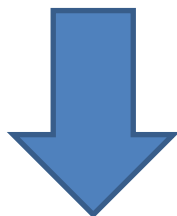


**Statement by Mr. Taro Kono, Minister for Foreign
Affairs of Japan, at the 57th Annual Session of the
Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization
(AALCO)**

(9 October 2018, Tokyo Prince Hotel)

Honourable Ministers and Attorneys General of the AALCO
members,
H.E. Professor Dr. Kennedy Gastorn, Secretary-General of
AALCO,
Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares, Under-Secretary-General for
Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel,
Mr. Shinichi Kitaoka, President of Japan International
Cooperation Agency,
Professor Masahiko Asada, President of Japanese Society of
International Law,
Distinguished delegates,

I would like to welcome all of you to Japan, and
welcome to Tokyo. It is my great pleasure to receive the
distinguished delegates of the AALCO members to its 57th
Annual Session. I feel privileged to be the Foreign Minister
during Japan's fifth time hosting the Annual Session of
AALCO, the second greatest number of Annual Sessions
hosted by any member next only to India, the home of its
Headquarters.



When AALCO was established in 1956, following the historic Bandung Conference held in the previous year, it started with seven Asian members including Japan. When Japan first hosted the Annual Session in 1961, there were only nine members and two observer States represented.

Today, the number of AALCO members stands at forty seven, along with two Permanent Observers, and this expanded membership is symbolic of the organization's increased significance. In its more than 60 year history, AALCO has continued to follow the work of the International Law Commission and communicated the views of Asia and Africa on topics of mutual concern to the United Nations and other international organizations.

Over the years, Japan has always committed itself to contributing to the work of AALCO by sending its delegates to every Annual Session and participating proactively in discussions, by supporting the Secretariat in terms of personnel and finance, as well as by co-hosting seminars and sending experts.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When Prime Minister Abe addressed the Asian-African Summit 2015 commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Bandung Conference, he said “The wisdom of our forefathers in Bandung was that the rule of law should protect the dignity of sovereign nations, be they large or

small.” Where there is rule of law, there is stability, and where there is stability, there is growth. The rule of law is also an important principle for upholding universal values such as democracy and respect for basic human rights.

Today, Asia and Africa are regarded as major growth centers of the world. This shows how much the AALCO members in Asia and Africa have benefited from a world governed by the rule of law and illustrates the need to sustain rule-based international mechanisms.

The importance of the rule of law is also highlighted in Japan’s foreign policy strategy to realize a free and open Indo-Pacific.

In order for international law to truly retain its universal character, Asia and Africa must continue to participate in its development. This is where AALCO has a significant role to play. AALCO is a forum suited for exchanging evidence of state practice and *opinio juris* (オピニオ・ユリス) (注：法的確信). Active participation in its discussions can serve to ensure that the views and opinions of Asia and Africa are represented in the development of international law.

In the speech addressing Asian-African Summit 2015, Prime Minister Abe also stated that “Traction for growth is always found in people.” With that in mind, I am pleased to announce that Japan is preparing to launch a new program,

starting next year, to support the capacity building of AALCO members in the area of international law. It will consist of training programs for working-level officials to address challenges concerning important international law issues for AALCO members.

Japan will continue to promote the rule of law in the international community. I look forward to walking side-by-side with all AALCO members along this path.

Thank you.