



ASEAN Inter - Parliamentary Organization

The 23rd General Assembly

8-13 September 2002, Ha Noi, Viet Nam

23GA/2002/Message/Kh

MESSAGE
OF
HIS MAJESTY NORODOM SIHANOUK
KING OF CAMBODIA
TO THE 23RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
THE ASEAN INT&R-PARLIAMENTARY ORGANIZATION
The Socialist Republic of Vietnam
Ha Noi
September 8-13,2002

On behalf of the people of the Kingdom of Cambodia and on my own behalf, I wish to extend my warmest congratulations to all distinguished members of the ASEAN later-Parliamentary Organisation (AIPO), and in particular, to His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Van An, President of AIPO for hosting the 23rd AIPO General Assembly in the prestigious city of Ha Noi.

In the last twenty-three years, AIPO has successfully pursued its goals and objectives through consensus building in establishing peace, security, in fostering social, cultural, and political co-operation, and in enhancing economic development of our region, Cambodia, for its part, will continue to actively participate and support all the activities of AIPO. I

wholeheartedly commend AIPO for having pursued and achieved these noble goals and objectives ever the years.

As we move into the 21st Century and with the current speed of globalization and increased interdependence, the role of the ASEAN Parliaments has become more important than ever before. I believe ASEAN Governments and Parliaments need to work together in harmony for the common interest of our region.

May I, in conclusion, extend to all distinguished AIPO members and delegates, my best wishes for a very successful General Assembly meeting, and to each and every member country, my good wishes for peace, harmony, and prosperity.





ASEAN Inter - Parliamentary Organization

The 23rd General Assembly

8-13 September 2002, Ha Noi, Viet Nam

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MESSAGE
BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA
TO THE 23RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ORGANIZATION (AIPO)

Hanoi, 8-13 September 2002

Mr. Chairman,
Members of AIPO,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate all members of AIPO who gather here in beautiful city of Hanoi to attend its 23rd General Assembly. On behalf of the people of Indonesia, I wish to extend our warm regards and sincere appreciation to the people and Government of Vietnam for hosting this august gathering.

The international community has just witnessed the conclusion of the World Summit on Sustainable Development that took place in Johannesburg from 2 to 4 September 2002. The Summit has successfully laid foundations and agreed on programs of action with a view to ensuring the implementation of sustainable development, as our joint endeavours to bring about prosperity.

I believe these efforts are in line with the ideals that we want to achieve in ASEAN. Hence, ASSAM has contributed significantly to the accomplishment in Johannesburg, particularly through our active participation in the Preparatory Committee Meeting in Bali. Again, this is another reflection of ASEAN increased role that has been recognized as indispensable by countries in world.

It is now for us in ASBAN, together with the world community as well as Mon Governmental Organizations, to make sure that the results of the World Summit on Sustainable Development are translated into concrete action.

In this regard, we should bear in mind that ASEAN can play such a critical role only if its members employ harmonious, solid and integrated relations and cooperation. Should ASEAN manage

to implement sustainable development, it will not only score its success in developing and prospering itself, but also will make its contribution to global efforts in building the stable, peaceful and prosperous world order.

In line with ASEAN's spirit and solidarity, initiatives and steps to bring about prosperity among ASEAN family have in fact been there from the early stage. From the outset, ASEAN has been aware about the necessity to pursue harmonious life and prosperity among its members. Therefore, it is of particular important to follow the agreed time frame and programs aimed at assisting the newcomer members to level off their position. This is not merely effort to fight against poverty and underdevelopment, as it also constitutes the prime objective of sustainable development, but it is indeed one of the main goals of ASEAN.

By the same token, our failure to improve the level of prosperity often gives rise to instability in the region as well as in the internal life of the individual member countries.

It widely recognized that the primary responsibility to bring about prosperity to the people rest in the hand of each and every country. In spite of that, in this increasingly globalized and fast changing world, there is a need to engage in joint endeavour to address the issues that in reality are inter related and mutually influencing.

Therefore, a concrete cooperation based on the spirit of togetherness has increasingly become essential. And with this hope, I wish you all success in your deliberation.

Thank you.

