Dr. Bonaya Adhi Godana

Dr. Bonaya A. Godana, one of the founding members of the African Association of International Law, and its first Deputy-Secretary-General and treasurer, passed away on 10 April 2006 in a plane crash at Marsabit Airport in Northern Kenya. 13 other people were also killed in the crash, while three survived. Among the casualties there were other senior politicians, including two Assistant Ministers and religious leaders. Dr. Godana and his travel companions were on a mission to secure peace among the inhabitants of the area along the border between Kenya and Ethiopia.

Dr. Godana’s death in the course of a peace mission symbolizes his life which was devoted to peace and development in his native Kenya, to the betterment of the welfare of his people, to the advancement of the rule of law in Africa in general, and to the teaching and dissemination of international law.

Dr. Bonaya Godana had an illustrious career in the teaching and practice of law, including as a member of the select committee on constitutional review in Kenya, as well as in the parliament and government of Kenya. A native of Dukana in Northern Kenya, he received his basic legal education at the University of Nairobi, where he obtained a Master of Law degree in 1976, followed a few years later by a Doctorate in international law at the Graduate Institute of International Studies of the University of Geneva (1984). He taught international law at the University of Nairobi in the late 1970’s and throughout the 1980’s and served from 1986 to 1988 as the Chairman of the Public Law Department in the faculty of law. A highly
respected scholar and researcher, Dr. Godana published during that period a number of articles on various aspects of international law as well as his well-known book on *Africa’s Shared Water Resources: Legal and Institutional Aspects of the Nile, Niger and Senegal River Systems*.

In 1992, he was elected to the National Assembly of Kenya where he was soon elevated to the post of Deputy Speaker which he held until 1997 when he was appointed Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs. He was subsequently appointed Foreign Minister in January 1998 and held this post until 2001. From 2001 to 2002, he served as Minister for Agriculture. From 2002 to his death in April 2006 he was the deputy Leader of the opposition Kenya African National Union (KANU) party.

Dr. Godana used his parliamentary and governmental functions to promote human rights, to preserve peace among the peoples of Kenya as well as among and within African countries, and to advance the rule of law. In this context, he played a very important role in the activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, particularly with respect to the protection of human rights in Africa, and in the OAU, where as Foreign Minister of Kenya he actively campaigned for an active role of the organization in the settlement of internal conflicts such as those in neighbouring Sudan and Somalia, and significantly contributed to the ongoing efforts to craft a new constitution for Kenya.

He also actively contributed to the study and dissemination of international law in Africa. In 1986, he participated in Lusaka (Zambia) in the Inaugural Conference of the African Association of International Law, and was elected Deputy Secretary-General and Treasurer of the Association. In this capacity, he provided a lot of encouragement and support to the work on the *African Yearbook of International Law*, and followed with great interest its continuous publication and development.

His death is therefore a great loss not only to Kenya, where he was a much admired and respected political figure, but also to the community of African scholars of international law of which he was a prominent member.

Dr. Godana will be remembered as an outstanding lawyer, an active representative of Kenya in international fora, and a highly respected