



Asian Parliamentary Assembly Report of the Standing Committee on Political Affairs

**14 - 15 March 2017
Islamabad - Pakistan**

**SC-Political/ Report-2017/01
15 March 2017**

1. The Meeting of the Standing Committee on Political Affairs convened in Serena Hotel in Islamabad at 9:00 hours on Tuesday, 14 March, 2017.

2. Delegations from Azerbaijan, Kingdom of Bahrain, Bhutan, Kingdom of Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, I. R. of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Kuwait, Lao PDR, Lebanon, I. R. of Pakistan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, UAE and Vietnam attended this Meeting. List of participants is attached as Annex -1

3. In Inaugural Ceremony, there were seven speakers as follows:
 - Welcome remarks by Mr. Amjed Pervez, Secretary Senate of Pakistan
 - Remarks by Dr. Ali Khorram, Deputy Secretary General APA
 - Remarks by Mr. Chhit Kimyeat on behalf of APA President
 - Remarks by H.E. Mr. Lyonpo Jigme Zangpo, Speaker of National Assembly of Bhutan
 - Remarks by H.E. Dr. Hadiyeh Abbas, Speaker of the People's Assembly of Syrian Parliament
 - Remarks by the Guest of Honor, Honorable Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker of National Parliament of Pakistan

- Opening Address by Honorable Mian Raza Rabbani, Chairman Senate of Pakistan

The texts of speeches are attached as Annex-2.

4. The next meeting was Special Committee for Creation of Asian Parliament. Honorable Rabbani as the Chairman of the Political Standing Committee opened the meeting. Dr. Khorram as Deputy Secretary-General asked the floor for the adoption of the Agenda and the election of Vice Chairman and Rapporteur. After the adoption of the Agenda, Honorable Nipat Thonglek Head of Thailand delegation was elected as Vice Chairman and Honorable Nayef Mhanna Head of Palestine delegation as Rapporteur.

5. Honorable Rabbani as the Chairman of the SCCAP asked Dr. Khorram to deliver the report of Secretary-General. Deputy Secretary-General pointed out that the APA Secretariat substantive report on the idea of the Asian Parliament entitled: *The Foundations of an Asian Parliament* has been the basis for further consideration of all APA Member Parliaments and the esteemed Senate of Pakistan took care of this initiative and has been successful to lead this committee which was mandated to develop strategies, to move the initiative forward by submitting result-oriented and time-bound reports and to reflect its achievements to the APA Political Standing Committee for consideration. He mentioned that the (SCCAP) held its meeting on 29 November 2016 and discussed various ideas and points of view by the participating delegates and all delegates expressed their general support for the promotion of the notion of Asian parliament in the light of the great potentials which exist in Asia and particularly in Asian Parliaments. Dr. Khorram expressed they underlined the formidable challenges and crucial prerequisites facing the creation of an Asian Parliament and they all emphasized that the creation of Asian Parliament is a long term project with various aspects of which needs to be explored in many discussions, conferences, and meetings to come. At the end he said, we are here in Islamabad to discuss and deliberate the details of the proposal and how we want to realize the idea of “Asian Parliament” step by step.

6. Honorable Rabbani expressed his views with regard to the Asian Parliament and asked Dr. Khorram to present the resolution and provide a table of six sub-regional groups and their Member Parliaments.

7. The draft resolution on SCCAP entitled “Towards an Asian Parliament” was presented and after three hours deliberations by many delegations, it was finalized to be forwarded to the Political Standing Committee. The text of the final draft resolution is attached.

8. After consultation with Member Parliaments, Dr. Khorram presented the list of six sub-groups as follows:

West Asia – North: Azerbaijan – Cyprus - Iran – Iraq – Lebanon – Syria – Turkey

West Asia – South: Bahrain – Kuwait – Jordan – Palestine – Saudi Arabia – UAE – Yemen

South Asia: Afghanistan – Bangladesh – Bhutan – India – Maldives – Nepal – Pakistan – Sri Lanka

South East Asia: Cambodia–Indonesia–Laos–Malaysia–Philippines–Singapore–Thailand–Vietnam

East Asia & the Pacific: China – Fiji – DPR Korea – Republic of Korea - Kiribati – Mongolia – Palau - Tonga

Central Asia & the CIS: Kazakhstan – Kyrgyzstan - Russian Federation – Tajikistan – Uzbekistan

9. Next day, on Wednesday 15 March, 2017, the Standing Committee on Political Affairs was held and Honorable Rabbani as the Chairman of the Political Standing Committee opened the meeting. Dr. Khorram as Deputy Secretary-General asked the floor for the adoption of the Agenda and the election of Vice Chairman and Rapporteur. After the adoption of the Agenda, Honorable Abbas Almahti, Head of Bahrain delegation was elected as Vice Chairman and Honorable Thephachah, Head of Laos delegation as Rapporteur.

10. H.E. Dr. Khorram, mentioned that the Standing Committee has 9 Resolutions for consideration and adoption as the draft.

- ✓ Draft Resolution on “Towards an Asian Parliament”
- ✓ Draft Resolution on “Good Governance”
- ✓ Draft Resolution on “Good Parliamentary Practices”
- ✓ Draft Resolution on Rule of Law and Judicial Empowerment
- ✓ Draft Resolution on Asian Parliaments’ Unwavering Support For The Palestinian People

- ✓ Draft Resolution on Advancing Principles of Friendship and Cooperation in Asia
- ✓ Draft Resolution on Asian Parliaments and Governments Together for Prosperity in Asia
- ✓ Draft Resolution on Significant Political Developments in Asia
- ✓ Draft Resolution on Deploring Acts of Terrorism and Violent Extremism

11. Dr. Khorram emphasized that the first Draft Resolution on “Towards an Asian Parliament” had been adopted last day in the SCCAP meeting by the same house so we suppose that is the outcome of this Committee too.

12. He presented the other three new draft resolutions for deliberations. The house discussed the resolutions one by one. There were many amendments from the delegates and after 4 hours deliberation those resolutions were adopted as the drafts for sending to the 1st Executive Council meeting.

13. In the afternoon session, the committee discussed the resolutions 5 to 7 above mentioned. The Draft Resolution on Asian Parliaments’ Unwavering Support for the Palestinian People was discussed and by receiving some amendments from the floor, it was adopted.

14. Dr. Khorram presented the Draft Resolution on Advancing Principles of Friendship and Cooperation in Asia and drew the attention of the delegates to Para 6 and 7 of the resolution. He asked the delegations of measures they have taken in promoting the APA Declaration on Principles of Friendship and Cooperation in Asia. India advised the secretariat to communicate with the speakers of the Member Parliaments. Dr. Khorram responded that the Secretary-General had contacted the speakers several times but no response yet.

15. Dr. Khorram mentioned the role of academic institutions for promoting further activities and joint initiatives pertaining to Friendship and Cooperation in Asia on the basis of Para 7 of the resolution. Kuwait delegation said we are supposed to support academic institutions exchange of views on this matter and we are available. Dr. Khorram asked the Kuwait delegation to send invitation to the secretariat to be distributed among the APA member parliaments.

16. Then Dr. Khorram presented the Draft Resolution on Asian Parliaments and Governments Together for Prosperity in Asia and asked the House to pay attention to Para 4, 5 and 6 of the resolution. Regarding Para 4 of the resolution, India and Bahrain delegations explained that they have institutions and training courses to train the best practices of their Parliaments and invited the other members to visit such institutions. Dr. Khorram mentioned with regard to Para 6, how the new Secretary-General has been contacting and participating in different inter-parliamentary organizations' meetings to work on issues relevant to the items on the APA agenda in order to facilitate further interaction and cooperation between Asian Parliaments and other organizations.

