

Plan of Action for Protecting and Respecting Cultural Diversity in Asia

COGNIZANT of the fact that Asia has been the cradle of the great religions, ancient civilizations and cultures;

INSPIRED by the Charter of Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) and based on the decision of Tehran Declaration;

EMPHASIZING that cultural diversity, as an inevitable reality, relating to the past, and the future of human civilizations should be preserved and appreciated by communities and individuals;

EMPHASIZING that humanity enjoys a unified and essential nature, and cultural diversity helps to bring about creativity, innovation and sustainable development;

BEING AWARE that cultural diversity as well as lingual plurality while reflecting different aspects of human life in Asia, it facilitates the enrichment of each culture and provides the ground for constructive interactions among them;

CONSIDERING that long-lasting peace depends on respect for cultural and value systems of different communities and recognizing that each human being should enjoy prosperity within a specific culture;

AFFIRMING that cultural rights is an integral part of citizenship as well as human rights, with due consideration to national, historical and cultural characteristics of each Asian nations;

ENCOURAGING dialogue and understanding among cultures and religions to fostering Asian common values and enhancing cooperation, aimed at promotion of peace and friendship as well as the prevention of war, violence and discrimination;

CONSCIOUS OF the fact that globalization has brought challenges in regard to cultural identities;

REAFFIRMING that in the new world situation cultural diversity continues to illustrate the strength of Asia;

To formulate policies and strategies to protect and respect cultural diversity at both regional and continental levels, we, the members of Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), approve the establishment of a "sub-committee within the APA to facilitate the following mandates:

To enhance the role of Asia as the ancient cultural continent with great spiritual and material capacities in order to facilitate cooperation and integration among Asian nations,

To facilitate exchanges and interactions in art and cultural fields such as music, literature, sport and film industry for promotion of cooperation and understanding,

To invite countries to cooperate in formulating their school curricula that helps promote national and cultural identities. Students should be encouraged to respect cultural diversity and to learn other cultures and languages,

To promote educational and cultural exchanges such as cooperation among ministries of education including cooperation on accreditation among universities and other educational institutions granting scholarships, comparative studies, and establishment of cultural “chairs” in universities, in order to remove misperceptions and enhance solidarity among cultures,

To encourage educational institutions to disseminate non biased and accurate information in regard to different religions to promote constructive and respectful interactions among them,

To formulate common cultural policies through mass media such as production of documentaries, movies and books focusing on cultural diversity,

To provide venues for promoting knowledge and understanding among cultures in Asia and fostering interfaith dialogue and dialogue among cultures and civilizations in order to consolidate peace and friendship,

To facilitate an Asian cross cultural program through easy and rapid access to internet for general public in such a way that exchange of ideas and views can easily be achieved,

To assist in organizing conferences, seminars and workshops, with participation of different groups and strata such as intellectuals and scholars to enhance dialogue and understanding,

To encourage media, research and educational institutions as well as non governmental organizations (NGO) to support dialogue among cultures and to protect different cultural identities,

To build up a joint action plan to utilize information technology to protect and promote cultural, national and ethnic identities of Asian nations in order to address

the challenges of globalization,

To develop necessary mechanism for utilizing variety of cultural capacities in economic development,

To help expand tourism in Asia in order to attain non-biased objective knowledge of different life-styles and constructive interaction among Asian countries,

To formulate cultural policies for protecting and introducing Asian cultural heritage and increase cooperation to combat smuggling and illicit traffic of cultural items,

To encourage big economic institutions to respect cultural diversity and allocate a percentage of their income for promotion of cultural identities,

To set up channels for utilizing the capacities of specialized international organizations such as UNESCO, ISESCO, to introduce Asian culture in world community,

To help countries to prepare annual report concerning the implementation of this plan of action and to review current challenges and possible opportunities.
