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MESSAGE OF SECRETARY-GENERAL TO INTERNATIONAL LAW CONFERENCE IN QATAR

The following is the text of a message from Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to the inaugural session of the Conference on International Legal Issues Arising under the United Nations Decade of International Law, in Doha, Qatar, today:

I am pleased to send my greetings and sincere best wishes to the participants in this important Conference on International Legal Issues Arising under the United Nations Decade of International Law. As the Decade approaches its mid-point, a comprehensive review of international legal issues in the context of this major international legal conference is of great value, and can make a serious contribution to achieving the objectives of the Decade. I pay particular tribute, therefore, to the State of Qatar and to the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee for organizing this timely international gathering.

The General Assembly's 1989 proclamation of the United Nations Decade of International Law was rooted in the conviction of Member States that promoting greater respect for the principles of international law and encouraging its progressive development and codification is a matter of the deepest importance. The United Nations is working to strengthen the rule of law in international relations at every level. The Decade provides an unparalleled opportunity for the United Nations, in cooperation with Member States, specialized agencies and other international bodies, to develop a comprehensive framework of cooperation to promote international peace and security through the application of international legal norms and principles.

Protecting human rights, creating a new framework of international security and achieving progress towards development have emerged as defining challenges of the post-cold-war era. International law provides a rigorous analytical basis of approach to these challenges, and a powerful means of action to achieve them. It is a source from which we can draw new ideas and new inspiration. It is a tool with which we can create a new vision of international human relations, and a new reality. International law is a dynamic resource of enormous potential.

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While we can work to improve the machinery of international law, its ultimate effectiveness will depend upon the political will of States to embrace its principles and share its ideals. With a firm international commitment to the spirit of international law, we can build a system of international relations that protects the rights and human dignity of the individual; that promotes mutual respect and support among nations; and that substantially enhances the prospects for global development.

The United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee share these common objectives. As a unique intergovernmental and interregional institution, the Consultative Committee serves not only as a forum for consultation and cooperation for its Member States, but also as a conduit for the exchange of experience and knowledge with other regions of the world. Your deliberations constitute an integral part of a global process of multilateral negotiation -- a process that is especially reflected in the work of the United Nations.

I congratulate the State of Qatar and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee on this important initiative, and I look forward to learning of the results of your deliberations.

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