



Asian Parliamentary Assembly *Secretariat*

Statement by H.E. Dr. Hadi Nejad Hosseinian
Secretary-General of APA
Before
The Executive Council of APA
Tehran, 17 Nov. 2007

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Mr. Chairman,
Honorable Delegates,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to welcome you all, distinguished APA delegates, Ambassadors, staff of Asian Parliaments, distinguished members of the Islamic Consultative Assembly and senior dignitaries of the Islamic Republic of Iran to this meeting of the APA Executive Council. I hope that with your participation and contribution this meeting of the Executive Council would also prove to be fruitful and a point of departure for mapping the route for greater cooperation and integration in Asia.

As the Secretary-General, I shall not fail to express deep gratitude to you as APA delegates for the cooperation, encouragement and the guidance you have provided the Secretariat in this short 9 months. Nine months is not a long time. However, within this short period of time, many member parliaments have not hesitated to communicate with the Secretariat and provide guidance and their views about the issues at hand. The Secretariat feels privileged for this relationship of trust and service it has begun to

establish with member parliaments. I am particularly grateful to Honorable, Mr. Jose De Vinicia, the Distinguished Speaker of the Parliament of the Philippines, for the leadership and the visions he provides for APA and Asia as a whole.

It is only fair to give credit where it is due. The Secretariat would not have been able to accomplish the tasks entrusted to it, if it were not for the full support it received from both the President and vice-President of the Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Honorable Dr. Haddad Adel and Hojatol-Islam wal-Muslimin, Mr. Aboutorabi Fard. I am grateful to them and to other Iranian APA Delegates, my colleague from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as many other Iranian MPs for their support and for the leadership and intellectual input they consistently provided in the last 9 months on the work of the Secretariat.

I believe the meeting of the Executive Council is the right place for us to share our thoughts about our work, challenges we face, and ways we can think of to overcome them. I will briefly touch on these three points.

The 6 plans of action, the Friendship pact of Asia, and the Rules of procedure which were subjects of deliberation in the meeting of the Executive Council in September 2007 were important themes that constitute the main challenges we all face today. APA delegates should take pride in identifying critically important themes to focus on. Globalization, cultural diversity, corruption, poverty, economic and monetary issues, energy are global challenges of the third Millennium. Any progress in implementation of any of these plans of actions takes us a step closer to our ultimate objective of cooperation and integration in Asia.

You will see that each of these documents is to be adopted by a simple and mainly procedural resolution. These resolutions envisage a sub-committee to explore the best way in which the plans of actions could be implemented. Working on these documents has been the main task of the Secretariat in the last 9 months.

In addition to that, I participated in a meeting which the Parliament of Thailand so generously and ably arranged to promote the concept of common legislation in Asia. I am very much thankful to the Parliament of Thailand for that opportunity.

With the help of the Parliament of the Philippines and upon invitation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, I visited Strasburg. I had extensive discussions with them on the importance of structure of inter-parliamentary organizations and their relations with the executive branch of governments to promote the likelihood of decisions getting implemented. They put a great deal of emphasis on the imperative of permanent secretariat, budgetary and administrative arrangements, if real progress is to be made towards the vision of integration and if the experience of the secretariat staff is not to be lost every two years.

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,

There are several challenges APA needs to overcome in the long run. Here, I will share with you my views on only one challenge, which I regard as the most formidable.

It seems to me that all APA Member Parliaments share that greater integration in Asia is the primary vision for the APA. However, I am not convinced that there is a wide convergence of views among all Member Parliaments about the pace and the manner in which APA should move forward towards that vision. This is not unusual, as far as I know. APA is a new enterprise. It takes some time for APA and its members to adjust to the reality of the new organization and its mode of operation.

Perhaps, at the level of APA, we need to think of some strategic management to bridge the gap and the divergence of views among the Member parliaments. The more input from the Member Parliaments in the development of such strategic management, the more likely it is that it would succeed in bridging the divide.

In this context, we must attempt to bring the APA, its vision and mandate to the people. We should perhaps begin thinking of how best to engage the media and the civil society

in each Asian country with the work of their parliaments about the APA. The role of the media in facilitating the work of the APA is undoubtedly an important element of a strategic management to bring further cohesion and greater integration in Asia.

I had an opportunity to make a statement about the APA, its work, its challenges and the role of the media in overcoming them at the 44th Session of the General Assembly of the Asian Broadcasters Union, which was held in Tehran on 31 October 2007.

I presented to the ABU the challenge of the right balance of partnership between the APA and the governments, the challenge of scattered economic potentials in Asia and the strategies to have them compliment each other, and the challenge of the right balance of speed, efficiency and approach to the vision of greater Asia within the APA Member Parliaments. I also suggested how the media in each country should engage its own civil society and promote public debate about the utility and virtues of greater integration in Asia, and how it can best be achieved. Public education in each country is the key.

The second step, I suggested is some exchange programs between broadcasters to educate the public in another country about the potentials of the country producing the TV and Radio programs. I also underlined that the APA Secretariat would support establishment by ABU of an annual prize to be awarded to the best TV and Radio production about APA and promoting integration in Asia. I hope that when you return to your home countries you would see fit to engage with the media, particularly the television and explore the feasibility of these projects to promote the cause of APA.

I look forward to an active exchange of views on the subjects at hand, and thank you most warmly for your patience.