



**First Virtual Meeting of  
Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) on  
COVID-19 Outbreak  
9 July 2020**



## **Declaration**

***on the implications of COVID-19 pandemic in public health,  
economics, and other fields on the Asian continent***

**Welcoming** the initiative of Grand National Assembly of Turkey, as current APA President, to host the First Virtual meeting of APA through Video-Conferencing on 9 July 2020;

**Deeply concerned** that COVID-19 pandemic is one of the greatest challenges humanity has ever faced, that it threatens the common well-being and health of all humanity, no country is immune from its consequences;

**Mindful** that COVID-19 pandemic has hampered the achievements of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in all countries and presents both an enormous challenge and tremendous opportunities for reaching all of the SDGs;

**Emphasizing** that the crisis has revealed that not one single state is capable of coping with the pandemic solely on its own, and the fight with this pandemic can only be won through robust international cooperation;

**Fully aware** of the existing gaps in international system that has been revealed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the urgent need for a coherent and well-coordinated international response to the pandemic;

**Emphasizing** the need for effective multilateralism and a holistic approach by the international community in order to deal with the challenges and implications of the pandemic and to enhance resilience to cope with future public health emergencies and other natural disasters;

**Reminding** that the global community should be on full alert on the recent Israeli planned annexation of West Bank while the world has been exhausted due to the COVID-19 outbreak;

**Recognizing** the significant role of parliaments and parliamentarians to oversee the government's measures in handling COVID-19 pandemic, evaluate and swiftly pass the emergency legislation to approve national funds to meet the needs of the populations they serve, especially the most vulnerable ones during pandemic;

**Recalling** the increasing concerns regarding the adverse impacts of the application of unilateral coercive measures (UCMs) on the individuals' enjoyment of adequate standards of living and

highest attainable standards of health which also impedes the global solidarity to fight against COVID-19;

**Keeping in mind** that the COVID-19 pandemic has created massive social and economic disruptions around the world, including Asia;

**Taking into account** the potential of the countries of Asia with their vast human resources and considerable dynamism, believing that they should take the lead in international/regional efforts, likewise, the embodiment of the democratic will of the peoples of Asia, Asian Parliamentary Assembly should be at the heart of all efforts for fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic by fostering cooperation and preparedness;

**Noting** that the COVID-19 pandemic is a human tragedy and a global health crisis, which poses major risks for the regional and world economies, and that the global fight against COVID-19 pandemic could only be successful if it is carried out on the basis of international cooperation, solidarity and inclusiveness;

**Underscoring** the significance of parliamentary diplomacy as a framework to further collaborate, exchange views, perspectives, and best practices among parliamentarians, as well as to address both the global health and socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 pandemic;

**Strengthening** the commitment of Asian Parliaments to ensure a strong response through closer cooperation and enhanced coordination taking into account that global cooperation is necessary to mitigate the unprecedented disruptions of the pandemic on the global economy, trade, investment and travel;

**Reaffirming** our commitment to work with all countries to coordinate on public health, travel, trade, economic and financial measures in order to minimize disruptions and recover stronger and better by reinforcing global links and the multilateral system, and in support of sustainable development;

**Underlining** that while the economic consequences of the pandemic are being addressed, the immediate priority should be ensuring the smooth flow of essential goods, including food, medicines, and medical and other essential supplies associated with combating the current pandemic;

**Emphasizing** the role of global supply chains, especially the need to strengthen these as pillars for global economic recovery and to address their vulnerabilities that were revealed in the course of the pandemic;

**Recognizing** the role of the digital sector in the midst of the pandemic, and the opportunities for growth in a post-pandemic world economy through this sector;

**Convincing** that Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are vital as the guiding frameworks for our long-term recovery efforts from COVID-19 pandemic as it can help us respond to the wide-ranging impacts of COVID-19 covering the health crisis, economic crisis, and humanitarian crisis at the same time;

**Recognizing** that the tourism sector is among those affected most severely by the pandemic, with travel and tourism businesses brought to a halt, leading to high unemployment and

furlough rates, adversely affecting the livelihood of many communities, and increased incidence of poverty;

**Fully believing** that the economy must be made to work for all to overcome inequality, achieve inclusive economic growth and social justice;

**Encouraging** the efforts at the international level to enhance the voice of emerging economies and developing countries in global decision-making, and to find sustainable and innovative solutions for heavily indebted countries;

**Supporting** cooperation on the basis of mutual benefit and shared development through global and regional economic initiatives;

**Being Fully aware** that the increase of infectious medical waste during COVID-19 pandemic possesses a danger to our health and potentially contaminates the environment and escalates the spread of other diseases in the future; thus it is critical to consider the proper and safe medical waste management;

**Emphasizing** that global crises like the pandemic require global response, close cooperation and increased coordination, and international organizations should be equipped to deliver this response, therefore a review of international organizations should be considered with that perspective;

**Reaffirming** the fundamental role of the United Nations (UN) system in coordinating the global response and providing adequate support to Member States to control and contain the spread of COVID-19 and in supporting Member States, and in this regard **acknowledge** the key leadership role played by World Health Organization (WHO);