17. Deputy Secretary-General presented the last two resolutions namely Draft Resolution on Significant Political Developments in Asia and Draft Resolution on Deploring Acts of Terrorism and Violent Extremism. He mentioned: before the Executive Council, the Dumas of Russia submitted a lot of amendments to the secretariat with respect to different resolutions. A part of that were editorial and technical amendments which were incorporated into the text of resolutions and adopted in the 9th Plenary in Siem Reap, Cambodia. But the other part was substantial or controversial that forwarded to the present Political Standing Committee for consideration. So majority of the amendments of the two draft resolutions belongs to the Dumas of Russia. We have two options, first to defer the consideration of these two draft resolutions to the next meeting of the Standing Committee in 2018 and second to open the discussion on these two draft resolutions and after deliberation we adopt them if there is consensus. The Chairman opened the floor for expressing the views on these two options. India asked the Chairman to open the discussion while majority of the delegations including Azerbaijan, Cambodia, China, Bahrain, Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Syria, Laos . . . showed their willingness to defer the consideration of these two resolutions to the next meeting. The chairman concluded that the consideration of these two resolutions would defer to the next meeting of the Political Standing Committee. India asked the secretariat to emphasis in the pre-amble of the resolution that no bilateral differences should raise in APA and its resolutions. Deputy Secretary-General asked India as well as the other delegates to submit their amendments in written form to be incorporated in the text. The approved draft Resolutions are attached as **Annex – 3**.

18. Dr. Khorram congratulated the APA for having four women parliamentarians (Indonesia, Iran, Iraq and Syria) as Heads of Delegation in this

Standing Committee. He elaborated this is in the line of APA endeavor for empowerment of women in Asia.

19. He thanked the Senate of Pakistan for the generous hospitality that has given to every delegation during stay in Pakistan. He also praised the chairman for his wise and democratic management during the meeting.

20. He informed the House that Economic and Sustainable Development Standing Committee will be held on 25 & 26 of April in Bahrain, the Staff and Financial Regulations Standing Committee in May in UAE, Social and Cultural Standing Committee in September in Thimbu, Bhutan, 1st Executive Council in August in Cambodia and the Plenary in late October in Istanbul.

21. The chairman thanked all delegations for active participation in the meeting. He also praised the Deputy Secretary-General for his permanent support and management and the secretariat for its hard working.

22. The meeting was adjourned at 17:30.

Annex – 1

List of Participants

1. Pakistan Delegation

- i) Rana Muhammad Iqbal Khan, Speaker Provincial Assembly Punjab
- ii) Agha Siraj Khan Durrani, Speaker Provincial Assembly Sindh
- iii) Ms. Rahila Hameed Khan Durrani, Speaker Provincial Assembly Balochistan
- iv) Mr. Asad Qaiser Speaker Provincial Assembly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
- v) Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed
- vi) Senator Taj Haider
- vii) Senator Nuzhat Sadiq
- viii) Senator Syed Shibli Faraz
- ix) Senator Nawabzada Saifullah Magsi
- x) Senator Barrister Muhammad Ali Khan Saif
- xi) Senator Muhammad Javed Abbasi
- xii) Senator Mir Kabeer Ahmad Muhammad Shahi
- xiii) Dr. Shezra Mansab Ali Khan Kharal, Member of National Assembly of Pakistan
- xiv) Dr. Shazia Sobia, Member of National Assembly of Pakistan
- xv) Malik Muhammad Uzair, Member of National Assembly of Pakistan

2. APA Secretariat

- i) Mr. Ali Khorram, Deputy Secretary General
- ii) Mr. Bijan Moshirvaziri, Deputy Secretary General
- iii) Mr. Mohammad Reza Dehshiri, Deputy Secretary General
- iv) Mr. Asghar Azarikhah, Deputy Secretary General

3. Azerbaijan

- i) Mr. Ilham Mammadov, MP / **HoD**
- ii) Mir Kamal Alizada, Secretary

4. Bahrain

- i) Mr. Abbas Almadhi Member Parliament / Head of Delegation
- ii) Mr. Mohamed Alammadi, MP
- iii) Mr. Ahmed Qarata, MP
- iv) Dr. Mohamed Alkhozai, MP
- v) Dr. Abdulaziz Abul, MP
- vi) Mr. Ali Alaradi, Staff Member
- vii) Mr. Majdi Buallai Staff Member

5. Bhutan

- i) Mr. Jigme Zangpo, Speaker of the National Assembly of Bhutan
- ii) Mr. Gopal Gurung, MP
- iii) Ms. Sonam Wangmo, Staff Member

6. Cambodia

- i) Mr. Chhit Kimyeat, **MP/HOD**
- ii) Mr. Thavy Nhem, **MP**
- iii) Mr. Dara Srun, Deputy Secretary General
- iv) Mr. Hok Bunly, Staff Member
- v) Mr. San Sokhom, Assistant

7. China

- i) Mr. Wang Xiaochu, **MP/HOD**
- ii) Ms. Wang Aihua, Accm. Off.
- iii) Ms. Wu Dan, Staff Member
- iv) Ms. Zhu Hongying, Staff Member
- v) Ms. Tian Yuzhi, Staff Member

8. Indonesia

- i) Mrs. Dwi Ria Latifa, **MP/HOD**
- ii) Mr. Dave Akbarshah Fikarno, MP
- iii) Mr. Wiryawan Narendro Putro, MP

9. India

- i) Dr. Mr. Shashi Tharoor, **MP/HoD**
- ii) Ms. Meenakashi Lekhi **MP**
- iii) Mr. Swapan Dasgupta, **MP**

10. Iran

- i) Ms. Dr. Seyedh Fatemeh Zolghadr, **MP/HoD**
- ii) Ms. Dr. Hajar Chenarani, **MP**

11. Iraq

- i) Dr. Hanan Mohsin, **MP/HOD**
- ii) Dr. Louis Bandar, MP
- iii) Mr. Mustafa Abbas, Staff Member

12. Jordan

- i) Ms. Naif Alhadid, **MP/HOD**
- ii) Ms. Ibrahim Abual Sayed, Staff Member
- iii) Mr. Majed Quisi, Staff Member
- iv) Mr. Nabil Alhisah, Staff Member
- v) Mr. Majd Khawawneh, Staff Member

13. Kuwait

- i) Mr. Waleed Altabtabae, **MP**
- ii) Mr. Khalil Abul, **MP**
- iii) Mr. Abdulaziz Nasrallah, Staff Member

14. Kyrgyzstan

- i) Mr. Kamchybek Zholdoshbaev, **MP**
- ii) Mr. Anvar Artykov, Staff Member
- iii) Mr. Mederbek Kanybek Uulu, Staff Member

15. Lebanon

- i) Mr. Kassem Hachem, **MP**
- ii) Mr. Antoine Saad, **MP**,

16. Lao Republic

- i) Hon. Viengthavisone THEPHACHANH, **MP/HoD**
- ii) Mr. Sanexay Sadettan, Staff Member

17. Palestine

- i) Mr. Emran Al-Khatim, PNC Member

18. Saudi Arabia

- i) Dr. Hani Yousef I. Khashoggi, **MP**
- ii) Dr. Saad N. Alangari, Staff Member

19. Sri Lanka

- i) Ms. Vnnathi Piyankara Jayaratne, **MP**
- ii) Mr. W.M.Neil Parakkarama Iddawala, Staff Member
- iii) M. Hashim Abdul Haleem, Staff Member

20. Syria

- i) Dr. Hadiyeh Abbas, **Speaker**
- ii) Mr. Ayman Malandi, **MP**
- iii) Mr. Anas Zarie, Public Relations
- iv) Dr. Ghazi Abbas, Assistant Secretary General
- v) Mr. Hisham Younis, Public Relations

21. Turkey

- i) Mr. Burhan Kayaturk, **MP/HOD**
- ii) Mr. Baris Karadeniz, **MP**
- iii) Ms. Elif Esra Onal, Staff Member

22. UAE

- i) Mr. Al Malik Aziza, **MP**
- ii) Sultan Othman Othman. **MP**
- ii) Mr. Al Mutawa Saeed, Staff Member
- iii) Mr. Badar Hamad Ali Eid, Staff Member

23. Viet Nam

- i) Mr. Dinh Cong Sy, **MP/HoD**
- ii) Mr. Ba Dinh Truc, Staff Member

24. Thai Land

- i) Mr. Gen, Nipat Thonglek, **MP**
- ii) Ms. Phinissorn Sikkhabandit, Staff Member
- iii) Ms. Natcha Nilrat, Staff Member

**ASIAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
(APA)**

Inaugural Session

**Serena Hotel, Islamabad
March 14, 2017**

**Meeting of Special Committee
on Creation of Asian Parliament (SCCAP);
and the Standing Committee
on Political Affairs”**

DRAFT WELCOME REMARKS

**Mr. Amjed Pervez Malik,
Secretary Senate of Pakistan**

- ***Excellency Mian Raza Rabbani, APA Vice President and President of Standing Committee on Political Affairs,***
- ***Excellency Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan.***
- ***Honourable Speakers, Presiding Officers, Members and Representatives of APA Member and Observer Parliaments.***
- ***Dr. Ali Khorram, Deputy Secretary General APA.***
- ***Excellencies, Dignitaries.***
- ***Ladies and Gentlemen!***

It is indeed a privilege and pleasure to welcome all our distinguished guests at this gathering of Asia's, legislators and public representatives and visionary leaders par excellence.

