Honorable Speakers,

Honorable Secretary-General,

Honorable Members of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, allow me to express my pleasure to address you today in the Kingdom of Cambodia. I wish to express our heartfelt appreciation for the Kingdom of Cambodia and the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia for their warm hospitality.

The world is going through a period of major transformation and change whose effects are being deeply felt. One the one hand, several crises threaten global stability in a range of regions from the Middle East to Africa, while on the other hand, several issues such as poverty, unfair distribution of wealth, racism and islamophobia, climate and environmental issues, cross-border terrorism and refugee crisis require solutions.

The wave of transformation that defines the challenges we are faced with is not limited to politics. We are experiencing a period in which new centers of economic activity emerge and the centre of gravity of the global economy is shifting from the West to the East, to Asian economies.

Against this background, I believe that, the APA provides significant contributions to stability, prosperity and development in Asia in its role as the biggest inter-parliamentary organization in Asia. As a significant institution which applies parliamentary diplomacy, an indispensable element of the contemporary world, the APA's work in a wide range of areas including in socio-cultural, political and economic areas is of significance in Asia and beyond.

Dear Guests,

Turkey is located in a region that is a crisis hot spot. The whole world has recently focused on this region. We are also inevitably affected by upheavals taking place in our region and increasing in violence and magnitude every other day.

As the fifth year of the civil war in Syria is coming to an end, we continue to host in Turkey our Syrian brothers and sisters who had no other choice but to leave their homes and homeland. We do so under our policy of open door in a period in which the West is building walls of shame. Turkey currently hosts more than two million seven hundred thousand refugees and according to the figures of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, it is the country hosting the highest number of refugees in the world.

Turkey has received without any hesitation and with open arms its brothers and sisters in their difficult days. This has entailed for us a financial burden of over 25 billion USD including the contributions of humanitarian assistance organizations. We continue to bear, alone, this burden under our humanitarian and international obligations with only a minor contribution of international community.

The acts of terrorist organizations that exploited the ongoing chaos in the region to extend their influence and power have reached a dimension that directly threatens our national security. The terrorist attacks perpetrated in Turkey by DAESH that claimed the lives of hundreds of Turkish citizens show clearly the magnitude of the threat we are facing. To the acts of DAESH, have been recently added PKK’s intensifying cowardly attacks. In this context, we are pressing ahead with extensive operations launched against terrorist groups in Syria and Irak that threaten public order and security of our citizens.

On the other hand, as you know, on 15 July, our democracy in Turkey faced a coup attempt staged by Gülenist Terrorist Organization (FETO).

On that night, terrorists disguised as soldiers departed from barracks and tried to take control of state and media institutions as well as strategic points in city centres including in particular İstanbul and capital city of Ankara and to change the legitimate government. In terms of its magnitude, this was an attempt at invading the country.

These treacherous terrorists who were members of an illegal gang and most of whom were bearing military uniforms attempted to put an end to Turkey’s democratic and legal integrity and to put in place a military junta administration despite the popular will. On that dark night when our democracy faced an attack, unfortunately, 248 Turkish citizens fell martyr and 2,193 were injured.

At those moments when the attacks were continuing full-fletched, our parliamentarians across the board came to the parliament although it was not a working day, and they held a meeting that lasted all night long. While we were in meeting at the Plenary Hall that night, our Parliamentary building was bombed, wounding some parliamentarians and staff members. The next day, upon the the call of the Speaker of the Turkish Parliament for an extraordinary meeting, all the political parties represented in our Parliament convened once again and issued a joint declaration proclaiming to the whole world their commitment to democracy and their opposition to all sorts of coups. The people took to the streets upon the call of President Erdogan and thus prevented the coup.

Let me give you a warning. FETO poses a threat against national security not only for Turkey but for all the 170 countries where it is active. The tactics they used in Turkey are also used by them in other countries. The organisation’s main strategy is to infiltrate state institutions, primarily intelligence, security and judiciary institutions, to influence the society and to take control of economic resources under the guise of education, dialogue, tolerance and civil society activity. This organization, which lacks values and morals, staged conspiracy plots against leading figures of the Turkish society, by deeming any instrument legitimate to achieve its vile objectives from wiretapping to secret filming to stealing exam questions and attempted to stage a coup when they felt they were at their strongest. I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to call all our friends to swiftly take all actions against Gülenist Terrorist Organization to protect their security and future of their countries to cooperate with Turkey in this direction. We request that our call is put on record as such.

Our country has suffered a lot from terrorism and will continue to fight against all forms of terrorism, no matter what the name – DAESH, PKK, PYD or FETO; I assure you that Turkey has an undisputable determination to fight against terrorism. We are also expecting our allies to fight all sorts of terrorism without making any distinction between them and through a principled approach. An organisation perpetrating a suicide attack in Ankara, Istanbul, Lahore, Kabul, Aleppo, Gaza is a terrorist organisation. So are the others perpetrating a suicide attack in Brussels and Paris. We must be able to say "Je suis Lahore, Aleppo, Kabul, Istanbul, Ankara, Gaza just as we say "Je suis Paris, je suis Brussels" and act in an equally sensitive manner regardless of the location of such terrorist attacks.

It is necessary to fight all of them and their sister organizations with the same degree of determination. International community must adopt that principle and act accordingly. Terrorism has no religion, ethnicity or nationality. We must put up a joint fight against all terrorist organizations regardless of their location or target of their acts.

Dear guests,

It took a long time, many hardships and efforts of many states for the world to reach its current level of democracy and universal values such as human rights and rule of law on which it built a new civilization. All these values involved a centuries-long struggle and cost many lives. The world will continue to pay other costs in order to strengthen and expand these values. This means that we have to defend all together democracy, human rights and rule of law for future generations, just as people before us worked together to make these universal values. I believe that the APA will continue to play a key role in defending and protecting these values.

To support the Asian Parliamentary Assembly in this role, Turkey will continue to deal with regional and global developments through a human-centred approach and to take a leading role in peace-building actions based on stability and development, as it has done before.

We are saddened and affected by the cases of instability, conflicts and humanitarian emergencies that take place in most of our close neighbour countries with which we have close historical, cultural and social links. It will remain a priority for Turkey to make all the efforts possible to solve such cases and to heal the wounds.

Dear Guests,

To conclude, I wish you a successful and fruitful 9th Plenary of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly and congratulate primarily the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia and all those who have contributed to the successful conduct of the meeting.

We take pride in the Turkish Parliament's taking over the Presidency of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly for 2017-2018; and thank you for your strong support. On this occasion, I would like to express that we will be pleased to host you in our country during our term as President of the APA.

I would like to renew our call regarding the Gulenist Terrorist Organization and call upon all our friends in Asia to swiftly take all necessary measures against the Gulenist Terrorist Organization for their own security and cooperate with Turkey in this direction. It is my hope that cooperation with the APA members in our struggle against the Gulenist Terrorist Organization will be reflected in the closing declaration of this Conference.

I would like to conclude my speech with a video regarding the bloody coup attempt staged by the Gulenist Terrorist Organization.

Thank you for your attention.

Thank you.