Hanoi, 8 September 2002
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF INDONESIA

MEGAWATI SOEKARNOPUTRI



ASEAN Inter - Parliamentary Organization

The 23rd General Assembly

8-13 September 2002, Ha Noi, Viet Nam

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MESSAGE

MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY

**KHAMTAY SIPHANDONE, PRESIDENT OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC, TO THE 23RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ORGANIZATION
HELD ON 8-13/09/2002, IN HANOI, SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF
VIETNAM**

Vientiane, September 2002

Your Excellency Mr. Chairman

Honorable delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of Lao PDR and on my own behalf, I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to convey my warmest congratulations to the honorable delegates and observers of the 23rd General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO), which has officially opened its session in Hanoi, S.R. of Vietnam. On this solemn occasion, my sincere congratulations also go to the National Assembly of S.R. of Vietnam who is hosting an AIPO General Assembly for the first time in S.R. of Vietnam.

This year of 2002 constitutes the 35th anniversary of ASEAN, as well as the 25th anniversary of AIPO. Throughout this period of time, ASEAN and AIPO have

overcome various challenges and have continuously developed and played an increasing role in the region and the world. Both organizations have met with success in mutual assistance in the spirit of independence, sovereignty and national integrity, equality and non-interference.

Since Lao PDR became an ASEAN and AIPO members 5 years ago, the Government and National Assembly of Lao PDR have actively participated to all cooperating activities with other member countries on an equal footing, namely in political and security cooperation, economic cooperation, functional cooperation and external cooperation.

The success and experience gained by ASEAN may not be separated from the important contributions brought by AIPO. AIPO has acted as an active forum for parliament members who represent the region's population of over 500 million people. AIPO therefore exercises a substantial role in enhancing solidarity, friendship and cooperation between legislative bodies, governments and the people of ASEAN member countries. It has brought a considerable contribution to the common cause of peace and development in the region and in the world.

It is my firm conviction that the delegates to the AIPO General Assembly will fruitfully debate and adopt policy guidelines that will advance economic progress and social stability in the ASEAN region in accordance with the spirit and content of the 35th Meeting of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM), the ASEAN +3 Foreign Ministers Meeting and ASEAN Regional Forum in Brunei. These meetings form basic elements for ASEAN in attaining economic strength, bringing stability and prosperity to the ASEAN family, and in reducing the development gap among ASEAN member countries through cooperation with dialogue partners on the basis of mutual interest, in view of building an advanced ASEAN.

It is in this spirit that I hereby convey my wishes for success to the 23rd AIPO General Assembly.

President of Lao PDR

Khamtay SIPHANDONE



ASEAN Inter - Parliamentary Organization

The 23rd General Assembly

8-13 September 2002, Ha Noi, Viet Nam

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**TIMBALAN PERDANA MENTERI MALAYSIA
(DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA)**

MESSAGGE

On behalf of the Government of Malaysia, allow me to extend my warmest greetings to His Excellency Nong Duc Manh, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, to the President of AIPO, to all Heads of Delegation and to all delegates to the AIPO General Assembly.

I am gratified to see AIPO continue its efforts to bring legislators from ASEAN countries together, this time in Hanoi, to discuss matters of common concern. It is indeed commendable that Vietnam is hosting this Conference for the first time, given its recent membership of ASEAN.

There are many issues that confront us. We should be concerned about the effects of globalization, which promised so much in the beginning, but has not been able to deliver the goods. In fact, we have seen the rich get richer, while the poor become even more destitute.

ASEAN should take collective steps to counter the adverse effects of globalization, while making sure that the benefits are shared by all. As members of the respective legislatures in ASEAN, I am sure you will examine and recommend many measures on how Governments in the region can confront this phenomenon.

Beyond economic developments, AIPO should consider ways and means to tackle social ills in ASEAN, in particular the scourge of drug abuse. I hope you will propose practical

steps towards this end, for example in halting the supply of drugs or in substituting the cultivation of poppy plants with alternative crops.

Finally, I wish you a pleasant and productive Conference. As in the past, I am sure that all delegates will benefit enormously from the sharing of views and experiences at this AIPO General Assembly.