It is the cross-stitch of a glorious past, promising future, shared cultural values and humane ideals that seamlessly hems APA, and, more largely, Asian nations together in these extraordinary times. The Parliament of Pakistan has had a long and deep association with APA and its predecessor association of Asian Parliament for peace. Pakistan has been instrumental in one transformation of the association and is working constantly for another.

It comes as a great pride to recall that not only APA has been revitalized and rejuvenated with 6th and 7th Plenary in

Islamabad and Lahore but the momentum continues during and after 7th and 8th Plenary in Cambodia.

It was during Pakistan's Presidency of APA that endeavours for Asian Parliament were for the first time formalized and the concept was reflected in the '**Islamabad Declaration**' of the 6th APA Plenary held in Islamabad in December 2013.

Our efforts to this effect were further institutionalized when in December 2014, the 7th APA Plenary, held in Lahore, approved establishment of the 'Special Committee on Creation of an Asian Parliament (SCCAP)', in order to work on a single agenda of developing consensus within Member Parliaments to formulate a road map for the Asian Parliament. The decision was formally included in 'Lahore Declaration' and in the Report of the 7th APA Plenary.

Senate of Pakistan and its leadership is fully aware of the challenges and difficulties in reaching the stage of formation of Asian Parliament. Borrowing from the speeches of quotes of others, I would say, we know there are roads that need to be travelled and bridges that need to be crossed in materializing this goal but as they say 'a thousand mile journey began with single step. We have taken quite a few steps in the journey and are hoping that more countries are joining us in destination.

In the 9th Assembly Pakistan has been elected Chairman of Political Affairs Standing Committee and SCCAP has been placed under it.

Senate of Pakistan considers it an honour that 21 countries are attending SCCAP and Standing Committee on Political Affairs equal to and in some cases higher than participation in plenary sessions.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Our present engagement brings together meetings of two very important forums of APA, namely the Special Committee on Creation of Asian Parliament (SCCAP) and the Standing Committee on Political Affairs.

As per their respective mandates, both the SCCAP and Political Affairs Committee would, during the course of present meetings, build upon the important initiatives taken and commitments crystallized during the previous meetings. I earnestly hope that instead of taking any 'U' Turns or moving in circle, we continue treading on the path incorporating new ideas or initiatives.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Our legislative, policy-making and developmental paradigms are fast changing to offset challenges tossed our way

by extraordinary challenges on peace, security, socio-economic and developmental fronts.

These compulsions call for out of box solutions requiring renewed commitment to regional cooperation and integration, rooted in stronger inter-parliamentary networking and partnerships.

In response, APA, which symbolizes the rich diversity, pluralism, inter-cultural and inter-faith harmony, and evolving unity and cohesion of Asian nations, stands out as a vehicle of change and transformation to a peaceful and prosperous future.

The presence of high number of Members participating the SCCAP and Political Affairs meetings gives me hope that we will have more participatory and substantive deliberations.

With these words, I again welcome all our distinguished guests here in Islamabad. I wish you a comfortable stay with assurances that the Pakistan Senate will be there for your kind assistance and convenience so as to enable you to make the most out of these meetings.

Thank You!



**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.



Asian Parliamentary Assembly

**Report of the Secretary-General to the
Special Committee of Creation of Asian Parliament
(SCAAP)**

Islam Abad, Pakistan

14 March, 2017

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Delegates

"Asian Parliament" has been the ultimate goal of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly since its foundation in 2006. APA has promoted the notion of Asian integration and Asian Parliament as the pivotal theme of its goals and objectives. In early 2014, the APA Secretariat prepared a special and substantive report on the idea of the Asian Parliament entitled: *The Foundations of an Asian Parliament*. The report was most welcomed by the 7th Plenary and many aspects of the idea were deliberated upon. It was decided by the 7th Plenary that the report should be given further consideration by all APA Member Parliaments and certain measures should be taken for taking the initiative steps further.

The APA 7th Plenary thus decided to set up a Special Committee on the Creation of Asian Parliament (SCCAP) to further consider the notion of Asian Parliament and develop ways and means for its promotion and creation.

The esteemed Senate of Pakistan took care of this initiative and has been successful to lead this committee which was mandated to develop strategies, to move the initiative forward by submitting result-oriented and time-bound reports and to reflect its achievements to the APA Political Standing Committee for consideration.

Concurrent with the meeting of the APA Standing Committee on Political Affairs in the 9th Plenary, the APA Special Committee on the Creation of Asian Parliament (SCCAP) held its meeting on 29 November 2016 and discussed various ideas and points of view by the participating delegates. All delegates expressed their general support for the promotion of the notion of Asian parliament in the light of the great potentials which exist in Asia and particularly in Asian Parliaments. Meanwhile, they underlined the formidable challenges and crucial prerequisites facing the creation of an Asian Parliament. They all emphasized that the creation of Asian Parliament is a long term project with various aspects of which needs to be explored in many discussions, conferences, and meetings to come. It was also pointed out that the feasibility of the project should be conducted in coordination with all APA Member Parliaments. The participating delegates undertook the responsibility to raise the subject matter to respective authorities of their own parliaments and governments and send their feedback on *The Foundations of an Asian Parliament* to the APA secretariat as soon as possible.

In July 2016, Honorable Mian Reza Rabbani, the Chairman Senate of Pakistan suggested a proposal to the effect that five sub-regional-groups be set up within the APA member parliaments to explore and ponder on the objectives, prerequisites, structure, and procedures of establishing an Asian Parliament and to hold meetings at the sidelines of the APA meetings in order to formulate a comprehensive document to be submitted to the APA Political Standing Committee for consideration and appropriate decision.

Today, we are here in Islam Abad to discuss and deliberate the details of the proposal and how we want to realize the idea of “Asian Parliament” step by step. At the end of deliberation, we adopt the text of resolution as the draft.

Thank you Mr. Chairman

**Inaugural Statement by Hon’ble Speaker Tshogpon Jigme Zangpo at the
APA Meetings of Special Committee on creation of Asian Parliament and
Standing Committee on Political Affairs
(Serena Hotel, Pakistan, 13-17 March 2017)**

Hon’ble Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan
Hon’ble Mian Raza Rabbhani, Chairperson of the Senate of Pakistan
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies & Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to convey the good wishes and warm greetings of His Majesty the King and people of Bhutan. As always, it is a great honour for me and my delegation to once again be amongst the presence of fellow speakers and parliamentarians from across Asia.

I am personally happy to be back in this beautiful city of Islamabad and the memories I cherish of my visit last year still remains as fresh as the Margalla hills in the backdrop. So, I would like to thank Hon’ble Mian Raza Rabbhani, Chairperson of the Senate of Pakistan for inviting me and my delegation to participate in these important meetings.

Diversity has always been the mascot of Asia and it is within this diversity that we seek to find unity, brotherhood and regional prosperity. At a time, when the political dynamics of the world keep on changing, it has become even more imperative for Asian countries to navigate into the future with collaboration and with a common vision.

When we talk about establishing an Asian Parliament, we must ensure that we create a body which reflects our collective interest and shared values for a brighter future. Fragmentation of our continent will never translate into prosperity but it is our strength in unity and commitment to regard each other as an equal role player that will bring about a great change for the betterment of our people.

