

Resolution on Measures to Promote Cultural Diversity and Protect Cultural Heritage in Asia

**APA/Plenary/SC- Social/Res/2019/01**

**16 December 2019**

*We, the Members of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly,*

***Recalling***APA Resolutions, APA/Res/2013/05; APA/Res/2010/05; APA/Res/2009/05; APA/Res/2008/17; and APA/Res/2007/02; on Protecting and Respecting Cultural Diversity in Asia;

***Considering***the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, 1954, and its protocols;

***Recognizing***the significant role of parliaments both in safeguarding their respective national cultural heritage and in harmonizing Asian approach in respect of cultural diversity;

***Emphasizing***that cultural diversity is dependent on protection of cultural heritage, and the existence of common grounds among Asian ancient civilizations provide solid grounds for co-existence and co-operation among nations in the region;

***Reaffirming***that cultural heritage is a fundamental component of the cultural identity of a people and their social cohesion, and its disrespect, damage or destruction may have adverse consequences for human dignity and human rights; particularly the rights of marginalized communities;

***Recognizing*** that tolerance is one of the fundamental values of humanity, which entails promotion of cultural diversity, culture of peace, and dialogue among civilizations;

***Recognizing*** the increasing importance of culture, as an integral part of development plans of all nations in Asia and beyond;

***Promoting*** greater understanding and respect among civilizations, cultures and religions by means of concrete projects in the priority areas of youth, education, and media, in collaboration with governments, international and regional organizations, in line with the outcome of the first World Cultural Forum, in Bali, Indonesia in November 2013 and document entitled “Bali Declaration on the Alliance of Civilizations”, held in Bali, Indonesia, in 29 and 30 August 2014;

***Reiterating***that multicultural dynamism in Asia provides as an indispensable asset for making a strong Asian community based on mutual respect and recognition of all Asian cultures and civilizations;

***Acknowledging*** that Cultural heritage has always been considered as an important resource for tourism and indispensable element for many travel tours;

***Noting*** that the exploitation of cultural heritage in tourism activities should not make any negative consequences on the local culture and environment;

***Noting*** that globalization creates opportunities for greater interaction among cultures and civilizations while bringing about challenges in preserving and celebrating the rich intellectual and cultural diversity in Asia

***Noting*** that the establishment of the Asian Cultural Council (ACC) under the framework of the International Conference of the Asian Political Parties (ICAPP) shall serve as an important platform for culture of peace, sustainable development, human connectivity and innovation at the Siem Reap Declaration;

***Recalling*** the 1970 UNESCO Convention on Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property to protect the cultural heritage in Asia;

***Considering*** that the smuggling of cultural objects from Asia poses a threat to the richness of Asian cultural heritage and underlines the important role of parliaments to both raise public awareness about this challenge and to strengthen it, where necessary;

***Deploring***the unrepairable damage brought to cultural and religious heritage by terrorism and organized crimes, especially damages to all religious and historical sites and holy shrines by indiscriminate bombing and shelling in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan;

***Condemning***Israeli attacks on Al-Aqsa mosque, the excavations and infringements on all Islamic and Christian holy sites in the 1961 occupied Palestinian territories and refuse Israel’s failure to comply with UNESCO resolutions concerning East Jerusalem;

***Expressing*** grave concerns regarding theft, damage, or destruction to any place of worship of any religion, cultural, religious, or historical heritage in Asia;

We therefore,

1. **Determine** to encourage and promote further intercultural dialogue and inter-religious exchanges throughout Asia;
2. **Resolve** to appreciate and promote the benefits of diversity and good governance among Asian nations, and encourage values such as justice, human rights, non-discrimination, democracy and respect within and among communities and nations;
3. **Reject** all manifestations of discrimination that are based on racism, xenophobia and all other related forms of intolerance;
4. **Remain Committed** to the protection of the rights of all communities, where applicable, so as to ensure the fulfillment of community rights
5. **Urge** relevant governmental agencies to further facilitate consular services as appropriate for citizens of Asian countries to allow for greater people-to-people interaction;
6. **Acknowledge** that illegal import, export and transfer of ownership of cultural property and artifacts are responsible for the impoverishment of the cultural identity of the countries of origin of such property;
7. **Decide** to remain cognizant of damages to religious holy places and historical sites by ISIS and other terrorist organizations in our home continent;
8. **Resolve** to cooperate to prevent illegal import, export or transfer of cultural property and artifacts among Asian countries and beyond;
9. **Urge** Member Parliaments to consider ratifying the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage;
10. **Call Upon** all Member Parliaments to promote tolerance and empathy among Asian nations with a view to diminish distrust, misunderstanding, and conflict among religious communities;
11. **Strongly Recommend** APA Member Parliaments to promote tourism in association with conservation and protection of cultural heritage;
12. **Reiterate** that during armed conflict, states should adopt measures to safeguard the cultural and natural heritage of a nation in conformity with international law and the principles and objectives of international agreements and UNESCO recommendations concerning the protection of such heritage during hostilities;
13. **Reiterate** that Member Parliaments should adopt measures to safeguard and restore the cultural and natural heritage of nations in conformity with International law and the principles of objectives of international agreements and UNESCO recommendations concerning the protection of such heritage during hostilities, including those caused by conflicts and violent extremism;
14. **Request** the APA Secretary General to uphold cooperation between APA and international and regional organizations such as UNESCO, United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), ISESCO and relevant Asian NGOs active in promoting cultural diversity and dialogue among civilizations;
15. **Call upon** APA Member Parliaments to support establishing an award to be presented annually to outstanding Asian artists; authors, poets, film makers, painters, etc. who best convey the APA’s commitment to cultural diversity in Asia;
16. **Request** the APA Secretary General to work with the universities and research institutions in the Asian region to do researches and studies on the identification and promotion of common cultural aspects of the Asian countries.