

CONCEPT NOTE OF APPF 26 (18-21/1/2018)

“PARLIAMENTARY PARTNERSHIP: PEACE, INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”

OVERVIEW

Ushering in the 21st century, the world in general, the Asia-Pacific region in particular has experienced substantial and drastic changes, challenges and opportunities intertwined. Despite complex security background, cooperation for peace, security, sustainable development and inclusive growth maintains a prevailing trend. The Asia-Pacific region, since the first APPF Annual Meeting in 1993, has been the most dynamic engine of the global growth. Together with the development in the state diplomacy, parliamentary diplomacy has been promoted actively, illustrated by the more active engagement of the parliamentarians at different inter-parliamentary organizations and forums such as Inter-Parliamentary Union, Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum and the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly.

Therefore the role of parliamentarians should be enhanced, the cooperation between parliamentarians, the peoples' elected representatives, should be fostered substantially as well as the partnership is to be cemented in order to contribute to peace, innovation and sustainable development of almost 3 billion people living in the 27 APPF Member countries. In this regard, APPF has to bring into full play its catalytic and stimulus role.

From 18 to 21 January 2018, the National Assembly of S.R. Vietnam will host the 26th Annual Meeting of the APPF in Hanoi, Vietnam. The Meeting's plenary sessions will focus on different elements of the following theme “***Parliamentary Partnership for Peace, Innovation and Sustainable development***”.

THE MEETING OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

Gender equality is the 5th Goal out of 17 Sustainable Development Goals, meaning that gender equality is a top priority for all of our countries and one of the benchmarks of progress against which our countries' development and growth will be measured. Although progress has been made towards gender equality and women's empowerment under the Millennium Development Goals, in many parts of the world, women and girls continue to suffer discrimination and violence. Thus, gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.

In order to implement this goal effectively and properly for sustainable development and prosperity, parliamentarians need to assume a more active role. Parliamentarians should be engaged in all steps of decision-making processes, whether at the global, regional or national level, in different arenas. Parliaments should be recognized as key players both nationally and internationally. It is important to encourage APPF Women Parliamentarians be engaged in debates and actions to promote gender equality. Therefore, the topic of the Meeting “Promoting gender equality for sustainable development and shared prosperity” reflects the determination to turn words into action for gender equality in the region.

POLITICAL AND SECURITY MATTERS

The first plenary session will focus on the topic of “Promoting parliamentary diplomacy for peace, security and prosperity in the region and the world”. Under this topic, issues that relate to

peace, security in Asia-the Pacific region shall be discussed in a way to promote friendship and cooperation with the critical role of parliamentary diplomacy. The current background of international relations requires stronger engagement of parliamentarians in enabling legislations to strengthen political will and improvement of conflict prevention measures for the sake of peace, prosperity and inclusive, sustainable growth.

One alarming issue that many countries across the region and the world face these days is terrorism and trans-border crime such as drugs trafficking, money laundering, human trafficking etc, which day by day threaten the people's well-being and erode the values of mankind. Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) countries have recognized that terrorism poses a direct threat to secure, open and prosperous economies. Therefore, building on the work done at recent APPF annual Meetings, this plenary session serves as a forum to review the recent developments in the joint efforts to combat terrorism and other trans-boundary crime. What is needed more from the part of parliamentarians to support the government in executing the policies to fight crime? Parliamentarians have a very important role to play when they are the links between people and the authorities. Parliamentarians can contribute to stem crime, violence and terrorism by enhancing national laws, supervising the implementation of policies that ensure equality among peoples, upholding the spirit of dialogue and cooperation as well as the rule of law and relevant international commitments.

ECONOMIC AND TRADE MATTERS

The second plenary session will focus on economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. This debate will provide a parliamentary perspective on and contribution to efforts in the region targeting the expansion of trade, investment, peace, stability, prosperity and sustainable development, which revolves around the agenda of APEC Summit 2017.