As our priority centers on global harmony and international governance, we must have the conviction that Asia can shape the world towards a better future. It is in this context that first and foremost, we must be willing to share our resources and hold each other's hand as we negotiate the challenges and choose the right path towards prosperity for all of Asia. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to live by the fact that our future is together and our strength must be combined, then and only then we shall see the rise of a prosperous Asia.

Today, as the special committee has been formed for the creation of Asian Parliament, I strongly believe that an Asian Parliament would mean instrument of international understanding and promote cross border solidarity. Furthermore, it is apparent that parliamentary exchanges including parliamentary diplomacy and collective role on the international platform can be enhanced. The main reason why we have other parliamentary assemblies across the world is for the need of acting internationally. I am sure we all believe that parliament's vigilance and its role should not only be confined to its national territory but should go international through bodies such as the Asian Parliament.

For Bhutan, attending the meetings of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly's Standing Committees in the past has given us an opportunity to reflect and discuss the potentials that we can realize for the effectiveness of our parliament.

Another perspective I would like to highlight is that our parliaments may vary in doing things because of different legal and constitutional settings but ultimately we share the same goal of strengthening parliamentary democracy. Thus, with these meetings of two important committees under the banner of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly, we will have an opportunity to further harmonize our goals and establish a working relationship among the Asian countries which will be fruitful and hopefully sustainable as well.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

We have come a long way since the establishment of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly in 2006. In order to further our efforts in realizing the vision of Asian integration, we must now take our initiatives to a higher level to promote peace in Asian and in the world at large.

I strongly believe that the meetings of the Special Committee for creation of Asian Parliament and the Political Affairs Committee will be successful in promotion of cohesive collaboration among our parliaments.

In conclusion, I would like to express that if we are ready to foster better coordination to fulfill the aspirations of our people, I believe that we have reached an opportune time to create a parliamentary body such as the Asian Parliament. My only plea is that if Asian Parliament is to be established, we must recommit ourselves to be willing to collaborate and support each other in the field of parliamentary cooperation.

Lastly, on behalf of the Bhutanese delegation, I would like to wish everyone a fruitful meeting for the next few days.

THANK YOU & TASHI DELEK!

**Syrian Arab Republic
People's Assembly
Speaker**

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

H.E. Senator Mian Raza Rabbani, Chairman of Senate House
H.E. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, National Assembly Speaker
H.E. Mr. Mohammad Riza Majidi, APA Secretary General
Excellencies, Speakers and Representatives of Parliaments
Distinguished guests

In the beginning, I have the honor to convey to you all the greetings of our steadfast Syrian people and warm regards of H.E. President Bashar Al-Assad, and to express our great hopes for taking important decisions in these meetings, which will contribute to strengthening peace and security in our Asian Continent.

I sincerely believe that the need for cooperation and solidarity today is greater than ever before. After more than a decade since the creation of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly, the challenges facing us are increasingly difficult, amid a state of anarchy in which the terrorists and extremists target more than one place of our Continent, which calls for giving more support to the valuable efforts exerted by our Assembly over the past years towards developing cooperation among the Asian States and their peoples, as well as strengthening the bonds of parliamentary friendship to bolster the opportunities of peace and security in our region and the world.

These common challenges and the emerging circumstances that sweep through our countries and region today put us before enormous responsibilities, which are impossible to endure without genuine cooperation, whether through the Assembly or the hoped-for Asian Parliament, which we vehemently support and hope will be effective and influential in serving the interests of Asian peoples and countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen

As Speaker of the Syrian People's Assembly, I am carrying the message of our people to this platform; the message of people who suffer the scourge of terrorism every day. They are facing the most horrendous forms of killing, and a country whose infrastructure and installations are exposed to systematic destruction.

We firmly believe that terrorism has one face. There is no good or bad terrorism, and unless world nations are united to confront it, there will be no secure future for all of us, and there will be no growth and development, as all development tracks at international level will be jeopardized.

Therefore, I call upon you in the name of the Syrian people from this rostrum to establish genuine international cooperation to confront terrorism, based on UN Security Council Resolutions, and in keeping with the principles of international law and cooperation with the countries that are exposed to terrorism.

-2-

Confronting terrorism cannot be fulfilled without a genuine action at all fronts, including political, cultural and the battle zones. We have to stand up together to take immediate action, and ban radical and Takfiri thoughts that promote blasphemous and sectarian incitement. This action will put us on the beginning of the road towards confronting extremism and terrorism.

I also call upon the countries that are implicated in supporting the terrorist groups in my country as well as in other countries to stop their erroneous policies, because history will record these errors and peoples will bring the culprits to book.

Honorable Audience,

We in Syria are achieving great victories at the level of combating the terrorist groups, in cooperation with our friends and allies. I seize this opportunity to extend our thanks to Russia, Iran and all the governments and forces that stood by outside, politically, militarily and economically in the battle of eradication of terrorism, represented in ISIS and Jabhat Al-Nusra and the other groups that embrace the terrorist ideology of ' Al-Qaeda'. These victories represent an essential foundation for restoration of peace and security to my country, Syria.

Based on this vision, we have been seriously participating in the Geneva or Astana meetings as well as the other dialogue initiatives. This vision is also boosting the national reconciliation efforts, sponsored by the state in the various areas in which the terrorists are taken out and the status of those who lay down their weapons is settled and sorted out. Civilians living in these areas are provided with needed food supplies and health services, which sincerely reflects our care for our people and keenness to spare the civilians the scourge of war and rid our country of this situation as early as possible.

Distinguished Audience,

The economic war imposed on our country and society by some countries is not less dangerous and heinous than the war of terror. It is a partner of

terrorism for our suffering. I therefore call upon the member parliaments in this Assembly to support our demands to lift the economic embargo imposed on my country. I also call the Assembly to issue a statement that demands to end these sanctions and to take necessary action to support this demand, in addition to supporting the Syrian government's efforts of securing food and medicine in the areas besieged by the terrorist groups and the action taken by the government to support the IDPs. The statement should also express support for the reconciliation efforts achieved by the government among the citizens of our homeland to enable my country to regain its past security and stability.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The future of our peoples depends on the policies and positions we adopt. So let us put our hands together for cooperation and coordination. Let us embrace the culture of amity, tolerance and peace and establish a new era of stability and peace, and build an environment that achieves social prosperity and decent living for our peoples and the peoples of the entire world.

-3-

We, in the Syrian People's Assembly, look forward to an Asian Parliament that represents significant steps towards an effective regional cooperation, which contributes to realizing the aforementioned goals and aspirations.

In conclusion, we would like to express our gratitude to the friendly Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and particularly the Pakistan Senate and National Assembly for their commendable efforts to make this conference a success.

Thank and God Bless you!

**Dr. Hadih Abbas,
Speaker of the Syrian People's Assembly**

- **Excellency Mian Raza Rabbani, Chairman Senate of Pakistan**
- **Honorable Members and Representatives of APA Member Parliaments**
- **Excellencies, Dignitaries, Distinguished Guests!**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen!**

Assalam-o-Alaikum!

1. I am pleased to extend greetings and a very warm welcome to distinguished parliamentarians and visionary leaders from across Asia here in this beautiful city of Islamabad.
2. I take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation for Honorable Mian Raza Rabbani, Chairman Senate for exemplary leadership and efforts to strengthen this esteemed forum.
3. Asian Parliamentary Assembly is indeed crucial in promoting unity and provides for a concrete framework for regional cooperation to strengthen human rights protection and democracy.

Distinguished Guests!

4. Asian region is rich in socio-economic, cultural, geographical, and developmental aspects. Forward looking trade policy, improved supply chains and production networks have transformed Asia during the recent decades.
5. However, major impediments exist including violent extremism, transnational terrorism and regional conflicts. Not just that, flashpoints like Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Jammu and Kashmir and Afghanistan are a continuous threat to regional peace and harmony.
6. As Parliamentarian, we cannot afford to ignore threats that confront us. We must not brush these challenges under the carpet. Asia today stands as the most disturbed region in the world. From the middle-east crises to the rise of Daesh, and the animosities of south-east Asia, there are challenges before us. But let us not forget that the democracies don't fight with each other.
7. It is believed that democracy cannot claim to be the true representative of its people if it fails to protect the rights and safety

of its oppressed classes, especially women, children and the minorities.

