



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

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;

Also Recalling the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted by the UNESCO General Conference at the 31st session, held in Paris on November 2, 2001";

Considering the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, 1954, and its protocols and UNESCO 2005 Convention on Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expression;

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 protection, conservation and management of the diverse Cultural and Natural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value in Asia declared under the Convention concerning *the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, 1972 is the responsibility of its member states and joint collaborative efforts, wherever necessary, may be made towards their safeguarding for posterity;

Recalling the UNESCO 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage; and UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage;

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;

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

Also 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;

Taking note of the UAE initiative to establish the Abrahamic Family House to serve as a focal point including the followers of the three divine religions. The House includes a mosque, a church, and a synagogue side by side. It also promotes understanding, introduces the notion of religions as a foundation for dialogue and tolerance among religions and cultures;

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 gaining knowledge about country’s history and culture 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;

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

Realizing 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 ,Afghanistan and Yemen;

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's¹ failure the Occupying Power to comply with UNESCO resolutions concerning the Old City of Jerusalem and its walls²;

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;

¹ Iran registered its reservation on word "Israel"

² The Philippines registered its reservation on whole para

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. **Emphasize** on the illegality of any change brought about by the Israeli occupation in the Old City of Jerusalem and its surroundings, as it is included in the list of World Heritage in Danger, and rejecting any change in its historical, civilizational, religious and cultural character, in violation of international conventions, such as the Geneva and Hague Conventions, and the relevant UNESCO and UN Security Council resolutions, which considered all these measures null and void, and demanded their immediate halt, and allow the UNESCO mission to investigate the facts about the excavations and tunnels carried out by the occupation under the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque;
14. **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;
15. **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, Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) and relevant Asian NGOs active in promoting cultural diversity and dialogue among civilizations;
16. **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;
17. **Encourage** the parliamentarians to support their governments outreaching to civil society about the importance of cultural diversity in societies and developing strategic plans and projects to develop the cultural sector to promote dialogue among civilizations and cultures based on mutual respect, towards consolidating the concept of humanity and promote human rights, dignity, and identity;
18. **Stress** on the important role the private sector can play in promoting cultural diversity, encouraging the development of plans and mechanisms to create a space

for dialogue between the private and public sectors to develop plans to manage, protect, and promote cultural diversity in Asia;

19. **Also stress** on the important role the parliamentarians can play in developing policies and legislation to promote the principles enshrined in the UNESCO World Day for Cultural Diversity in their countries and to develop appropriate mechanisms for developing plans and regulatory frameworks to manage the cultural heritage sites, by identifying the cultural importance of these sites, maintaining their authenticity and preserving their value while respecting international laws for cultural diversity;
20. **Call upon** the APA Member's Parliaments to support the cultural diversity including respect to regional and national particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, as part of intangible asset and heritage of human culture.