



Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum

17th Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF)
Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR, 11-15 January 2009

PRESS RELEASE: NO. 4

Date: January 15, 2009

Distribution: *After* 12:00 PM

IN THIS FINAL ISSUE

- **Resolutions**
- **Summary of Activities**
- **Next APPF meeting**

1. 16 Resolutions Adopted

In the final plenary session of today, the Drafting Committee has submitted report on the package of 16 resolutions, which incorporate interventions and statements of the delegates during the 5 working days. The package of 16 resolutions came out due to a process of working of the Drafting Committee and the Working Groups in refining, combining total 39 draft resolutions which were submitted to the Executive Committee. The adopted resolutions cover following APPF traditional areas: Economic and Trade matters, Political and Security matters, Inter-parliamentary cooperation and APPF future work. Lao delegation has contributed six draft resolutions.

This final press release will furnish the press community with summary of activities and results of the Meeting prior and after the final plenary session.

On Political and Security matters

There are six resolutions on these matters: Resolution on Political Security in the Asia-Pacific Region, Resolution on Strengthening Peace and Security in South East Asia, Resolution on the Middle East Process, Resolution on Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, Resolution on Cluster Munitions and Resolution on Terrorism.

The resolution “Promotion of Peace and Stability in South East Asia” approached the regional efforts in nurturing peace and security by the practical response of South East Asia sub-regional action plan. This refers to the call on ASEAN APPF members to implement the current political mechanism in the ASEAN Charter, ARF, the ASEAN Vientiane Action Program, which represent the spirit to solve conflicts not by the use of force but by dialogue based on mutual trust and understanding.

The Forum also stressed its strong voice against violence and use of force to solve conflicts which are demonstrated in the Gaza and in some other part of the region and expressed views for actions to stop those actions and finding peaceful resolution.

On Economic and Trade matters

There are eight resolutions: Resolution on WTO and the Doha Round Negotiation, Resolution on Energy Security, Resolution on Food Security, Resolution on Raising the

Level of Trade and Capital Flow within the Asia Pacific, Resolution on Sustainable Tourism, Resolution on Overcoming the Global Financial Crisis, Resolution on the World Economic Situation and the Resolution on the Climate Change and Environment.

The resolution on raising the level of trade and capital flow within the Asia Pacific region stressed the need to move for stronger economic integration through FTA/RFTA negotiation; for strengthening the region's economic competitiveness and human resource development. For this goal, the resolution addressed the integrated cooperation between developed and developing economies to cope with the economic challenges, and the need to approach the solutions in a systematic and comprehensive way, including measures for stabilized and sustainable economic development, economic and non economic measures to tackle with social disparities which may result from the economic down turn.

On Inter-parliamentary cooperation

There are two resolutions on these matters: Resolution on Gender Issues in Parliaments and Resolution on Combating Corruption.

On APPF future work

The Drafting Committee referred one draft resolutions on the link of APPF to other regional bodies for further discussion in the 18th APPF meeting. It is known that some matters relating to the rules and procedure of the Forum will be transferred for the 18th APPF meeting.

2. Summary of the Forum's activities

A joint communiqué highlighting accomplishments by the 17th Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) will be signed by the head of the delegation and released at the closing session of the Forum on Thursday in Vientiane.

In this 17th Meeting, the Executive Committee has decided to apply the time limits for speakers at the plenary sessions within seven minutes for speeches and five minutes for participants in the open debate; creation of a Drafting Committee and necessary working groups by the members to work on the draft resolutions.

Statements and Remarks

In his opening remarks, the President of the APPF and of the Lao NA, HE Thongsing Thammavong highlighted the challenges and opportunities of the APPF and called for greater legislative and economic co-operation among APPF member countries.

For the APPF Honorary President Y. Nakasone, Mr. Takuji Yanagimoto, acting for the head of the delegation from the Japanese Diet has delivered the message of congratulation on the 17th APPF meeting in Laos. The congratulation message highlighted the history of the

APPF development from its establishment in 1993 across the 20th century and marked with renewed developments in the 21st century, which include the “multilayered relations, [and changes toward] a multipolar world”.

Honorable Mr. Lindsay Tisch, Deputy- Speaker of the House of Representatives of New Zealand addressed the participants. Opening remarks were also made by Mr. Anders B. Johnson, the IPU Secretary General.

Delegations have had also the opportunity to call on His Excellency Mr. Choummaly Sayasone, President of the Lao PDR, and His Excellency Mr. Bouasone Bouphavanh, Prime Minister of the Lao PDR. The President stated that he highly appreciated the increasingly developed APPF co-operation and solidarity, and called for the bridge of the development gap between APPF member countries and promotion of regional linkage dealing with challenges the region faces.