8. APA member states must therefore intervene for the peaceful resolution of all outstanding disputes in light of the UN Security Council resolutions and in accordance with the aspirations of the people.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

9. I firmly believe that foundation of an all-inclusive and truly representative Asian Parliament is the best way forward since it shall serve as the custodian of interests of Asian nations in dealing with increasing challenges.

10. Let us not forget that:

- While Asia remains the engine of the global economy, out of the 766 million people living below the poverty line, about 33% live in South Asia and 9% live in East Asia and the Pacific.
- While the Asian Tiger continues to reign the world markets, it also houses 29 per cent of the world's out-of-school primary-age children.
- While Asia is the most populated continent hosting 60% of the world's population, it is short of clean drinking water as 80% of its freshwater is used for irrigating crops.
- Across Asia, women are climbing the ranks in business and politics but at the same time Gender Based Violence is highest in Asian region; 37.7% in South East Asia to be precise.
- While Asian region has contributed the most in UN Peace keeping troops, this region has at the same time been marred by terrorism, coup d'états and autocratic takeovers.
- While the world's greatest contributor to climate change is the West, the potentially most affected region shall be Asia.

- 11.** These, ladies and gentlemen, are the realities which not only confront us but can become the basis to unite us. As Martin Luther King Jr. famously said and I quote,

“If we are to have peace on earth... our loyalties must transcend our race, our tribe, our class, and our nation; and this means we must develop a world perspective.”

Distinguished Audience!

- 12.** The Asian Parliament shall offer a centralized platform to exert uniform efforts for consolidation of democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall also work as a catalyst for peace-building and international security.
- 13.** It is our collective responsibility to work towards comprehensive and integrated socio-economic progress of the entire region through dialogue, understanding and consensus.
- 14.** It is therefore essential that APA strives to strengthen parliamentary ties among members which can eventually lead to inter-state trade and economic cooperation.
- 15.** We must work together for confronting our shared challenges by combating violent terrorism and extremism, poverty alleviation, reducing impacts of climate change and ensuring human rights and global economic development.

Dignitaries, Ladies and Gentlemen!

- 16.** As Speaker National Assembly, I have always been cognizant of the importance of Inter-parliamentary relations. Thus, I have constituted Parliamentary Friendship Groups with 88 Parliaments from around the world.
- 17.** Forum such as this are important for sharing experiences and best parliamentary practices and providing technical and other required support with a view to facilitate process of democratization.
- 18.** For taking the international development agenda forward, we have constituted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Parliamentary Task Force in Pakistan at the national and provincial

level. We are the first Parliament in the world to have our fully functional SDGs Secretariat at the National Assembly.

- 19.** We are also heedful of the hazards of climate change. In this regard, we have set a precedent at the Parliament by shifting to clean energy. Today, Parliament of Pakistan is first ever in the world to “Go Green” by shifting completely on Solar Energy. We are not just self-sufficient in fulfilling our own energy needs but also contributing to the National Grid with surplus generation.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

- 20.** Pakistan is committed to peace and prosperity in the region and the entire world. Unfortunately, Pakistan has been worst hit by terrorism and over the last two decades lost over 65,000 innocent lives in its war against terror.

- 21.** In the aftermath of heinous attack on Army Public School, the whole nation stood together with a renewed resolve to uproot this menace of terrorism from the country.

- 22.** The Government of Pakistan, backed by the Parliament, launched consensus-based military operation “Zarb-e-Azb” which has been remarkably successful in our campaign against terrorism and extremism.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

- 23.** Pakistan is a strong advocate of regional integration and connectivity. In this regard, the recently launched China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is a real game changer which will lead to economic regionalization in the globalized world. CPEC will not only benefit China and Pakistan but will have positive impacts on Iran, Afghanistan, India, Central Asia, and the entire region.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

- 24.** The balance of power is shifting from the West to the East. This century is Asia’s century. Pakistan is strategically placed to serve as a bridge between South Asia and the Middle East.

- 25.** I firmly hope that the Asian Parliament would be a collective platform for harnessing such potential among member states.

- 26.** Lastly, I expect that the Member Parliaments will ensure their effective participation at regional and international fora with a view to promote transnational collaboration in the resolution of international disputes.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

- 27.** Let us join hands and work together for achieving our desired goals for regional peace, development and prosperity.

With this, I thank you all!

**ASIAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
(APA)**

Inaugural Session

**Meeting of Special Committee
on Creation of Asian Parliament,
and Standing Committee
on Political Affairs,**

**Serena Hotel, Islamabad
March 14, 2017**

DRAFT INAUGURAL SPEECH

**Hon'ble Mian Raza Rabbani,
Vice President Political Affairs Committee,
and Chairman Senate of Pakistan**

- ***Honourable Speakers, Presiding Officers, Members and Representatives of APA Member Parliaments and Observer delegations.***
- ***Excellency Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan.***
- ***Dr. Ali Khorram, Deputy Secretary General APA.***
- ***Excellencies, Dignitaries, Distinguished Guests.***
- ***Ladies and Gentlemen!***

It is indeed a pleasure and privilege to have among us our distinguished colleagues, friends and partners from across the APA fraternity at this inaugural session ahead of the meetings of the Special Committee on Creation of Asian Parliament (SCCAP) and Standing Committee on Political Affairs and here in Islamabad.

I welcome you with sincerest sentiments of goodwill and friendship; optimistic that our present engagement would be as productive and fruitful as our previous interactions.

Your presence here marks the collective pragmatism, rich diversity, pluralism and positivity that defines our great continent.

It is promising to see the sustained and high-level of commitment shown by our esteemed Members and partners at successive APA plenary sittings and sub-forums.

APA during Pakistan Presidency and now:

I am pleased to recall that during its two-year presidency from 2013 to 2015, Pakistan has endeavoured to build regional synergies and partnerships to rejuvenate and transform APA towards realizing the Asian Century dream of ‘Shaping Asian Destiny through Asian hands’.

Together we pursued the agenda of greater regional integration by enhancing cooperation and networking towards forming a grand Asian

Parliament, representative of all on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

The breakthrough to this effect came in the form of the **‘Special Committee on Creation of an Asian Parliament (SCCAP)**, created during the 7th Plenary held in Lahore in 2014.

I feel elated and encouraged that as a result of our joint efforts, today APA stands poised and well galvanized towards promoting peace, security and development, respect for the rule of law, justice, equality and a better standard of life for all throughout the continent.

It is now promising to see that Cambodia has sustained the momentum built by Pakistan to this end, as evident by our productive engagements and interactions at the 8th and the 9th plenary session.

During the course of our present engagements, we will be dealing with key issues and matters during meetings of Standing Committee on Creation of Asian Parliament and Standing Committee Meeting on Political Affairs.

In this regard, we will be needing your continuing cooperation, wisdom and intellect to formalize and document our pledges as plans of action.

The resolutions put on the agenda of the SCCAP and Political Affairs Committee are very important. They portray the sentiments, expectations and needs of the people of Asia, voiced through their elected representatives. They also put into right perspective the scope, depth and nature of the issue at hand in order to chart out a befitting response.

Here I deem it pertinent to mention here that earlier Pakistan had proposed 7 resolutions to APA. These are in addition to three resolutions pertaining to Good Governance, Good Parliamentary Practices, and Resolution on Rule of Law and Judicial Empowerment, which will be taken up by the Political Affairs Committee meeting tomorrow.

I would request the APA Tehran Secretariat to kindly transmit the seven earlier resolutions proposed by Pakistan to relevant APA standing committees for further discussion and action.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Common Challenges to Asian Integration

It is promising that the global economic, cultural and technological centre is shifting from Europe and North America to Asia on account of its energy, dynamism and its young and educated population.

However, as we step up our efforts for regional integration, we must first resolve the conventional and non-conventional challenges that threaten to unravel the gains on account of Asian pragmatism and rise on the world stage, demanding our most undivided attention.

Regional Conflicts and Terror

Raging regional conflicts, extremism, transnational terrorism and human rights abuses constitute the foremost impediment to Asia's forward march.

Human Rights Abuses

Wanton violence, unrest and wide-scale human rights abuses in Kashmir, Iraq, Syria and Palestine stand as a poignant testament of enduring prejudices, polarizations, intolerance, enmity and hatred rooted in religio-ethnic discrimination and extremism.

