

Plan of Action for Alleviating Poverty in Asia

RECALLING article 9 of the APA Tehran Declaration concerning “the adoption of a decision to set up a working group in the Islamic Republic of Iran to study and draw up a plan of action for ... proposing mechanism for the eradication of poverty by 2015 as set by the United Nations”;

INSPIRED by the Charter of Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) to strengthen Asian economy through cooperation and integration;

SUPPORTING the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), particularly the first Goal i.e. reducing by half the portion of people living on less than a dollar a day by 2015;

EPHASIZING that Poverty alleviation is an imperative for the economic and social development of Asian countries;

AFFIRMING that durable international peace and security cannot be achieved without a successful and comprehensive program for poverty alleviation;

COGNIZANT of the fact that Asia has played a great role in the advancement of the world economy and has achieved some success in poverty reduction in the last 10 years;

CONCERNED that despite the increasing economic growth in Asia in recent years, still about two-thirds of world poor population live in this Continent; mostly suffer from malnutrition, with no access to clean water and sanitation and unemployment;

ACKNOWLEDGING that economic growth in many Asian countries has led to poverty reduction, but the increasing gap between urban and rural areas indicates that such growth has little impact on living conditions of the most poor people in the rural areas;

PAYING DUE ATTENTION to the situation of the people living in the margins of cities and those in rural areas as the most vulnerable segments of society;

EMPHASIZING the need to facilitate active engagement of marginalized people in economic activities;

AFFIRMING that poverty is a complicated and multidimensional challenge with internal and external aspects that necessitates an international and concerted cooperation to alleviate poverty;

UNDERLYNING that poverty is a global problem and its solution relies on coordination between international and national anti-poverty programs in each Asian country;

To formulate policies and strategies to alleviate poverty in Asia, at both regional and continental levels, we, the members of Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), approve the establishment of a “Commission” within APA structure to facilitate the following mandates:

To adopt joint appropriate policies and programs for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), particularly with regard to poverty alleviation and combating hunger,

To encourage all Asian countries to adopt and implement a comprehensive national strategy to reduce poverty with due attention to sufficient budget allocation in human resources development and social safety nets for poor populations;

To mobilize participation of public and private institutions such as corporations, non-governmental organizations, financial institutions and prominent figures in anti-poverty programs by promoting partnership programs through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) mechanism

To share best practices regarding poverty alleviation and greater capacity-building for economic development in Asian countries,

To take measures to advance economic growth with greater focus on labor intensive projects in order to provide poor workers greater access to job and income,

To adopt policies and measures to attract foreign and domestic investments in job creation,

To provide technological and financial aid for rural development, expansion of Small and Medium size Enterprises (SMEs) in the areas of rural industries and handicrafts in less developed areas,

To invest in infrastructure and big construction projects such as railroads, dams and highways which create jobs and thereby help improve the living conditions of the poor peoples,

To share experiences in granting credits including micro credits for job creation and poverty reduction,

To share experiences and information in the field of education and training for skill development to promote self employment in deprived areas,

To take necessary measures for the safety and security of labor and capital in order to encourage entrepreneurship and job creation policies,

To adopt common policies for the movement of labor within Asia, with the goal of facilitating the movement of skilled and unskilled workers in a legal and transparent way by establishing a networking mechanism for exchange of information on labor movements;

To urge cooperation between the host and the source countries of migrant workers towards improving their standards of living, rendering their movement easier and to protect them from possible maltreatment and unwarranted working conditions;

To increase the public participation in services such as transportation, post and communication,

To adopt effective and transparent legal systems, to combat corruption, and to facilitate investment in human resources and infrastructure for more job creation in less developed areas,

To adopt decentralized policies for delegating administrative and financial powers to local authorities in order to secure effective participation of the whole population in development activities;

To enhance the roles, accountability and management capacity of local bodies in human resources allocation and program implementations in favor of the poor;

To encourage both public and private sectors to invest in education and health in rural areas;

To share experiences in the field of agriculture such as irrigation systems, seed improvement and plant diseases;

To adopt appropriate policies for easy access to clean drinking water and health services for improvement of quality of life in rural areas;

To expand social security networks for improving living conditions of vulnerable groups particularly elderly, disabled and female headed household,

To share experiences in the fields of reproductive health, family planning, child mortality and maternal health, giving due considerations to religious and cultural differences;

To adopt common policies for combating infectious diseases and preventing contagious and fatal diseases such as HIV/AIDS, bird flu, etc.;

To pay serious attention to foreign debt problems of some Asian countries by adopting appropriate measures to reduce debt in long term,

To facilitate and promote tourism among Asian countries, by utilizing educational and dissemination of information networks particularly at public level,

To attract investment to develop necessary infrastructure for tourism, especially in lesser known areas in order to create jobs for poor people;

To pay serious attention to eradicate basic poverty problems, especially the accessibility to government services for the poor, land right problems and household debt problems;

To formulate policies and measures for taking care of the poor living in vulnerable areas, especially those in natural disaster-affected and violence-related areas;

To support the participation of community and local people in managing natural resources in their own areas.
