extremism and Terrorism (Legal Aspects)
- Establishing Cooperation Against Trafficking in Women and Children
- The International Criminal Court: Recent Developments
- An Effective International Legal Instrument Against Corruption
- International Law in Cyberspace
- The Work of UNCITRAL and Other International Organizations in the Field of International Trade and Investment Law
- The WTO as a Framework Agreement and Code of Conduct for World Trade
- Managing Global Financial Crises: Sharing of Experience

- Human Rights in Islam
- Peaceful Settlement of Disputes

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that there are three ways in which a matter is placed on the Work Programme of AALCO :

- 1) Reference by a Member State
- 2) Suo-moto initiative of the Secretary General
- 3) Through follow up the work of the ILC

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you are aware, one of the functions assigned to the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) is to serve as an Advisory body to Member States in the field of international law and as a Forum for Asian-African cooperation in legal matters of common concern. In this regard, the China-AALCO Exchange and Research Programme on International Law aims to support the further progress of AALCO and better fulfillment of the Organization's objectives and missions in the new era. This program intends to promote the exchange and dialogue, share good practices, experience and knowledge, enhance capacity-building in the field of international law among AALCO member States and to support the work and activities of AALCO. The programme covers a number of frontier and relevant topics which also form the core areas of concern for AALCO Member States, including International Investment Law, Climate Change and International Environmental Law, New development in the Law of the Sea.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the years, AALCO has played a key consultative role in facilitating the codification and progressive development of international law and in the process has highlighted the particular importance of incorporating Afro-Asian perspectives in such an exercise. The contribution of Developing Countries to International Law, the Rule of Law and the World Order will always be relevant. In this quest of AALCO, China

has been an active participant and has been a strong supporter of the work of the Organization ever since China became a Member in 1983.

China has hosted the annual sessions of AALCO on three occasions – the 29th session in 1990, the 54th session in 2015 in Beijing and the 59th session in Hong Kong SAR in 2021. In 2019, China hosted the 4th Meeting of the AALCO Open-ended Working Group on International Law in Cyberspace in Hangzhou.

The latest addition to AALCO's network of Regional Arbitration Centers is the AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre. The Centre, under the auspices of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) and with major support from the Chinese Government was officially opened in May last year. The AALCO Hong Kong Centre marks the sixth Regional Arbitration Centre of AALCO. As other Five Regional Arbitration Centres of AALCO in Cairo, Kuala Lumpur, Lagos, Teheran and Nairobi, the AALCO Hong Kong Centre aims at promoting international commercial arbitration in the Asia-African region.

In term of the Chief Executive of the organization, **Mr. Tang Chengyuan**, an eminent Chinese diplomat served as the third Secretary-General of AALCO and he served two terms as the Secretary-General from 1994-2000. China has regularly seconded distinguished Deputy Secretaries-General (DSGs) to AALCO. Currently, we have the honour of having **Mr. Sun Guoshun**, a senior Chinese diplomat, as one of the DSGs in the AALCO Secretariat. Therefore, Mr. Sun will be leaving the Secretariat next month due to retirement. I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to Mr. Sun for his great contribution to the AALCO Secretariat. I also take this opportunity to warmly welcome **Mr. Yong Zhu** as new DSG in the AALCO Secretariat.

In addition, eminent academics from China, **Professor Sienho Yee** and **Dr. Huang Zhixiong** have been the Rapporteurs of AALCO's now concluded Informal Expert Group on Customary International Law and the ongoing AALCO Open-ended Working Group on International Law in Cyberspace respectively.

China has extended unwavering support to the commitments of AALCO - through its financial and material contributions, unfaltering participation in all events of the Organization, and by inviting and facilitating the Secretariat's participation in its nationally organized events on international law and cooperation.

To conclude my remarks, on behalf of AALCO and on my own behalf, I take this opportunity to profoundly thank the Government of the People's Republic of China for organizing the 6th Session of the China-AALCO Exchange and Research Programme on International Law. I also extend my sincere gratitude to the Chinese Government for the warm hospitality and facilitation of my visit.

Thank you for your time and attention. I wish you all a fruitful session.