



7TH PLENARY SESSION
OF ASIAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (APA)
LAHORE,
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN
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OPENING REMARKS

By

HON'BLE SENATOR MUSHAHID HUSSAIN SAYED

CHAIRMAN OF THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE



- ***Excellency Syed Nayyer Hussain Bokhari,***
APA President and Chairman Senate of Pakistan.
- ***Honourable Speakers, Presiding Officers, Members and Representatives of APA Member Parliaments and Observer delegations.***
- ***Dr. Masoud Eslami,***
Deputy Secretary-General, Asian Parliamentary Assembly.
- ***Excellencies, Dignitaries,***
- ***Ladies and Gentlemen!***

It is, indeed, a great privilege to have the singular honour to welcome you at the 7th Plenary session of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly here in Lahore.

First to all, I like to extend my deepest appreciation to Excellency Syed Nayyer Hussain Bokhari, the APA President, for his personal interest, devotion, and zeal towards rejuvenating this esteemed parliamentary forum.

These prized engagements and interactions have enabled Asian parliamentarians to sit together and swap ideas on issues of common interest and concern.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Since its inception at the 5th General Assembly of the Association of Asian **Parliaments for Peace (AAPP)** held in Pakistan's capital city Islamabad back in 2004, APA has come a long way as an important regional forum widely acknowledged as the institutional voice of Asian Century.

APA's endeavours towards promotion of shared ideals that inter alia include peace and security, socio-economic uplift, rule of law, justice, and Human rights were further augmented at the extraordinary 6th Plenary session of the forum held in Islamabad in December 2013.

One of the largest inter-parliamentary gatherings ever arranged in the history of Pakistan's Parliament with 28 Member and two Observer countries participating, the 6th Plenary set the tone and pace towards achieving common goals, most importantly the establishment of an Asian Parliament.

The resolves and targets thus made and set were further fine-tuned, deliberated upon and strategized at the first Troika Plus meeting, and then the two Executive Council Meetings.

Now the 7th Plenary session, is all set to reviewing the outcomes of our previous engagements at various APA sub-forums, both during the general debate as well as the simultaneous standing committee meetings.

These range from general discussion to Secretary-General's report, and reviewing and finalizing standing committees' decisions and resolutions.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

I also welcome the representatives of Observer International Parliamentary Organizations participating in the event. I am avidly looking forward to listening to their valuable views also, since it is a manifestation of APA's constant outreach endeavours in order to cement strong partnerships across the region.

Considering the centrality of interdependence and networking in the modern day globalized world, no organization, especially a progressive inter-parliamentary forum like APA, can afford to work in vacuum.

Unilateralism has long been relegated to history's dustbin as a remnant of Cold War. Multilateralism is both the precursor and facilitator of shared growth and prosperity, especially in the context of the Asian region that pulsates with both manifested and latent potential.

With an abundance of natural resources, skilled human capital, and educated young population, Asia, no doubt, is the new socio-economic, cultural and technological Mecca in the new World Order driven by Asian minds and hands in the 21st Century.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

It is both an opportunity and a challenge to effectively use this forum to share expertise and pool resources through sound cooperative mechanisms.

The collective development and prosperity of the poor people of Asia, which is home to three-fifth of the world's population, depends on the critical decisions and the future course of action we take today.

Hopefully, this meeting will guide us to seek the very optimal solutions to all issues placed on its agenda, with the ultimate focus on actualizing a functional and mutually-beneficial integration.

As we talk of integration, I no longer see it as a matter of ifs and buts – but more so as when and how.

Things are changing on a positive note with Asian share in global trade increasing, precipitating an unmistakable economic boom.

To carry this momentum forward, APA will do well to help facilitate conclusion of free trade negotiations and monetary initiatives within the region to enhance the bargaining power of each state.

It is our collective responsibility to work towards comprehensive and integrated socio-economic progress of the entire region through dialogue, understanding and consensus.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

I look forward to interactive discussion. I hope that this important gathering of Asian Parliamentarians here in Lahore as well as our future interactions will go a long way towards promoting peace and prosperity in Asia.

Thank you!