



7TH PLENARY SESSION
OF ASIAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (APA)
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By

HON'BLE SYED NAYYER HUSSAIN BOKHARI

PRESIDENT ASIAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
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*
- *Honourable Raja Zafarul Haq, Leader of the House in the Senate of Pakistan.*
- *Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed.*
- *Excellencies, Dignitaries, Distinguished Guests.*
- *Ladies and Gentlemen!*

Assalam-o-Alaikum!

It is, indeed, a great honor to welcome and greet all of you at this large and historic gathering of Speakers, Presiding Officers, Parliamentarians from APA member states, Observer countries and partner organizations, here in Lahore at the 7th Plenary Session of Asian Parliamentary Assembly.

Please accept our sincerest wishes and prayers as a memento of abiding friendship from the people and the Senate of Pakistan.

As President of this esteemed forum, I am very pleased to note the sustained and high level of commitment and participation shown by our esteemed Members and partners at successive APA sub-forums since the 6th Plenary session held in Islamabad last year.

Seeing through the prism of the Islamabad Declaration issued by the last Plenary session, APA's progress during the year remained focused and geared towards addressing all the issues deliberated upon and identified, especially the key objective of forming an Asian Parliament, as also depicted by the theme of the 7th plenary sitting.

Seeking to build a just and equitable economic order by encouraging collaboration in all areas of human endeavour, the First Troika Plus Meeting pondered over critical issues such as formation of Asian Parliament, APA's connectivity with other regional multi-lateral forums, and ways and means to curb violence, promote dialogue and peace in Asian sub-regions.

The two Executive Council meetings held this year, first in Geneva and the second right here in Lahore yesterday further deliberated on all the issues and firmed up the agenda for the plenary.

These two meetings proved to be of utmost significance, as they not only reviewed the progress on the decisions made during the last plenary and the 1st Troika-Plus meeting, but also discussed and finalized the draft resolutions compiled laboriously by the standing committees on Political Affairs; Economic Affairs and Sustainable Development; Social and Cultural Affairs.

The Resolutions, which have been passed and tabled in the 7th Plenary are also of great importance being a roadmap to shape up Asian destiny by Asian hands in the Asian Century.

I am confident that the commitments we make here will usher in a new era of prosperity, peace, and sustainable development for our people.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen!

- **These are extraordinary times.**
- **These are historic times,**
- **And these are also troubled times.**

Extraordinary because Asia's spectacular rise from a poor underdeveloped agricultural backwater to becoming the global factory in a period spanning little over five decades is nothing short of an economic miracle.

Historic because compared to economically dismal 1960s when developing Asian economies were summarily written off as of little significance for lacking natural resources and high levels of poverty, Asia has risen like Phoenix on the wings of its energy, dynamism and its young and educated population.

Troubled because despite all these positive developments, economic prosperity in Asia has not been shared equally amidst enduring challenges

on account of spiraling poverty, access to basic amenities, gaping cleavage between haves and have-nots, human rights, accelerating growth, improving social indicators and creating a geo-political environment that fosters peace.

Also of great concern and an impediment to Asia's forward march are raging regional conflicts, extremism, and transnational terrorism. Wanton violence and unrest in Kashmir, Iraq, Syria and Palestine stand as a testament of enduring, polarizations, intolerance, enmity and hatred.

Palestinian issue, in particular, ranks high on our agenda. I take this opportunity to share with you that at the recent UN Committee on Israel-Palestine Peace Process meeting at UN Headquarter attended by large number of Parliamentarians and regional Parliamentary Bodies. I represented APA and highlighted the Member countries mutual concerns on the issue, especially the recent genocide unleashed in Gaza. Historic wrongs should be reversed and intractable conflicts, both inter-state and intra-state be resolved through the spirit of peace and reconciliation.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen!

I have a firm faith that an all-inclusive and genuinely representative Asian Parliament is the most befitting course available to us given the highly-fluid socio-economic and geo-political, security and development scenario prevailing in the region.

I am confident that by forming a grand parliament, which is representative of the whole region and stands as custodian of its interests, we can overcome all these challenges and build a future of Asia that we can all be proud of.

It is clear that in order to make this century the Asian Century, we need to stay cognizant of the ground realities. We have to cross many rivers; we have to negotiate many snags — of governance, structural reforms, dispute resolution, and alleviating deprivation — to make integration work and deliver.

It is high time to address structural problems in our way and redefine national and global responsibilities and priorities in bridging the gaps where they exist.

I am also positive that with necessary political will, we can work out suitable mechanisms and frameworks in order to realize the commonly-cherished ideal of an Asian Parliament, enabling the entire region to leverage the opportunities created by paradigm shifts across the world.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Economic and commercial activities are squeezed in an unstable and uncertain environment. Pakistan has experienced this bitter reality first hand being the frontline state in the international war on terror, braving huge repercussions on socio-economic and development front.

As we strive for greater regional integration there is a need for a new and comprehensive approach supported by political, security, economical and social measures.

I am confident that we can achieve all this and more through joint, and, more importantly, sustained efforts.

I avidly look forward to listening to your valuable views and suggestions as to how we can further augment synergies and cooperation towards realizing all commonly-cherished ideals, especially with regard to our 'Quest for an Asian Parliament'. My hope and expectation is that in this 7th General Assembly we will be able to go beyond mere declaration and put in place a structure and mechanism to achieve early the shared vision and goal.

With these words, I once again welcome you, and wish you a comfortable stay and a really motivating and stimulating experience.

I, hereby, declare the 7th Plenary session of Asian Parliamentary Assembly now open.

Thank you!