****

**Statement by**

**His Excellency Dr. Mohammad Reza Majidi**

**APA Secretary-General**

**At the 140th IPU Assembly**

**On the Theme of General Debate**

“*Parliaments as platform to enhance education for peace, security and the rule of law*”

**April 2019**

**Doha, Qatar**

**Statement by His Excellency Dr. Mohammad Reza Majidi**

**Secretary General of Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA)**

**At**

**140th  IPU Assembly**

**April 2019, Doha- Qatar**

**Mr. President,**

**Distinguished Delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is a great pleasure for me to address this august assembly in my capacity as Secretary General of Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA); a parliamentary body that accommodates over 42 member parliaments. The core intention behind creation of this Assembly was to pave a suitable bedrock for integration in Asia, despite diversity of the prevailing cultural, social and religious visions in this region. Since my election as Secretary General of this highly important Parliamentary Assembly, I have spared no effort to follow the IPU’s footstep as a longstanding international parliamentary body, which has immensely endeavored to bring into fruition the real essence of parliamentary diplomacy worldwide. In fact, IPU’s years of fruitful experience can help us to make our representative body in Asia a success.

**Mr. /Madame President**,

**Honorable delegates,**

The major theme placed this time in the agenda of 140th IPU Assembly under general debate item encompasses a wide spectrum of issues that directly intertwined with our everyday life at both national and international level.

“Parliaments as platform to enhance education for peace, security and the rule of law”

Within the context of this theme, allow me at the outset to draw your attention to the fact that I represent a parliamentary organization in Asia raison *d’etre* of its creation primarily centers on promotion of peace at regional and international level.

The Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace (AAPP), which, later changed into Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) grew out of the collective desire and concerted effort of legislators and members of civil society in Asia to promote peace in general and in the Asian region, in particular. It was with this mindset that APA was born nearly two decades ago with the following main objectives:

1. Provide a forum for parliamentarians to exchange views, ideas and experiences for developing common strategies for promotion of peace in Asia and the world,
2. Foster cooperation and coordination among parliamentarians in Asia for promotion of peace and respect for human rights and humanitarian principles,
3. Provide a forum for parliamentarians, and civil society organizations for promotion of peace,

Escalation of tensions in our region, particularly in the Middle East during the last decade, has made APA to discharge its commitment through peacebuilding process, based on the rule of law with close contribution of its member parliaments, urging them to enact legislations, which can better serve to the promotion of dialogues, reconciliation and culture of peace. To this end, APA has spared no efforts to express its deep concern over exertion of unilateral measures in defiance of all international instruments to subjugate sovereign governments and has succeeded in adopting unanimously several resolutions in this respect.

Furthermore, APA has repeatedly stressed on various occasions through adoption of resolutions that multilateralism and multilateral processes are essential tools in addressing the common threats and challenges, rejecting the interventionist tendencies and unilateral pre-emptive action in international relations which jeopardize the rule of law.

Therefore, building peace as the key element for strengthening security and the rule of law cannot be won with hard power only. We need soft power also; we need to win the battle of ideas, through education, through democratic debate, through a better understanding of each other's cultures. To this end, it is the core responsibility of parliaments to play their critical role to address the challenges of our times, when not everything could be tackled at the level of Governments alone.

I conclude my statement, adding that Parliaments are committed to encourage, through the educational system, intercultural and interreligious dialogue with a view to promoting tolerance, trust and mutual understanding.  Consequently, we strongly advocate that parliamentarians should invest time and efforts to build up the mechanisms through educational programmes in schools and universities in order to pave the way for strengthening peace, security and rule of law.

Thank you for your attention