

ASIA-PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM (APPF)

24TH ANNUAL MEETING

RESOLUTION APPF24/RES.21

BUILDING THE TOOLS OF DEMOCRACY

(Sponsored by Chile)

The 24th Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum;

Considering that the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) is a parliamentary body that has become a crucial entity at the moment of generating cooperation amongst the countries of the region through a clear and constructive dialogue able to set the basis for peace, stability and prosperity in the region;

Conscious of the fact that the Declaration of Tokyo 1993, the Declaration of Vancouver 1997, the Declaration of Valparaíso 2001 and the New Declaration of Tokyo 1993 have established the permanent objectives and principles of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum that involve the respect for the universal values of regional peace, freedom, democracy and the fundamental human rights;

Recalling Resolution N°2 on Regional Cooperation in the Asia Pacific Region for the Promotion of Democracy, Participation and Political Leadership of Women adopted during the 23rd Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum held in Quito, Ecuador on January 14th, 2015;

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948, in particular Article 21, which like the International Pact on Civil and Political Rights adopted in 1966, guarantees that everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, to have equal access to public service, to vote and to be elected;

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which sets forth in its Article 21 (3) “The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures”;

Reassuring the commitments adopted by the APPF member countries through the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Covenant on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. All of them guarantee the protection and promotion of men and women's fundamental rights, as part of the human dignity of every person without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or any other status;

Bearing in mind resolution A/RES/70/1 of the United Nations General Assembly adopted on September 25th 2015 where the 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development was agreed, taking into account also the Millennium Development Goals agreed during the 2000 United Nations Millennium Summit;

Positively Valuing the Universal Declaration on Democracy adopted in 1997 by the Inter Parliamentary Union, which in its Article 1 defines democracy as "a universally recognized ideal as well as a goal, which is based on common values shared by peoples throughout the world community, irrespective of cultural, political, social and economic differences". In its Article 2, it states that Democracy is both an ideal to be pursued and a mode of government "to be applied according to modalities which reflect the diversity of experiences and cultural particularities without derogating from internationally recognized principles, norms and standards";

Recalling Article 7 of the Inter American Democratic Charter (2001) which recognizes the link between democracy and human rights when it states that "Democracy is indispensable for the effective exercise of fundamental freedoms and human rights in their universality, indivisibility and interdependence, embodied in the respective constitutions of states and in inter-American and international human rights instruments";

Stressing the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document passed by the United Nations General Assembly where in number 135 the relationship between democracy and the right of free determination is highlighted when it states that democracy "is a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives";

Considering the Democracy Program submitted in 1996 by the United Nations General Secretary before the United Nations Organization General Assembly;

RESOLVES TO:

1. **Reaffirm** the commitments adopted by the APPF Member States in relation to the protection and promotion of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that constitute the cornerstone of any democracy. Therefore it is essential for Parliament Members to carry out their legislative, representative and controlling duties considering human rights;
2. **Exhort** the APPF Member States to double their efforts in order to advance in the consolidation of the rule of law and the democratic institutions promoting equal access to justice, fighting against corruption, ensuring accountability, transparency and free access to information through the implementation of technology and communication in public administration;
3. **Urge** the countries of the region to celebrate free, fair and competitive elections held at regular intervals on the basis of universal equal and secret suffrage, credible and perceived by the people as such. Therefore, impartial and independent election entities are required, with clear mandate, resources and will to carry out their duties;
4. **Renew** countries' commitment to lay the basis for building a robust civil society, promoting the participation of men and women, handicapped people, indigenous and tribal peoples, and migrants, with the aim of guaranteeing the promotion of their interests, the expression of their concerns and active participation in the process of making decisions that rule all aspects of their lives;
5. **Ask** the nations of the Asia Pacific to promote civil education and the building of a democratic culture based on the right to freedom of opinion and expression and on the values of mutual respect, tolerance and diversity;
6. **Reiterate** the commitment of the APPF Member States and their Parliament Members to work together to overcome poverty and inequality progressively under the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through policies focused on human development and gender equality, the promotion of growth and employment, of measures to distribute income and of policies showing respect for the environment;
7. **Encourage** the countries to continue to implement measures to increase regional security and peace, as both are critical aspects of a strong long lasting democracy based on regional cooperation and exchange of experiences and information to jointly and coordinately face up threats coming from terrorist activities, piracy, drug trafficking and organized crime;

8. **Request** the countries to promote preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution mechanisms, laying the bases for disputes to be solved peacefully through the strengthening of channels for dialogue at local, provincial and national levels, and the building of trust among the different areas of society;
9. **Urge** the Asia Pacific countries one more time to cooperate in the creation of a regional and international environment favorable to build and strengthen democracy by promoting pacific relations amongst the states, providing an incentive for the cooperation amongst authorities in issues related to peace, safety and justice, and creating the basis so that decision making be in agreement with international law and a good representative of the citizenship.