Debate in the Plenary sessions

The 17th Annual Meeting held five plenary sessions. A great number of delegates have deliberated their voices during the sessions.

At the plenary session on economic and trade matters, the delegates discussed a number of topics and drafted resolutions on overcoming the global financial crisis, negotiations of the Doha Round, sustainable tourism, food security, energy security, world economic situation and raising the level of trade and capital flow within the Asia Pacific. Delegations stressed that the ongoing globalization and increasing economic integration brought about both unprecedented opportunities and challenges for all countries. In this connection, participants shared the view that further integrated co-operation among regional countries would promote flow of capitals and investment in the region and concurrently address its challenges.

APPF delegations acknowledged that greater co-operation, taking into account the different developmental levels of members during negotiations, is a vital factor for the success of the Doha Round Negotiations, which would benefit all members. Participants supported an open, equitable and fair multilateral trading system on the basis of accountable, inclusive and transparent trade principles.

Participants stressed that great and imminent FTAs/RTAs are vital to accelerate capital flow and investment in the region and should be transparent, consistent with the WTO principles and should take into account the development interests of less developed member nations, and would promote sustainable economic development in the region as well as in the world.

At the plenary session on political and security issues, the delegates discussed a number of topics and drafted resolutions on political security in the Asia Pacific region,

denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, strengthening of peace and security in South East Asia, cluster munitions and terrorism. The delegations shared the view that, despite the ongoing trend of stability, co-operation and development, the Asian-Pacific region is facing a number of traditional and non-traditional threats to peace and security such as the reverse impact of the global financial crisis to the vulnerable social groups and to the achievements of the UN millennium goals, threat from terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, transnational crime and natural disasters. The participants condemned the use of force to solve the conflicts as the situation has developed severely in the Gaza, and shared the view that the international community should co-operate to persuade the parties for stop of the fire exchanges and find solution to the conflict by dialogue.

On the issue of food security and energy security, the meeting urged APPF countries to share information and experiences, to strengthen the role of international and regional organizations, to increase co-ordination and co-operation in the research and development of technique to increase crops and to work on mechanism of food reserve. Delegations called on APPF developed countries to continue providing financial assistance and know-how for developing members in situation of food and energy crisis.

The Singapore Delegation presented a report on the recent ASEAN Regional Forum 2008.

On the inter-parliamentary cooperation matters, delegates discussed a range of topics and tabled resolutions on parliamentary capacity building, handling climate change and environmental issue, natural disaster management, poverty reduction and gender issues in parliaments. The delegates join their voices to urge APPF members to effectively address social and political factors that create conditions for unstable development due to the challenges caused by the global financial crisis, such as poverty and widening gaps between the rich and the poor among others. In this regard, the participants stressed the significant importance of economic co-operation for the development of countries in the region, thus ensuring regional peace and security. They also supported efforts to strengthen regional security co-operation frame works such as the new ASEAN Charter, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and other dialogue mechanisms. A draft of resolution on APPF future link with other regional bodies was referred to the next APPF meeting for this purpose.

In the plenary sessions, the delegates have addressed a number of cross cutting issues of co-operation of the Forum, including the climate change and environment friendly development policy, fighting against transnational crime, saving resources for sustainable development, promotion of tourism to help alleviation of poverty. To address environmental concerns, it is advised for the members to incorporate environmental protection into national development policies, to transfer appropriate technologies to the developing and less developed countries as the most vulnerable countries due to the global warming, to

encourage the use of renewable energies, reduction of emission, to develop an inclusive strategy towards these issues.

3. APPF Future and next annual meeting

At the final plenary session on APPF matters, participants discussed a number of specific topics on APPF in future (membership, APPF observer status, APPF rules of procedures). Lao National Assembly President has transferred the duty to Singapore as the next APPF Presidency. The date and venue of the 18th APPF Annual Meeting was set for 17-23 January 2010. Mr. Abdullah Tarmugy, Speaker of the Parliament of Singapore has delivered his Acceptance Speech.

The Meeting agreed to transfer to the new presidency member and the new Executive Committee for consideration of ideas proposed at this meeting on the question of enlargement of the APPF Executive Committee's organization.

A Join Communiqué stating the activities and the decisions of the Meeting has been signed by the head of the delegations at the final stage of the final plenary session.

The 17th Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum, held in Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR from 11-15th January 2009 with participants from 21 member parliaments, 1 observer country (Brunei Darussalam) and 1 special guest (Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has closed in the afternoon of today.

For the final version of the package of resolutions and a Join Communiqué adopted by the Seventeen Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum, please contact the Office of the Lao National Assembly or later in the Website of APPF in <http://www.appf.org.pe> . It is known at this stage that a CD version of the documents of the meeting will also be sent to the delegations prior to their departure.