The state-sponsored violence and genocide rampant in these global flashpoints have also exposed the inadequacies and shortcomings of the UN and its relevant bodies such as the Security Council and Human Rights Council, as well as International Court of Justice and other multilateral forums.

Here I like to commend and thank all those APA Members who supported Pakistan in tabling a resolution on the issue of Kashmir at Siem Reap, Cambodia, last year.

A resolution on Palestine issue was also tabled at the last Political Affairs Committee meeting in Siem Reap, but it was deferred, and will now be taken up by during our present engagement.

It is good to see this unanimity of opinion among APA members on Palestine Kashmir issues, whose resolution is central to Asian peace, stability and prosperity.

However, it is time to crystallize our resolutions into viable plans of action along parliamentary diplomacy and other suitable channels so as to find peaceful and mutually-acceptable solutions.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Western Great Game and Divisive policies of some Asian states

Some western powers' **'Great Game'** to purposefully fuel unrest and anarchy in Asia through forced regime change and engineered sham democracies has set the developmental clock decades back for many a nation. Middle East is a case in point.

Oblivious of the dangers lying ahead, some Asian states are also playing into the hands of foreign powers by carrying forward the divisive policies to create split among Asian nations.

We must not let these forces and elements to succeed.

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 developmental front.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Socio-economic Challenges

It is also a bitter reality that economic prosperity in Asia has not been shared equally with the human, social and security dimensions of sustainable development scoring low on national priorities agendas.

Despite rapid economic growth, Asia remains home to 62% of the world's hungry with nearly 490 million people suffering from hunger and malnutrition.

Poverty, corruption in areas of governance, lack of access to basic amenities like clean drinking water, Health and Education, rising inequalities, inequalities in distribution of wealth and access to justice, gender disparities and intolerance are rife.

Estimates that over 1.7 billion people lack access to improved sanitation in Asia and the Pacific; and that a billion more people could be "water stressed" in the next 35 years in Asia ring alarm bells.

That women in Asia are on an average 70% less likely than men to be in the labor force causes grave concern, especially since UN estimates that Asia-Pacific economy would grow by an additional \$89 billion annually if women were able to achieve their full economic potential.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Tuning Challenges into Opportunities: The Priorities

Our somewhat common challenges are also the cherished goals of **2030 Sustainable Development agenda**, making challenges also an

opportunity to realize our peace, prosperity, developmental and other Asian Century aspirations.

This global hot-seat role that Asia yearns, demands paradigm shifts, reformations, and prompt action across a wide range of issues and fronts demanding immediate attention back home.

Our priorities are very clear:

- There can be no development without peace. We must eliminate terrorism, violence and armed conflicts impeding Asia's progress through increased dialogue and understanding.
- We must conserve environment and fast depleting fresh water resources by adhering to a development agenda that is sensitive to environmental considerations.
- Likewise, revitalizing growth in agricultural productivity should be pursued in tandem with resolving tangible impacts of climate change on agriculture.
- Simultaneously, we need to ensure that Asia's **350 million** small farmers, typically those working less than 2 hectares, can compete and thrive in modern, food value chains.
- We also need to double up our efforts to create an integrated energy market to realize Asia's economic, industrial, technological, and agricultural ambitions, and usher in an era of progress and prosperity.
- Building a just and equitable economic order based on inclusive growth and increasing accessing to education can be an effective two-pronged strategy to eliminate deprivation and illiteracy that in turn spawn extremist and violent tendencies in the society.

- We must make our domestic governance systems transparent, corruption-free and accountable since good governance is indispensable to robust democracies.
- At the same time, we must empower women politically, economically and socially to make headway on the path to sustainable growth and progress, which demands full and equal participation of both men and women.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Way Forward

The world, and not just Asia-Pacific region, is in throes of significant geo-political and economic transitions that are bound to impact all.

The EU defragmentation with UK's exit may likely tip the scales in favour of expediting Asian integration, especially along socio-economic and technological lines.

By exhibiting necessary political will, the Oil and Energy rich Asian powers can facilitate integration by shifting their focus from Europe to reinvigorating regional economies and markets.

Asian Parliament

I am confident that by forming a grand **Asian 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.

In this regard, I had earlier proposed forming five regional geo-political groups within APA during the Meeting of APA Standing Committee on Economic & Sustainable Development Affairs held in Islamabad on 26th July, 2016.

I am positive that during the course of our present engagement, especially at the subsequent **SCCAP meeting**, we may deliberate the modus operandi as to how these regional groups can effectively work out suitable mechanisms and frameworks to realize the commonly-cherished goal of an Asian Parliament.

Moreover, since peace, development and democracy are some of the indispensable prerequisites of regional integration, special attention needs to be paid towards strengthening democracy, defeating terror, dousing divisive conflicts and animosities, and ushering in peace for early and durable integration.

As a frontline state in the international war on terror, Pakistan remains committed to eliminating terror and militancy, despite staggering repercussions and losses on human and socio-economic fronts.

We believe that this is a global issue and needs to be addressed effectively.

At APA's platform, our challenge lies in putting in place conducive collaborative measures on political, economic, and social fronts to augment Asian stability in face of all external and internal threats and obstacles to peace and development.

The core objective is to ensure stability as a precursor to a more people-centric and rights based human development approach, enabling the entire region to leverage the opportunities created by paradigm shifts across the world.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Pakistan has been able to turn the page on many of the aforementioned common challenges by prioritizing democratic pluralism, peace and inclusive development in our policy and legal frameworks.

At the regional level also, we desire a stable, peaceful and prosperous Asia.

However, we believe that this warrants a comprehensive approach not only to deal with violence but also its root causes. This requires enhancing international cooperation in multiple domains.

Guided by the “**Asian Spirit**” and the goal of creating “**Asian Harmony**”, we wish to establish a political discourse in not just South, but the whole of Asia, that is based upon cooperation, not confrontation.

We seek friendship and good-neighbourly relations with all our neighbours including India. We look forward to resolving all outstanding issues including the **Jammu and Kashmir dispute**, which we consider a sine qua non for regional and global stability.

We are also committed to working together with **Afghanistan** to expand mutual trade and economic cooperation and reinforce efforts at the regional level to strengthen collaboration in diverse fields – from trade to energy to communication corridors.

Situated as we are on the cross roads of central, south and west Asia, we realize the enormous opportunities that ensue from pursuing with diligence the vision of common development and cooperation.

We seek to tap the enormous potential of Asian continent for the betterment of our peoples, by forging strong and enduring inter and intra-regional synergies.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Role of Parliament and Parliamentarians:

Parliament plays an essential role in steering national and regional progress on peace and sustainable development goals being hubs of collective national wisdom and resolve, and legitimate platforms to resolve conflicts.

APA Parliaments must engage in the peace, Sustainable Development and climate change agenda at national, regional, and global levels.

I am confident that our endeavours will prove to be successful in this regard, leading to further deepening of cooperation among Asian nations on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

At APA platform, we must encourage sharing of good parliamentary practices and innovations to make legislative process conducive, allowing our respective parliaments to have a significant influence on sustainable development policies by inscribing targets and objectives into laws.

Our challenges and opportunities stand intertwined. Isolated and fragmented efforts, or unilateral approaches will prove to be a non-starter and counter-productive.

The equation is simple:

“Either we embrace doom together, or jointly journey towards a common destination that promises prosperity, sustainable development and inclusive progress.”

The choice is ours!

I am optimistic that this meeting will help synthesize mutually-agreeable and acceptable solutions to all issues placed on its agenda.

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.

Thank You!

