

Vision Speech for AALCO Secretary General (23.9.2020)

*Mr. Tana Weskosith, Deputy Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Dr. Vilawan Mangklatanakul, Director-General of the Department of Treaties
and Legal Affairs,
Excellencies, distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

It is my absolute privilege and honor to be Thailand's candidate for the position of AALCO's Secretary General with the support of the Royal Thai Government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to which I would like to extend my sincere gratitude.

The Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO), as the only organization at the inter-governmental level embracing the two continents, Asia and Africa, serves as an advisory body to its Member States in the field of international law and as a forum for Asian-African co-operation in various legal matters.

In support of my candidature, I am delighted to share with you my vision of how I would like to contribute to AALCO as Secretary General. I come with a clear mandate for the Organization. I would like to **make AALCO a more proactive and robust organization**. This is my main vision. Now, let me highlight key priority areas and strategic direction of AALCO :

First, I would like to make AALCO more visible and more proactive organization. AALCO must be a leading organization in addressing emerging challenges in international law. Consolidating legal position in both regions and put forth in other international fora and increasing cooperation with other international organizations are keys to make AALCO more recognized, visible and proactive organization.

AALCO need to address emerging challenges and cross-cutting issues in international law and to enhance cooperation in the field of international law, especially regarding certain pertinent topics which have been included in its work programs, namely international law in cyberspace, biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction under the Law of the sea, trade and investment law, including reforms of disputes settlement mechanisms, International Legal

Instrument Against Corruption and the peaceful settlement of disputes. This also should include the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic on international law and the international law in the post-COVID-19 World.

Second, I will continue the digitalization of AALCO. The way in which the world is changing and will be changed by the covid pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused especially changes in the organization's work. AALCO needs to adapt and welcome the new era of digitalization in order to increase efficiency of the organization as well as facilitate Member States and AALCO staff to work and cooperate in the time of pandemic. Virtual technologies should be utilized to facilitate the AALCO's activities such as webinars, virtual consultations, virtual conferences or online research activities.

Third, I would like to encourage future generations of international lawyers in the Asian-African region. AALCO is a knowledge based organization. One of the main pillars that support the development of international law in the Asian-African countries is the availability of legal professionals providing knowledge and services. Capacity building, training and education help to promote development and cooperation in international law and help build expertise and capacity in the Asian-African countries. It is important to encourage new generations to take the lead and address global challenges in the domain of international law. The future generation will take part and take responsibility in the formation and promotion of international norms dealing with new and emerging challenges.

AALCO need to work in close co-operation with various organizations, especially with academic institutions in terms of helping create opportunities for careers in international law by, for example, providing international law internship programs for students in the Asian and African regions, establishing the AALCO Research Award Program for outstanding research, encouraging the assimilation of academic inputs into the work of AALCO through a Visiting Fellowship Program and promoting networking of new generation of international lawyers in the region as well as providing a platform for discussion on the most cutting-edge contemporary international legal issues.

Fourth, ensuring full participation of Member States is a pillar of a robust organization. AALCO is a forum for consultation amongst 48 member States and provides advice in matters of international law as well as cooperation in legal matters. AALCO plays an important role in the international law-making

process and contributes to the progressive development and codification of international law. AALCO need to play a more significant role in establishing and maintaining justice and the rule of law with respect to the most pressing challenges facing the international community. I will encourage more involvement from member States in AALCO's activities, especially via secondment to the Secretariat, to invite observers from non-participating States to AALCO's meetings and also to welcome countries from Asia and Africa to become new members of AALCO.

Lastly, I will promote the understanding of differences in culture and legal systems among the member states of AALCO, by strengthening collaboration and the harmonization of law. Legal harmonization among its member states is a challenge for AALCO as a forum for Asian-African co-operation in legal matters. There are different legal cultures in Member States. It is of great importance to promote understanding of differences in cultures and legal systems, and use culture as a tool to enhance harmonization of law. Moreover, AALCO can have a significant role as a center for harmonizing the action of Asian-African States in international legal matters.

These are key priority areas and strategic direction to drive AALCO in the next four years, if I am elected as the next Secretary General of AALCO.

I am confident that my wealth of expertise and experience in law and management will make AALCO a more proactive and robust organization.

And I strongly believe that AALCO can be an important piece of the jigsaw in connecting the legal perspectives of Asian and African countries to the global effort in the harmonization and progressive development of international law. AALCO will play a crucial role in furthering this work, work that I would love to contribute to.

I thank once again the Royal Thai Government for nominating me as candidate for the position of AALCO Secretary General and I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for all of the hard work in supporting my candidature, especially in organizing this reception to introduce me.

I sincerely thank all of you for your presence here tonight.

I would very much appreciate your kind support for my candidature.