DATO SERI ABDULLAH BIN HADJI AHMAD BADAWI





ASEAN Inter - Parliamentary Organization

The 23rd General Assembly

8-13 September 2002, Ha Noi, Viet Nam

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MESSAGE OF
HER EXCELLENCY
PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
TO THE 23RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
ASEAN INTERPARLIAMENTARY ORGANIZATION
HANOI, VIETNAM
SEPTEMBER 8-13, 2002

His Excellency, Nguyen Van An,

President of the National Assembly of Viet Nam and president of AIPO,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Filipino people, let me convey our best wishes to the 23rd general assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization.

AIPO has evolved from a mainly social organization to a major regional alliance. It is now ready to take on the challenges posed by the emerging political landscape in ASEAN. Since ASEAN derives strength from unity in diversity, its future looks bright despite a tumultuous year. I am confident its savvy parliamentarians can lead the region out of poverty, terrorism and other vulnerabilities.

This meeting, then, builds optimism at a time of anxiety and concern. by reinforcing our regional relations, I have faith ASEAN will ease forward to peace and stability.

ASEAN's achievements in recent years attest to this. There is the ASEAN leaders' agreement to help the region's poorer countries develop faster. Increased technical aid to Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Viet Nam will strengthen the region's competitiveness and dramatically improve its standard of living in a few years.

The push for ASEAN trade alliances has intensified with talks of a China-ASEAN free trade agreement. This would be a comprehensive economic partnership that will better address wealth disparities over a vast area.

In these trying times, cohesion is necessary to counter the influence of such strong western groupings as the NAFTA and the European Union. Now is the time for Asia to increase its collective strength and influence international trade.

According to the Asian development bank, if Asia continues with its current economic growth with no substantial increase in inequality, it will be largely free of poverty by 2025. The Philippines government shares ADB's view that for growth to impact on poverty reduction, it must benefit the poor and the disadvantages.

A common strategy to combat terrorism must be set alongside our battle against poverty. Although ASEAN is a very diverse grouping, we can set up concrete conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms, such as the ASEAN regional forum.

We should reaffirm the commitment we made at last year's ASEAN summit to help combat international terrorism. to reiterate what I said in that meeting, ASEAN should institute domestic reforms and expand its regional coalition to thwart a potential terrorist attack. Complacency is the enemy of security. We have to be more vigilant in order to preserve it.

Distinguished colleagues, our countries share common problems - economics, peace, security, health, the environment. We must work together to cope with all these if we want our peoples to prosper. We must always learn to adapt to constantly changing realities.

Ladies and gentlemen, our mission does not end here. We must continue the arduous task of finding solutions to conflicts that affect the region. Through our full trust and cooperation, I am confident we will all prevail in the end.

Mabuhay!



ASEAN Inter - Parliamentary Organization

The 23rd General Assembly

8-13 September 2002, Ha Noi, Viet Nam

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MESSAGE

MESSAGE FROM MR S R NATHAN
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE
TO THE 23RD AIPO GENERAL ASSEMBLY
8-13 SEPTEMBER 2002, HANOI

1. My warmest greetings to all the distinguished delegates to the 23rd General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation.
2. The past few years have not been easy for ASEAN, facing as it did some of the most difficult challenges in its history. The timing could not have been worse. Firstly, the financial crisis of 1997 left lingering doubts in the minds of others about the relevance of ASEAN. Secondly, questions were raised about the cohesiveness of ASEAN-10 and its future viability. Then, as things were beginning to turn around in the new millennium, the events of September 11 2001 ignited a chain of reactions that brought unprecedented challenges to the world and our region.

Remaking ASEAN

3. These developments around us have brought with it an opportunity for ASEAN to remake and repackage itself to meet the new challenges. The regional and global events of 2001 have led ASEAN to an important crossroad. To its credit, ASEAN has seized the moment and sought to emerge with a new resolve to strengthen solidarity and uphold peace and security in our region. ASEAN has also taken new measures to enhance cooperation and promote its economic competitiveness and regional influence. In addition, ASEAN has consolidated efforts at integration and

positioned itself as an outward-looking organisation. As a result, the international community is once again beginning to sit up and take note of ASEAN.