Annex-3



Draft Resolution on “Towards an Asian Parliament”

SC- Political- SCCAP/Draft Res/2017/01
15 March 2017

Recalling the document titled “Foundations of an Asian Parliament” prepared by the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) Permanent Secretariat in May, 2014;

Further recalling the Lahore Declaration adopted on 3rd Dec, 2014 by APA Plenary that established the Special Committee on the Creation of the Asian Parliament (SCCAP), to consult with Member Parliaments in order to formulate a road map for Asian Parliament, reflecting the emergence of the Asian Century;

Emphasizing that the creation of an Asian Parliament is a long term objective, various aspects of which need to be explored as stipulated in the report of APA Standing Committee on Political Affairs held on 2 June 2016 in Jordan;

Welcoming the decision made in the meeting of the SCCAP convened in Jordan in June 2016 and approved by the 9th APA Plenary meeting in 2016, that the SCCAP will function under the APA Standing Committee on Political Affairs;

Recalling the discussion of the SCCAP meeting held on 29 November 2016, Siem Reap, Kingdom of Cambodia;

Therefore, we the Members of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly,

1. **Reiterate** our resolve to continue efforts and support the fulfilment of SCCAP’s objectives;
2. **Support** the step by step and inclusive efforts of the SCCAP in promoting cooperation through consultation with Member Parliaments on common issues such as environment, poverty alleviation, trade and regional connectivity amongst others;
3. **Support** the creation of sub-regional groups in the APA for providing input to the SCCAP. The Sub-Regional groups for the purpose of the Asian Parliaments shall submit their input through the APA secretariat to the SCCAP which will place a report containing the proposals before the Standing Committee on Political Affairs before every plenary;



Draft Resolution on “Good Governance”

SC- Political/Draft Res/2017/02
15 March 2017

Realizing that good governance is inextricably linked to sustainable development which leads to stability and prosperity;

Recalling, UN Commission on Human Rights Resolution No.2005/68 of 20 April 2005, UN Human Rights Council Resolution No.7/11 of 27 March 2008 on “Good Governance for the Promotion of Human Rights” and as well as the “United Nations Millennium Declaration”;

Recognizing the importance of good governance in the achievement of SDGs;

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1976, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1976, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979, the Convention against Torture, 1987, the Convention on the Rights of Child, 1990, which provides every citizen, irrespective of gender, religion or race, a right to take part in the public affairs;

Therefore, we the Members of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly,

1. **Reiterate** that good governance is a key to achieving inclusive economic, social and institutional development;
2. **Recognizes** that transparency in all its forms and manifestations, free, responsible media, right to information, popular participation in government (India), and a vibrant civil society are the pillars of good governance;
3. **Suggests** that Member Parliaments may provide indicators for good governance;
4. **Stresses** upon the Member Parliaments to identify gaps in governance which may lead to poverty, injustice and terrorism resulting in the weakening of democratic institutions;
5. **Calls upon** Member Parliaments to ensure enhanced participation of women, youth and minorities in the national political process;



Draft Resolution on Rule of “Law and Judicial Empowerment”

SC- Political/Draft Res/2017/03

15 March 2017

Recalling the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which are indispensable foundations for a more peaceful, prosperous and a conflict free world;

Recognizing that the rule of law is essential for all states equally, and respect for and promotion of the rule of law and justice are the guiding principles for every state;

Further recognizing that all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, have a right to be accorded equal protection of the law and to be treated in accordance with the law, without any discrimination;

Recommending all members States Reaffirming the duty of all Member States to settle their international disputes through peaceful means, including, negotiation, dialogue, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and judicial settlement;

Further reaffirming that the rule of law is and the protection of human rights can realize through the empowerment of the judiciary;

Convinced that the rule of law and sustainable development are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing, and are an essential prerequisite for the realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms;

We, the members of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly

1. **Stress** the importance of civilian capacity development through rule of law;
2. **Stress** the importance of institutional strengthening by maintaining the rule of law;
3. **Urge** Member Parliaments to ensure compliance with international humanitarian laws, as they are an indispensable prerequisite for improving the situation of victims of armed conflict, through enactment of appropriate legislation and development of oversight mechanisms;
4. **Commit** to ensure that impunity is not tolerated for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity or for violations of international humanitarian law and gross violations of human rights law, based on the principles of shared responsibility and non-interference of States in the internal affairs of other States, in accordance with international law;

5. **Encourage** the promotion of a system of justice which incorporates the full range of judicial and non-judicial measures to ensure accountability, justice, provide remedies to victims, reconciliation, and establish independent oversight;
6. **Reiterate** our strong and unequivocal condemnation of terrorism and extremism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes, as it constitutes one of the most serious threats to the rule of Law; and
7. **Emphasize** the importance of our continued efforts for promotion of the rule of law in all its aspects, and to take steps to strengthen the rule of law for realization of peace and security, human rights and development.



Draft Resolution on “Good Parliamentary Practices”

SC- Political/Draft Res/2017/04
15 March 2017

Noting the ever increasing and assertive role of parliaments in public affairs and in the promotion of democratization for ensuring good governance;

Taking into account the fact that 181 states have adopted parliamentary systems for managing their national affairs;

Noting the cardinal role that parliaments play in a democratic polity and in addressing issues of public importance;

Recognizing that parliaments must be truly representative, transparent, accessible, accountable and effective in its functions;

We, the members of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly:

1. **Urge APA (Kuwait)** Member Parliaments to adopt transparent modes of public communications, through ensuring access of media to their administrative system and to develop their own websites and broadcasting channels;
2. Further **urge** APA Member Parliaments to devise effective outreach mechanisms for engagement with public, including, civil society, with a view to ensure their meaningful contribution in the legislative processes;
3. **Call** upon APA Member Parliaments to adopt measures for ensuring public confidence in the integrity of parliamentarians, through enforceable codes of conduct and transparency in managing the affairs of political parties and their funding;
4. **Encourage** APA Member Parliaments to streamline their legislative process by encouraging public hearing in respective constituencies;
5. Call upon APA Member Parliaments to ensure their effective participation at regional and international forums (India) with a view to promote transnational collaboration amongst Member Parliaments, and to devise a strategy towards this end by the APA;
6. **Also call** upon APA Member Parliaments to ensure their oversight of the executive, particularly, in the formulation of international policy, and to make recommendations to their respective governments towards a peaceful settlement of international disputes;

7. **Urge** APA Member Parliaments to adopt positive measures for ensuring a meaningful participation of women, minorities and marginalized communities in their working;
8. **Call** upon APA Member Parliaments to promote inter-parliamentary cooperation through formation of friendship groups and working groups on issues of common interest;
9. **Further** Call upon APA Member Parliaments to encourage developing democracies through sharing their experiences and best parliamentary practices and provide technical and other required support with a view to facilitate their process of democratization.



Draft Resolution on Building Prosperity in Asia Through Friendship and Cooperation

SC- Political/Draft Res/2017/05
15 March 2017

We the Members of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly

Recalling relevant APA resolutions on Advancing the Principles of Friendship and Cooperation in Asia (APA/Res/2015/01—11 December 2015); Resolution on Measures and Methods of Materialization of Principles of Friendship and Cooperation in Asia (APA/Res/2014/01— 3 December 2014); Resolution on Consolidation of Friendship and Cooperation in Asia (APA/Res/2013/01-- 9 December 2013); Resolution on Reinforcing the Declaration on Principles of Friendship and Cooperation in Asia (APA/Res/2010/09—30 November 2010); Resolution on Pursuing Implementation of the Declaration on the Principles of Friendship and Cooperation in Asia (APA/Res/2008/09, 29 November 2008) and Resolution on the Friendship Pact in Asia; (APA/Res/2007/06, dated 19 November 2007); Text of the Declaration on Principles of Friendship and Cooperation in Asia (APA/Res/2007/06/Annex, 19 November 2007);

Relying on deep-rooted ties of history, geography, culture, economy, politics, and civilization which bind Asian nations together;

Recognizing the amity and the friendly relations among the Asian Nations, Parliaments, and States as an indispensable asset which need to be further strengthened by all kinds of inter-governmental; inter-parliamentary as well as inter-national interaction and cooperation;

Deploring the current widespread war and violence in West Asia which undermine peace and security and entail massive killing and indiscriminate targeting of innocent people;

Offering in Good Faith all our capacities and capabilities in parliamentary diplomacy for mediation, reconciliation, and supporting dialogue with a view to promoting friendship and cooperation and contribute to peaceful resolution of conflicts in Asia;

Emphasizing the fundamental role of democracy and human rights in the promotion of friendship and cooperation in Asia and calling upon all Member Parliaments and their respective Governments to ensure equal and non-discriminatory access of their citizens to civil rights;

