



Statement

By

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The Secretary-General of the APA

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**Mr. President,
Honorable Speakers of Parliaments,
Honorable Members of Parliaments,
Distinguished Delegates,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It gives me a great pleasure to speak for the second times, before this august Assembly today. Allow me at the outset to congratulate Honorable, Mr. Mahmoud Al-Abrash, the Speaker of People's Assembly of the Syrian Arab Republic as the new APA President. I am confident that under his able leadership, APA will continue to work towards further realization of its objectives. I am also sure that the Secretariat will enjoy the full support of the new APA President as we did during the last two years, thanks to Honorable, Mr. Marzuki Alie, the former APA President and his competent colleagues, particularly Honorable, Mr. Noor Mohammad Wahid, the Head of APA Executive Councils in 2010.

The Fifth APA Plenary is yet another occasion for renewing our motivation and resolve to seize the available opportunities and aggregate our strength to meet our challenges. Flying together towards further integration in Asia has been the main theme of the APA resolutions and activities ever since the inception of the Assembly in 2006. Indeed, integration in Asia has been seen by the APA as a prelude to further peace, prosperity, democracy and justice in Asia. Each Asian Member Parliament has a role to play in the promotion of this ideal goal and a fair share of responsibility in facilitating and materializing its requirements.

Parliaments possess fundamental powers to set the ground for development plans and priority agenda of their own countries. Cooperation within the framework of the APA has provided Member Parliaments with a solid standing point for combining their strengths and harmonizing their efforts to perform the same functions at a regional level. The essence of Asian Parliamentary diplomacy as inspired and promoted by the APA is to utilize the powers and functions of Parliaments in a harmonized and effective manner towards further integration in Asia.

The principal function and effective power of Parliaments rest in their position as legislative power. By exercising their main function as law-making institutions, Asian Parliaments can immensely contribute to the process of Asian integration through their common legislations. The common legislation may just embody certain principles required to deal with the issue at hand. It does not necessarily include all the details of a legislation which, based on each country's distinctiveness, may be different from one country to another.

The initial common legislations by the APA may begin with subjects that are non-controversial and of particular concern to all Member Parliaments such as smuggling of cultural items in Asia; promoting health equity in Asia; and Asian strategy for climate change.

Indeed, the APA has already made remarkable contributions to the initiation of Asian integration by addressing fundamental issue areas relevant to the development and prosperity in Asia and by adopting resolutions which identify priority agenda items for further convergence among nations of this region.

What is needed at this stage is to find effective mechanisms for the realization of principles and objectives set out by the APA so far. Besides utilizing their legislative power, two strands of the same strategy must be woven together: Firstly, the APA Member Parliaments should engage their respective governments in the process of Asian integration and pave the way for the APA resolutions to become international conventions in the foreseeable future. Secondly, the APA Member Parliaments should organize a concerted public relations campaign to reach out to their respective constituencies and inform them of the values and benefits of the APA objectives and activities.

Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

In reviewing the achievements of the APA by-meetings, I should like to report to the Plenary that thanks to the streamlining resolution of the Fourth Plenary, the APA managed to reduce the quantity of its sub-committee meetings and improve their quality throughout the year 2010. It helped the APA to rationalize its work and conduct its meetings more efficiently. Member Parliaments learned well in advanced of the calendar of APA events and meetings prepared by the Secretariat early in the year.

Issues related to the APA Standing Committee on Cultural and Social Affairs were addressed at a general meeting hosted by the Parliament of Palau. The subjects considered by this meeting included Globalization; Combating Corruption; and Health Equity.

The second general meeting which was held at the Headquarters of the APA Secretariat in Tehran, and hosted by the Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran covered all subjects pertaining to the APA Standing Committee on Political Affairs, including The Role of Asian Parliaments in Promoting Comprehensive Counter-Terrorism and Counter Occupation Strategies; Supporting the Right of Palestinian People; Declaration on Principles of Friendship and Cooperation in Asia; Nuclear Security Assurance; and Enhancing Cooperation between APA and Asian Governments.

The third general meeting which was hosted by the State Duma of the Russian Federation considered issues relevant to the purview of the APA Standing Committee on Economics and Sustainable Development. These subject matters included the Environment and the Integrated Energy Market in Asia.

The House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia hosted the sub-committee on International Financial Crisis. The Parliament of Cambodia hosted the Sub-Committee on Cultural Diversity. The Parliament of Turkey arranged to host the Sub-Committee on Alleviating poverty, but later cancelled the meeting. The House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia, as the APA President, had to fill in for Turkey and hosted the Sub-Committee on Alleviating Poverty.

I would like to express sincere thanks to the esteemed Parliaments of Cambodia, Indonesia, Iran, Palau, and Russia for hosting the APA meetings in 2010. I hope APA will enjoy the full cooperation of these and other Member Parliaments in conducting our work in 2011. My appreciations also go to all Member Parliaments that have actively participated in these meetings.

Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

I need not go into the details of proceedings of all the meetings in 2010 since the distinguished delegates are in the possession of the written reports of these meeting as prepared and made available by the Secretariat. However, I think it is important and useful to elaborate on the following points:

International Conferences on Priority Subjects

In the course of deliberations of the meetings of the APA Standing Committees and Sub-Committees, and subsequently in the two meetings of the Executive Council in 2010, it has been recommended to this Plenary to hold international conferences on four important subjects that have been on the APA agenda for some time. This new mechanism is designed to give a boost to certain agenda items which need more scholarly elaborations on the one hand and more publicity on the other to accomplish their desired outcomes. Moreover, such conferences are expected to attract interested groups and stakeholders who are active in these fields in one way or another.