**Welcoming** the UN General Assembly resolution entitled “Global Solidarity to Fight COVID-19” approved on April 2, 2020 which emphasizes on the political message about the importance of unity, solidarity, and international cooperation in the efforts to mitigate COVID-19’s global pandemic;

**Welcoming** the “COVID-19 Response” resolution adopted at 73<sup>rd</sup> World Health Assembly of the World Health Organization (WHO) in May 18, 2020 which reaffirms global commitment for the intensification of efforts to control the pandemic, and for equitable access to and fair distribution of all essential health technologies and products to combat the virus;

**Calling** for intensified international cooperation to contain, mitigate and defeat the pandemic, by scientific collaboration in the development of vaccines and making them accessible to Member States at reasonable cost, exchanging information, scientific knowledge and best practices and by applying the relevant guidelines recommended by WHO;

**Drawing attention** to the fact that no country is safe until every country is safe against this global pandemic, and international cooperation and solidarity for the sake of humanity requires provision of essential food, medicines and medical equipment to the countries most in need;

**Expressing** our appreciation to those countries with the capacity and will to provide assistance such as medical equipment to other countries and encouraging all countries to extend assistance to one another;

**Recognizing** the importance of preserving the international supply of chains of goods and services, including essential food and critical goods such as medicines and medical equipment, reminding that border restrictions against the pandemic should not hinder the transport and delivery of goods and services that are important for the well-being of populations and health of economies;

**Strengthening** supply chains through international collaboration, information sharing, utilization of existing trade facilitation platforms with a view to optimizing these, promotion of the use of science and technology as well as advancements within the digital economy, and through implementation of measures aimed at restoring investor confidence;

**Expressing** our commitment to restart international tourism and travel by implementing policies that will restore confidence in the tourism sector, taking into account the joint recommendations issued by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the WHO on 26 February 2020, and enhancing our cooperation on safely reopening the tourism sector across Asia;

**Recognizing** that the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affects social groups in the most vulnerable situations with repercussions on health and development gains, urging the relevant parties of the international community to put social inclusion at the forefront of the efforts against the pandemic;

**Underscoring** that the availability of a vaccine to humanity as a whole and its production in adequate quantities for all are as critical as its development, and that vaccine should be available as global public goods which must be accessible to all, it is important to supply the vaccine to the entire world population including vulnerable communities and countries, where the pandemic poses greater risks, and ensuring that the available vaccines are safe, efficacious, accessible and affordable;

**Calling upon** all Asian Parliamentary Members to condemn UCMs imposed by any third State against any other nation, which may have adverse and serious effects on the access of all individuals to medicine, pharmaceutical supplies and a number of other needs that are vital for health and well-being in this complicated situations;

**Calling** on the countries with adequate capacity to provide assistance to others to give priority to the most affected, including Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), Small Island States (SIDS), and Middle-Income Countries (MICs) with regards to financial and medical assistance in light of the current health and socio-economic crisis emanating from the COVID-19 pandemic;

**Recognizing** that the poorest and the most vulnerable, including refugees, face the greatest danger against this outbreak, calling on the international community to extend its humanitarian and financial support to vulnerable and marginalized groups as well as the host-countries and to act in line with the principle of “leaving no one behind” as indicated in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development while implementing measures against the pandemic, further drawing the attention of the international community to the needs of women and girls, elderly, children and persons with disabilities;

**Reaffirming** our commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and acknowledge the key leadership role of WHO and the fundamental role of the United Nations

system UN's role and responsibility in formulating and implementing effective multilateral responses to COVID-19;

**Welcoming** the initiatives of the UN Secretary General as well as express our support to the efforts within the UN General Assembly;

**Underlining** the historic opportunity that the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN presents in emphasizing the importance of effective multilateralism and a rules-based international system that remains open, inclusive, transparent, and fit for purpose to improve global pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response capacity;

**Resolving** to overcome economic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic in the Asian region and continuing to work on the implementation of the APA resolution on the approval of the roadmap for providing incentive measures for green financing, expressing willingness to hold a meeting of the green finance working group by the end of September 2020 with the participation of representatives of governments, development institutions of interested states and financial market regulators to develop further decisions;

**Expressing** the need to draft a joint parliamentary strategy for the Asian Parliamentary Assembly, which includes the development of effective action plans, policies and implementation mechanisms to address the repercussions of the Coronavirus outbreak, provided that such plans cover the economic, social and service sectors most affected by the crisis in our countries, and to develop future approaches to economic and development prospects;

**Believing** that Asian parliaments must have clear vision of action in conducting the necessary communication with international institutions and major powers to ensure that future Covid-19 vaccines reach all countries, and to ensure global health security and counter any selective policies in the distribution of these vaccines in the future;

**Stressing** the need to hold virtual workshops and seminars to exchange experiences among parliaments of Asian countries, to benefit from the experiences of parliaments in enacting legislations and plans, and benefit from the efforts and experiences of countries in the face of economic, social, health, and other areas, through virtual meetings and seminars;