

**STATEMENT BY MR. PREM CHAND GUPTA, MEMBER OF
PARLIAMENT ON AGENDA ITEM: 22(A) COOPERATION BETWEEN
THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE ASIAN-AFRICAN LEGAL
CONSULTATIVE ORGANIZATION AT THE 57TH REGULAR SESSION
OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON NOVEMBER 20, 2002**

Mr. President,

International law is an indispensable instrument to shape a new world order. International law cannot acquire the sanctity and universality that are fundamental to its wider acceptance without adequately accommodating and reflecting the needs and aspirations of the Asian and African States. Over the years, we have witnessed the able participation and representation of Asian and African States in the work of the UN and its legislative forums. Their contribution to the development of law of treaties and the law of the sea is memorable, thanks largely to the work of the Asian African Legal Consultative Organisation as a forum for co-ordinating and trying to develop common negotiating positions of Asia and Africa.

2. Member countries continue to receive valuable assistance from AALCO to help them prepare and participate in a variety of international law meetings on environment, trade and human rights. A number of declarations and draft principles prepared by the AALCO on subjects like refugees, humanitarian law, extradition, mutual judicial assistance, migration,

investments are also worthy of note. Its continued emphasis on the work of the International Law Commission, law of the sea, terrorism, human rights, international trade, environment, and the evolving international criminal law will be of immense help to the member States. Besides its annual meetings and the customary annual meeting of legal advisers of member States in New York, it has also been conducting specialized seminars, workshops on contemporary themes of international law. These meetings bring together the best available talent of Asia and Africa in international law. There is a need to intensify these interactions.

3. The AALCO has an indispensable role to help the Asian African States in developing enlightened legal policies and positions and play their due role in shaping a just and equitable world order. Towards this end, it must reorganise its mandates and gather necessary funds and infrastructure. The Asian African States must ensure development of international law expertise through the establishment of specialized institutions of legal learning. Wider dissemination of developments of international law in an easily accessible form to different segments of the community is also

essential. There should be a regular interaction between academic and governmental experts in international law within the country and across the regions. To this process, AALCO can contribute immensely with training programmes, organization of highly specialized but quality lectures from leading exponents of international law, institution of fellowship programmes at the university level and exchange of scholars and experts on international law within the two continents. We welcome the establishment of the Centre for Research and Training at AALCO that is an important step towards achieving the above objectives. It is understood that some of these activities can be pursued only with the availability of more funds. The clearance of arrears in contribution and raising funds through voluntary contribution could help.

Mr. President,

4. It is heartening to note that the new permanent home of AALCO is beginning to take shape in New Delhi and hopefully by next year, the Headquarters building along with the residential complex for the Secretary General, should be ready for occupation. With the acquisition of a new home, the AALCO will also be acquiring a whole new dimension and

depth in all its activities. We hope that AALCO will attract a much wider membership and begin to better equip its Member States to deal with contemporary problems of international law. Under the leadership of Nigeria, we have no doubt that a vigorous drive for increasing the membership of AALCO would be undertaken.

5. The Organisation has become a recognized body of international law in the international community as it is the only inter-governmental body of its kind with an observer status with the United Nations. We hope that the cooperation between AALCO and the United Nations will continue to grow stronger. We cherish our association as Members of AALCO which has been serving us as a forum for cooperation in the field of international law. We are optimistic that in the coming years, the organisation will play a greater role and help in consolidating the common interest of Asian African States and would achieve its objectives of training and dissemination of international law expertise among Asian African States and thereby strengthen their role in evolving a fair, equitable and universal legal order.

Thank you, Mr. President