



**Welcoming Address of
Secretary-General of Asian Parliamentary Assembly
In Inaugural Ceremony of
Political Standing Committee
Islam Abad, Pakistan**

14 March, 2017

Your Excellency, Mr Mian Raza Rabbani, Honorable Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan

Your Excellency, Mr Sardar Ayaz Sadigh, Honorable speaker of the National Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Honorable Dr. Hadiyeh Abbas, Speaker of Syrian Parliament,

Honorable Mr. Zangpo, Speaker of Bhutan Parliament

Honorable Mr. Chhit, High Representative of APA President,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am happy to witness once again an important APA gathering with so many distinguished participants from so many Asian parliaments. I would like to welcome you all and express my gratitude for having the opportunity to address you here today. I would also like to register my

special thanks and appreciations to the Senate of Pakistan in general, and Honorable Mian Reza Rabbani, the Speaker of this Parliament for the sense of responsibility towards the APA and for the generosity for hosting such a prestigious Meeting.

Honorable Speakers,

Distinguished Delegates

In light of the challenges in the post-global order and its implications for Asia, parliaments are becoming increasingly more important both in domestic and foreign affairs. The principal function of parliaments in democratic systems of governance is legislative in nature. However, they also possess substantial weight in the political apparatus of their respective states. While Parliaments participate alongside the executive branch in exercising the national sovereignty of their respective states, they tend to assume a controlling function over certain governmental decisions in internal and external affairs.

Distinguished Delegates,

As the largest Asian inter-parliamentary organization, and relying on its wide scope of membership which covers most countries of Asia, APA is in a position to depict itself as a Model Asian Parliament.

APA has promoted the notion of Asian integration and Asian Parliament as the pivotal theme of its goals and objectives. Achieving integration in Asia is a formidable endeavor which would require certain conditions and definitely face certain challenges. Regional and international integration requires prolong and continuous cooperation. It is our pleasure that the Senate of Pakistan has taken this initiative very serious and we invite the other members to make their own contributions to this ultimate goal of APA.

Distinguished Delegates,

Asia in a globalised world is facing diverse political, economic, social and cultural challenges especially the extremism. In order to address these challenges we should put emphasis on our affirmative identity rather than excluding or blaming others.

We need to review our Asian Identity in a way that would be conducive to a collective solution, the respect for cultural diversity as well as to the inclusiveness. In other words, such a meeting can pave the way for a consolidated Asian Identity based on shared values and commonalities while respecting multiculturalism. This meeting would also pave the way for addressing comprehensively the challenges of Asia in order to realize a common Asian identity through parliamentary diplomacy. This is the way that Asian parliaments can address the challenges in the post-global order and its implications for Asia.

I am confident that the Asian Parliamentary Assembly can promote understanding on a broad spectrum of issues, including confidence-building measures, and combating terrorism, extremism and sectarianism.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The two important meetings of the APA that we are going to hold today and tomorrow here in Islam Abad have a great deal of important subject matters on their agenda. Today we discuss the essence and the content of the Asian Parliament and we will have share-responsibilities of all APA members in five sub-regional groups. Tomorrow we will discuss 9 important resolutions for the adoption as the draft. I am grateful to witness constructive discussions on various topics both in Special Committee for Creation of Asian Parliament Meeting as well as in the Standing Committee on Political Affairs. I am confident that by the end of these meetings, by virtue of your thoughtful and vigorous deliberations, we will have yet another successful event in the APA records.

And as the last point,

We have every reason to be optimistic about future accomplishments of the APA as we can certainly be optimistic about the future of Asia. Tying these two lines of optimism together should be our common point of conclusion of our meeting, whereby we combine our determination and concerted efforts towards much more prosperous Asia.

Thank you very much for your attention.