

**First Working Group meeting**

**on Asian Parliament**

**Bangkok, Thailand**

14 Feb. 2019

**Background:**

1-During the Standing Committee meeting on Political Affairs in Gwadar, Pakistan, October 2018, Participants discussed the topic of AP within the context of SCCAP. They all emphasized that the creation of AP is a long term project with various aspects which need to be further explored. Based on the proposals raised in the meeting, APA secretariat was tasked to communicate to all MP's to get their views on establishment of a Working Group on AP under Standing Committee on Political Affairs with the same mandate as that of SCCAP.

2-Secretariat prepared a Questionnaire and asked each APA member Parliament to respond and nominate one permanent contact person to attend this working group. Whenever an acceptable number of MPs responded, the WG will formally start its work.

3-At the meeting of Standing Committee on Political Affairs in Istanbul during the meeting of General Assembly November 2018, the Thai delegation offered to host the first Working Group meeting in Bangkok on the sideline of SC on Social and Cultural Affairs.

4- The first WG-AP was held on 14 Feb. 2019 with participation of interested APA members, after the closing session of SC on Social and Cultural Affairs in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting was chaired by Iran as the Chairman of Political Standing Committee.

5- The Secretariat briefed the meeting on the responses received so far from 10 member parliaments: Bahrain, Bhutan, Cyprus, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lao PDR, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and encouraged other members to respond as soon as possible.

6- The following remarks were raised by delegations:

* Pakistan: …this whole process needs the involvement of academia, intellectuals, civil society, government and business executives and experts from Asia as well as other regional and international parliamentary bodies organizations to have focused deliberations and inclusive proposals on Asian Parliament... the character of the Asian Parliament should be more than a forum, and should have “limited-Executive” characteristics… in terms of legislative competence, we are of the opinion that it will evolve with the passage of time and take shape. However, initially, we may at least acknowledge or respond to legislations in common areas of cooperation… The Working Group may consider commissioning a formal study to develop a clear roadmap of the Asian Parliament under its supervision… Resolution, “Towards Asian Parliament”, be discussed… the APA Secretariat may ensure the holding of Working Group on Asian Parliament Meeting on the side-lines of every scheduled Committee Meeting… Pakistan is ready to host any special working group meeting.
* Kuwait:…We should expedite the process towards our objectives…agree with Pakistan to draw a clear road map and time table plus a steering committee to gather ideas to produce an outcome of main concepts of AP and report to Political Standing Committee…lets initiate the working group today...no more brain storming…we are ready to host the WG-AP with a limited number of participants…
* Russia: We support more specific decisions and plan of work…Do we need AP?...is it possible to have one?...what is the organizational basis for AP?...we should consider the model of European Parliament etc... governments should be involved…we cannot proceed without engaging the Ministry of Foreign Affairs…we propose those parliaments such as Pakistan who support the creation of AP to discuss the matter with their own MFA and report to our meeting…
* Jordan: we call on the Secretariat to send the questionnaire along with response received so far to all member parliament…stress on advisory nature of the AP.
* Cambodia: We are ready to contribute through academia to AP process.
* Turkey: We can host the meeting in Istanbul but we welcome holding the WG-AP in Kuwait.

**The Chairman’s summation:**

1. The venue of the next meeting of WG-AP will be in Kuwait.
2. It was agreed to hold the next meeting within 15 days.
3. Call on all APA Parliaments to actively participate in the next open ended meeting of WG-AP.
4. Due to the insufficient numbers of responses received by the Secretariat, all MPs are urged to respond to questionnaire as soon as possible.

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