Reiterating the importance of the Declaration on the Principles of Friendly Relations in Asia as a proper framework for promoting peace and prosperity in Asia;

Encouraging further expansion of friendly relations including cultural, diplomatic, scientific, and commercial relations among all Asian States and further interaction among Asian Parliaments and Nations in pursuance of the purposes of the Declaration;

1. **Urge** collective and concerted efforts by all Asian States whose parliaments are APA Members to provide humanitarian assistance of all kinds to the vulnerable people in war- torn countries;
2. **Call Upon** all Asian States to direct their diplomatic efforts at reducing political tensions and utilize all ways and means within their power to avoid and de-escalate controversies which have potential to undermine principles of friendship and cooperation in Asia;
3. **Urge** Asian Parliaments to disseminate information about the APA Declaration on the Principles of Friendship and Cooperation in Asia by all available means including parliamentary and state publications, parliamentary friendship groups, public programs, etc.
4. **Decide** that every Member Parliament would motivate public and private media networks, websites and the like at local and national levels to engage in promoting and spreading the word about the content, importance and positive results of the adoption and implementation of the APA Declaration on the Principles of Friendship and Cooperation in Asia;
5. **Encourage** Asian academic institutions, think-tanks and research centers, universities and educational institutions, as well as professional associations throughout Asia to take part in promoting and adhering to the tenets and guidelines enshrined in the APA Declaration on the Principles of Friendship and Cooperation in Asia,
6. **Call upon** all APA Member Parliaments to inform the APA Secretariat of measures they have taken in promoting the APA Declaration on Principles of Friendship and Cooperation in Asia
7. **Request** the Secretary-General to continue his consultations and coordination with the APA Member Parliaments as well as interested Asian organizations and academic institutions for promoting further activities and joint initiatives pertaining to Friendship and Cooperation in Asia.



Draft Resolution on Asian Parliaments and Governments Together for Prosperity in Asia

SC- Political/Draft Res/2017/06
15 March 2017

We the Members of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA),

Recalling APA resolutions on Mobilizing Interactions Between APA and Asian Governments (APA/Res/2015/02—11 December 2015); Engaging APA with Asian Governments and Inter-Governmental Organizations (APA/Res/2014/02); Asian Parliaments and Governments: Together for Solidarity and Prosperity in Asia (APA/Res/2013/02 –9 December 2013); Measures for Enhancing Cooperation Between APA and Asian Governments (APA/Res/2010/11, 30 November 2010) and resolution on Enhancing Cooperation Between Asian Parliamentary Assembly Member Parliaments and Their Governments for Implementation of APA Decisions (APA/Res/2008/10, 29 November 2008);

Emphasizing the need to foster closer coordination and cooperation between APA and Governments of APA Member Parliaments;

Encouraging Member Parliaments to consider endorsing and adopting common legislations on issues of mutual interest to both APA and Asian Governments;

- 1. Urge** all Member Parliaments to inform relevant high-ranking officials of their respective governments of the great potentials, activities, and achievements of the APA as the largest inter-parliamentary organization in Asia and report thereon to the Secretariat for circulation;
- 2. Decide** to form APA parliamentary groups comprising nominated delegates from volunteer Member Parliaments under the supervision of the APA Vice-President for Political Affairs, and in full coordination with the APA Secretariat, to hold contacts and meetings with relevant inter-parliamentary and inter-governmental organizations, with a view to converging points of view and considering possible joint initiatives pertaining to regional and global issues, including the creation of an Asian Parliament;
- 3. Encourage** Member Parliaments to seek the views of their respective Governments on the subject of Asian Parliament and to contribute to the work of

the APA Special Committee on the Creation of Asian Parliament (SCCAP) by providing their points of views and analyses of the subject matter;

4. **Request** APA Member Parliaments to identify and describe their priority desirable topics for receiving training, as well their capabilities to offer training and best practices, and share them with other Parliaments through the APA Secretariat, in order to organize training programs on exchanging best practices and learning from each other;
5. **Request** the Vice-President for Political Affairs to report to the Executive Council and the Plenary Sessions on his/her activities pertaining to the formation of working groups from interested Member Parliaments to focus on the implementation of APA decisions on political affairs;
6. **Request** the Secretary-General to expand the scope of its contacts and communications with inter-governmental as well as inter-parliamentary organizations who work on issues relevant to the items on the APA agenda in order to facilitate further interaction and joint efforts on common grounds with a view to enhancing cooperation between Asian Parliaments and Governments and report thereon to the next session of the APA Standing Committee on Political Affairs and the Executive Council.



Draft Resolution on Asian Parliaments’ Unwavering Support for the Palestinian People

SC- Political/Draft Res/2017/07
15 March 2017

We, the Members of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly,

Recalling APA Resolutions on Supporting Palestinian State and Protecting Rights of Palestinian People, (APA/Res/2013/03, 9 December 2013); Violations of International Humanitarian Law in the Palestine and the War Crimes Committed By the Zionist Regime in Gaza (APA/Res/2009/01, 8 December 2009); and Humanitarian Crisis in Palestine Particularly in the Gaza Strip (APA/Res/2008/08, 29 November 2008);

Inspired by the Principles and objectives enshrined in the APA Charter and the relevant APA resolutions;

Committed to contribute to the promotion of peace and security at regional and global levels on the basis of justice and the rule of law;

Affirming the responsibility of the international community to support implementation of resolutions and recommendations of the United Nations Security Council; the UN General Assembly; the Human Rights Council; and the APA pertinent to the situation in Palestine, particularly Al-Quds Al-Sharif;

Supporting the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital,

Denouncing the declared intention of the US to transfer its embassy and discouraging the transfer of any other embassy to Jerusalem;

Expressing serious concerns on Israel’s lack of commitment to abide by resolutions and recommendations of the UN Security Council, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and the APA regarding the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, particularly in Al-Quds Al-Sharif;

Reaffirming the applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention relative to the protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to the occupied Palestinian territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif;

Recognizing that Israel’s severe violations of international humanitarian law and of the human rights of Palestinian people undermine international efforts towards achieving a just and lasting peace in the region;

1. **Urge** all Members of the APA to support and treat the State of Palestine as a full member of the United Nations
2. **Denounce** all violations of international law which threaten international peace and security including all acts of terrorism and organized crimes; and violations of human rights committed by the Israeli occupying forces in Palestine.
3. **Encourage** all members of the international community to put pressure on Israel to immediately release all the Palestinian prisoners including the Members of the Palestinian Parliament; dismantle all illegal settlements as well as the entire separating wall and put an end to confiscating Palestinian lands.
4. **Declare** all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, including expropriation of land and properties which tend to change the legal status of Jerusalem as invalid and bearing no legal effect on their original status.
5. **Condemn** Israel's continuation of building settlements defying applicable international law; disregarding the legitimate rights of the Palestinian People including their right to resist and protest against foreign occupation of their lands; and hampering international efforts towards achieving a just and lasting peace in the region;
6. **Express** grave concerns on the suppression and injustice, as well as continuing violence practiced against people, particularly women and children, in the occupied Palestinian territories under the Israeli occupation including East Jerusalem, and in the Syrian Golan occupied by Israel;
7. **Call Upon** all members of the APA and the United Nations as well as all regional and international organizations concerned, particularly the United Nations Security Council and the International Criminal Court to address, under the UN Charter and the Rome Statute, the crimes against humanity and the war crimes committed by Israel in Palestine which threaten the international peace and security;
8. **Praise** the decision taken by the European Union not to purchase any products produced in the settlements based in the occupied territories and call on states of the APA Member Parliaments to act in a similar way;
9. **Demand** Israel to stop the systematic destruction of the Palestinian cultural heritage as well as the destruction of public and private properties, as laid down in the Fourth Geneva Convention;
10. **Reject** the unlawful resolutions adopted by the Israeli Knesset such as Judaisation of the Jerusalem and the Citizenship Loyalty Law, denying the State of Palestine and the rights of Palestinian People in the occupied territories;
11. **Call Upon** the international community to fulfill its pledges to rebuild infrastructure and rehabilitate people in Gaza which have been destroyed by Israeli forces.