The 21st century has witnessed the vigorous development of globalization, digital technology revolution and global value chains, thus transformed the world economy fundamentally. Although the world economy has recovered, there remains uncertainty and uneven development. Stronger efforts are needed to ensure that the benefits of global trade are inclusive and sustainable.

Promoting seamless regional economic integration is one top priority of the international cooperation mechanisms, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region to consolidate multilateral trade systems, expand trade and investment into a new-generation and higher level. This session will provide parliamentary perspective on specific issues such as developing global value chains, supporting multilateral trade systems, promoting trade in services and investment, removing non-tariff trade barriers, developing e-commerce, improving capacity to join new-generation FTAs, regional connectivity, etc. Best parliamentary practices in these-above mentioned topics will be shared.

Food security is the second Sustainable Development Goal, also prioritized in agenda of Asia-Pacific cooperation where provides 80% of the world agricultural products. Parliamentary actions on the SDGs are urgently needed and each parliament should advance the implementation of the SDGs through national harmonisation of appropriate targets and indicators. Concrete actions and solutions are needed, for example to develop eco-agriculture, re-structure supply chains, invest more in agricultural infrastructure, apply high technology in agriculture, cooperate in fisheries and aqua-culture. All these need to be taken into account in relevant legislation and programming.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are important driving forces of the Asia-Pacific economies. Therefore, MSMEs are always on the agenda of APEC SOM annually. The

parliamentarians are involved in the consideration of best practices in the debate of Green MSMEs, improving the MSMEs' accessibility of finance, technology, facilitating the MSMEs to get access to the FTAs and the global value chains etc.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

The third plenary session will address several dimensions of regional cooperation that can help promote parliamentary partnership for peace, innovation and sustainable development.

Climate change threatens to wipe out the impressively hard-earned achievements in socio-economic progress of the Asia Pacific region and remains an economic, social and environmental challenge to the achievement of the SDGs due to the region's high level of vulnerability to climate change. Without concrete responses, climate change could put people at risk, endanger households and government revenues and increase poverty thus causing social fragility and further inequalities. All these factors need to be taken into account in relevant legislation and policy-making. Opportunities for sustainable development can be identified in the context of climate change challenges, allowing countries to transform development models to attain the SDGs, but also requiring immediate actions of respective countries and engagement of all stakeholders, in which parliaments play a key role.

Generating funding and mobilizing resources for an effective implementation of the sustainable development agenda is the central challenge from which depends the success of the SDGs achievement. Traditional and innovative resources from private and public sectors and national and international stakeholders could undoubtedly help to meet the global goals. Through their budgetary functions, parliaments can play an important role in advancing SDGs implementations. Budget allocations for the national sustainable development strategy will be critical to successful implementation of SDGs. Parliaments should make sure that national commitments and sustainable development priorities are duly reflected in the budget and that they are gender-sensitive. International agreements could help establish new targets and monitoring frameworks at national and regional levels focused on financing sustainable development. Parliaments should monitor and facilitate the continuous process of identifying, implementing and evaluating the contributions of each country in order to progress from the current level of contributions, strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of sustainable development.

Our world today is an inter-connected one. Societies are diverse and multicultural, and the careful management of this diversity has become keys to building peaceful and prosperous nations. The OAsia-Pacific region is a diverse and multi-cultural region with huge potential of tourism development. Therefore, fostering regional cultural and tourism cooperation is significant to the economic growth of the region as well as to each country and also the maintenance of peace and the promotion of mutual understanding between nations. Therefore, during the debate, delegates may wish to consider the following questions: What are good examples of parliamentary action to enhance regional cultural and tourism cooperation? How can parliamentarians better engage with their constituents in this regards?

APPF WORK

This session encourages the parliamentarians to discuss in depth the role of APPF in promoting the partnership for sustainable and inclusive growth in the Asia-Pacific. What is the key agenda of the APPF in years ahead? Should there be any revision framework for APPF members to review what has been achieved and what needs to be done to fulfill its mission as a effective cooperation mechanism for Asia-Pacific parliamentarians.