The recommended conferences for the year 2011 are to be held on the following subjects:

1. Principles of Cooperation and Friendly Relations in Asia;
2. Global Financial Crisis;
3. Asian Integrated Energy Market; and
4. Inter-Religious and Inter-Cultural Dialogue in Asia.

In the light of the participatory culture that has been developed within the APA, I am glad to announce that the Parliaments of Indonesia; Russia; and Iran, have undertaken to host and organize these conferences in 2011. The Secretariat will provide assistance to the host Parliaments on the organization and substance of the conferences. The Secretariat will announce, in coordination with the host, the appropriate dates for these international conferences.

Publicity Campaign in Asia and Beyond

In a world characterized by communication revolution and global media outreach, it is crucially important for the APA to make the old and young people in Asia informed and familiar with its goals and objectives. It should run a publicity campaign to inform both the public and the private institutions throughout Asia and even beyond of the potentials of our continent and the requirements of integration in Asia.

Promoting APA Day

In the context of publicity campaign, the APA Secretariat proposed commemoration of 14 November, on which the APA Charter was formally adopted, as the APA Day. The first Executive Council recommended to the Fifth Plenary to adopt a decision on 14 November as the APA Day. At the same time, the Secretariat has had a number of posters designed on the occasion of the APA Day which reflect the thematic effort of APA to achieve greater cooperation and integration in Asia. You have no doubt noticed these posters in the meeting halls.

Troika Plus Meetings

Utilizing APA potentials to address and find ways to help solve problems endangering peace in Asia has always been a priority for APA. In this context, the streamlining resolution urged APA Troika Plus to continue to make representation, on behalf of the APA, in areas and situations of conflict in order to help defuse the situation and promote international peace and security. In accordance with this resolution, a meeting of Troika Plus was held in Tehran, in May 2010, and addressed the grave situation in Gaza following Israeli aggression there.

I believe the Troika Plus mechanism is an efficient tool at the disposal of the Assembly to be utilized to respond to emergency situations. Troika Plus mechanism is expected to prove more effective because it relies on Asian potentials and political asset that the Asian Parliaments carry.

APA Financial Regulations

The Third APA Plenary Meeting encouraged the Secretary-General to develop a set of financial and personnel regulations including scale of assessment of contributions by Member Parliaments for consideration and approval of the Executive Council.

We in the Secretariat have worked for some months on this subject and after consulting different modalities employed by international organizations such as the United Nations, the International Parliamentary Union and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, have come up with a draft proposal on the APA scale of assessment of contributions.

According to the APA Streamlining Resolution, the Fourth Vice-President of the Plenary is responsible to arrange the meetings of the Ad-Hoc Committee in order to make a concrete recommendation on the draft regulations to the Executive Council in 2011. It is important for the APA that the Executive Council and the Plenary would consider and adopt both the Staff and Financial Regulations at appropriate time.

Until the APA adopts its own financial regulations and determine the scale of assessed contribution by its Member Parliaments, I urge the Member Parliaments to consider making voluntary financial contributions to the organization in order to support its accomplishments and make the implementation of its mandates more feasible. This issue is becoming increasingly more important as we approach the year 2011 by which new arrangements have to be made to manage the financial affairs of the APA Secretariat.

Furthermore, the Secretariat has also sought to generate fund for the APA activities by exploring the possibility of involving the private sector to initiate a range of activities that promote APA principles and objectives. Ideas such as organizing an annual Asian Economic Forum, if supported by APA, is bound to promote APA principles and objectives on the one hand, and generate funds needed for the APA activities.

APA International Outreach

In line with the mandates of the APA resolutions, the Secretariat has taken certain steps to expand the international ties and interactions of the Assembly with international governmental organizations such as the United Nations; inter-parliamentary organizations such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU); Parliamentary Union of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (PUIC); Inter-Parliamentary Union of the Arab Countries (IPUAC); Latin American Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (LAIPA); and non-governmental organizations such as the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP); Most of the APA activities in this respect have been directed to attending the general assemblies of these organizations and seeking and granting observer status on the mutual basis. In my view, the growing international outreach of the APA will definitely contribute to the realization of its goals and objectives.

Furthermore, the Secretary-General has participated in the several IPU Assembly meetings and explained the APA positions on different issues related to IPU Agenda. On these occasions, in accordance with the Third APA Plenary resolution, APA coordination meetings have been held on the sideline of the IPU meetings in order to discuss and coordinate positions of APA Member Parliaments on major international issues of importance to APA. I am pleased to report to the Plenary that the participation by the APA Member Parliaments in these coordinating meetings has steadily grown and proved constructive in presentation of the APA position on the one hand and the promotion of its stature on the other.

The APA international outreach would also require more involvement of its Member Parliaments in the activities of the Secretariat. I urge the Member Parliaments to consider supporting the Secretariat by seconding competent and qualified experts from their countries to work with the Secretariat. This will help us to improve our performance and create a more diversified environment.

In conclusion, I must stress that that APA has grown tremendously as an organization under Indonesian leadership. APA continues to grow and give greater voice to Asian people. We need to follow up implementation of our decisions and resolutions. Hopefully, APA will take major steps in this direction under Syrian leadership.

Thank you.