A New Relevance

4. The ASEAN Regional Forum also witnessed a new momentum at the 9th ARF in Brunei recently. There has been a discernible shift in the major powers' perception of the ARF and ASEAN's central role in the forum's contribution to regional security. The signing of the ASEAN-US Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism is another clear indication of ASEAN's commitment to the global efforts against terrorism, and the preservation of regional security.
5. Within ASEAN, regional integration has been identified as an important prerequisite to revitalising ASEAN and getting it back on track. ASEAN's international partners must view and engage ASEAN as one entity, not "newer and older" or "more or less" developed members. The process of integration is making steady progress through the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI). The recent IAI Development Cooperation Forum (IDCF) held in Jakarta, saw the successful completion of the third phase of the work plan for integrating ASEAN.
6. In order to maintain ASEAN's competitiveness in a globalising world, ASEAN is also packaging itself as an attractive region for investment. The ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) reached a significant milestone early this year when the first six signatories agreed to reducing tariffs in the region to 0-5% on almost all of their products under the Common Effective Preferential Tariff scheme. Looking beyond the region, ASEAN is now embarking on a FTA with China, and closer economic partnerships with Japan, New Zealand and Australia. ASEAN must continue to keep its doors open to the rest of world if it is to maintain its strategic relevance. The outward looking approach that ASEAN has adopted in encouraging greater engagement with dialogue partners and other major international players underscore this.

Conclusion

7. ASEAN's journey towards achieving regional integration and greater strategic relevance will be long and not without obstacles. But I believe ASEAN possesses the will and the wherewithal to meet these aspirations. Its success will depend, to a large extent, on support from all sectors in ASEAN nations - political leaders, business community, individuals and the grassroots, all of which are represented by the Parliamentarians at AIPO. The AIPO General Assembly is therefore an important platform for Parliamentarians to show their will in supporting ASEAN's various initiatives, and in asking how they can contribute further towards the remaking of ASEAN into a strong and viable organisation.
8. With that thought, I wish the 23rd AIPO General Assembly every success in its deliberations.



ASEAN Inter - Parliamentary Organization

The 23rd General Assembly

8-13 September 2002, Ha Noi, Viet Nam

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**MESSAGE
FROM
HIS EXCELLENCY THAKSIN SHINAWATRA
PRIME MINISTER OF THAILAND
To the 23rd General Assembly
Of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization**

On behalf of the Government and people of Thailand, I wish to extend our warmest regards and best wishes to all parliamentarians and distinguished participants attending the 23rd General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO).

For the past 35 years after the birth of ASEAN, the Association has represented the collective will of the nations of Southeast Asia to bind together in friendship and cooperation for peace, freedom and prosperity in this region.

To ensure ourselves a place in the future, we must gather and co-ordinate even more closely at all levels on important political, economic, and social issues of concern. We must work even harder to achieve the goals of the ASEAN Vision 2020 through the implementation of the Hanoi Plan of Action and development of the Roadmap for the Integration of ASEAN (RIA) as instructed by our Leaders at the 7th ASEAN Summit.

I am therefore pleased that during the 35th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) held in Bandar Seri Begawan in July this year, we were able to review regional and international political and economic developments to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by

globalization and address the new security concerns raised by the 11 September 2001 terrorist attack in the United States. These were among the important factors in the evolving situation that underlined the urgency for ASEAN to respond.

To fight against the scourge of terrorism, we need to liaise with the international community through the United Nations, our Dialogue Partners, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN+ 3 process. It means that we need to work together and share information not only at domestic but also at international level.

Regarding the economic challenges facing our region, I believe that despite the financial crisis five years ago that shook ASEAN's confidence, the RIA would ensure that our economies remain competitive and dynamic through strengthening AFTA, accelerating the ASEAN Investment Area (AIA) and fostering individual linkages through the ASEAN Industrial Cooperation (AICO).

At the same time, I am confident that the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan together with other programs and projects focusing on four-priority areas, namely human resources development, infrastructure, information and communication technology, and regional economic integration, would narrow the development gap within ASEAN.

I am also delighted that the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) initiated by the Royal Thai Government was warmly welcomed at the last AMM. I would like to emphasize that the ACD, as we see it, shall be a form of cooperation that is not based on creating another bloc of nations. The ACD shall be a commitment for each Asian country to pool our strengths for cooperation in the fields and areas that they are most comfortable with and most likely to benefit from. The ACD shall be a process that involves active public participation, cooperation between nations as well as cooperation between peoples.

I believe that, after 35 years of working together, ASEAN is mature enough to engage in frank and candid exchanges on any issue that may affect us. To this end, AIPO, with its 25 years of existence, has played, and will continue to play, an important role in complementing the measures adopted by our governments under the framework and joint efforts of the ASEAN countries. Through the exchanges and sharing of information and experiences among our parliamentarians, we have been able to foster closer regional cooperation in the spirit of equality and partnership, thus contributing towards peace, progress and prosperity in our region.

On this note, I wish the 23rd General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization every success. I am confident that your deliberations will promote the legislative branches of ASEAN as one of the important dynamics to strengthen ASEAN as a concert of Southeast Asian nations.

(Thaksin Shinawatra)

Prime Minister



ASEAN Inter - Parliamentary Organization

The 23rd General Assembly

8-13 September 2002, Ha Noi, Viet Nam

23GA/2002/Message/Bn

MESSAGE FROM
HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAJI HASSANAL BOLKIAH
MU'IZZADDIN WADDAULAH, SULTAN AND YANG
DI-PERTUAN OF BRUNEI DARUSBALAM
ON THE 23RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ORGANIZATION (AIPO),
HANOI, VIETNAM 8-13 SEPTEMBER 2002

Your Excellency President of AIPO,

Honourable Delegates,

It is with great pleasure that I extend sincere best wishes to the host country, as well as to all delegates of AIPO on the occasion of the 23rd General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation (AIPO) being held in Hanoi, Vietnam.

We wish to thank the Vietnam National Assembly for Inviting the Brunei Darussalam delegation to the distinguished gathering. Brunei Darussalam, although given a Specie! Observer status is accorded the same privileges as an ordinary member and this year alone was invited to attend two ad-hoc committee meetings and was one of the AIPO delegates to visit Japan. The Brunei Darussalam delegate is of the opinion that the visit to Japan was

Informative and successful in enhancing friendship, co-operation and consultation between AIPO and the House of Councillors and the House of Representatives of Japan.

ASEAN member countries may be diverse in terms of political systems, cultures, traditions and values, but share a common desire and genuine capacity for regional co-operation to safeguard ASEAN's interests and efforts to uphold stability, peace and prosperity in the region.

Through the hard work of regional organisations of ASEAN such as AIPO, we have every confidence that the existing bonds of friendship, understanding and close co-operation among ASEAN member countries and people will be strengthened even further,

Finally, I wish the 23rd General Assembly of AIPO every success in its deliberation.





ASEAN Inter - Parliamentary Organization

The 23rd General Assembly

8-13 September 2002, Ha Noi, Viet Nam

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**MESSAGE OF HIS EXCELLENCY SENIOR GENERAL THAN SHWE,
CHAIRMAN OF THE STATE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
AND PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
TO THE 23TH AIPO GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

On behalf of the Government and the people of the Union of Myanmar and on my own behalf, I wish to extend warm greetings and sincere congratulations to the distinguished members of ASEAN Inter-parliamentary Organization (AIPO). I would also like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to H.E. Nguyen Van Ann, President of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and President of AIPO for hosting the 23rd AIPO General Assembly in Hanoi, Vietnam.

It is most auspicious for our region that the convening of the 23rd AIPO General Assembly coincides with the 35th Anniversary of the founding of ASEAN. ASEAN has not only increased in membership but also grown in strength. It has become one of the most important regional organizations in the world. The success of ASEAN testifies to the continuing validity of the ASEAN way of consensus building, non-intervention in internal affairs and quiet diplomacy.

We in Myanmar remain firmly committed to ASEAN. Ever since we became a member in 1997, we have been striving to fulfil our obligations and continue to make important contributions to peace, stability and prosperity of the region.

The 23rd AIPO General Assembly has before it a wide-ranging agenda that includes enhancing regional integration, narrowing the level of economic development among Member States, poverty eradication and transnational crime. I am confident that the delegates to the General Assembly will be able to have a fruitful exchange of views on

these matters of great significance to the region. It is evident that if ASEAN is to achieve progress, there cannot be a two-tier system. In this regard, the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) aimed at bringing closer the original ASEAN Members and the newer Members deserves the support of all nations.

I wish to assure the General Assembly of Myanmar's full-hearted cooperation in its deliberations. I am confident that ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization will continue to contribute to peace and stability of the region.

