

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

26th ANNUAL MEETING OF ASIA-PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

1. At the invitation of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the twenty-sixth Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) was held in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, from 18 to 21 January 2018 with 354 participants from 20 member countries and 01observer country. The list of participants appears as **Appendix I**.
2. The third APPF Meeting of Women Parliamentarians was held in the morning of 18 January, before the opening of the Annual Meeting. H.E. Madam Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, President of the National Assembly of Viet Nam delivered her opening remarks, emphasized the significance of the APPF Women Parliamentarians Meeting, an important network connecting women parliamentarians to discuss gender equality and other matters for the interests of women and girls. The Meeting addressed the theme of “Promoting gender equality for sustainable development and shared prosperity”. The Honorable Mrs. Truong Thi Mai, Vietnamese National Assembly deputy delivered her key note address. Delegates stressed that parliamentarians should maximize their roles in all steps of decision-making processes, whether at the global, regional or national level, in different areas to promote the implementation of the 5th Goal of Gender Equality out of 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
3. The Executive Committee convened on 18 January 2018 and approved the Annual Meeting's agenda and program of activities. Madam Tong Thi Phong, the First Vice-President of the National Assembly of Viet Nam was agreed to be the Chair in the President's absence. The Honorable Mr. Vu Hai Ha, Deputy of National Assembly of Viet Nam was confirmed as the Chair of the Drafting Committee. Fiji was agreed to replace New Zealand in the Executive Committee for the coming term.
4. On 18 January 2018, the President, H.E Madam. Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, opened the Annual Meeting by warmly welcoming all participants and wishing them a pleasant stay in Viet Nam. In her opening remarks, the President highlighted the challenges and opportunities for the APPF and called for greater cooperation among APPF member parliaments to bring APPF to a higher level to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. At the Opening Ceremony, H.E. Mr. Tran Dai Quang, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam delivered his welcome remarks, highlighting the special role of APPF and its members over the past 25 years in dealing with common challenges. He emphasized that APPF should to work together with other regional fora to build the vision for cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.
5. H.E Madam. Jiko Luveni, Speaker of the Fijian Parliament, the Host of the 25th APPF thanked the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam for its hospitality and excellent preparation for the Meeting.

As a special guest of the Host, Madam Gabriela Cuevas Barron, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union expressed her heart-felt gratitude to the National Assembly of Viet Nam for inviting her and colleagues to present at the Meeting, symbolizing the parliamentary diplomacy development.

6. The Honorable Mrs. Cuevas Barron highlighted the significance of association, integration and inclusion to contrast the messages of isolationism and the voices that attack multilateralism, especially while the world is facing such important challenges as inequality, disarmament, climate change and so many on. She stressed the ‘turning words into action’ spirit inspired by the IPU Hanoi Declaration adopted at the 132nd IPU General Assembly.
7. The Honorable Takuji Yanagimoto, Member of the House of Councillors and Head of the Delegation of Japan delivered a speech on behalf of APPF Honorary President Yasuhiro Nakasone, expressing his support for APPF. He highlighted that The APPF Annual Meeting shall become a leader holding the torch of hope not only for the Asia Pacific region but also for the entire world.
8. The Heads of 26th APPF delegations paid a courtesy call on H.E Mr. Nguyen Phu Trong, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Viet Nam. The General Secretary highly appreciated the increasingly developed APPF cooperation and the APPF Parliamentarians as the bridge between people and governments, representing the people’s aspiration.
9. The Annual Meeting held four plenary sessions. A great number of speakers addressed the plenary sessions. A list of speakers from the plenary sessions appears in the **Appendix II**.
10. In the first plenary session on Political and Security matters, H.E. Madam Tong Thi Phong, First Vice-President of the National Assembly of Viet Nam delivered her keynote remarks on peace and security, highlighting a shared vision of Asia-Pacific for the interests of its people. Former IPU President, Mr. Saber H. Chowdhury was invited to speak at the plenary session. Delegations shared that peace, cooperation and development remain a major trend in Asia-Pacific and in the world. On the other hand, region also faces potential conflicts, instability, security threats and other global issues such as climate change, epidemics, terrorism, etc. Participants resolutely condemned terrorism and shared the views that terrorism, trans-border crime should be effectively addressed with joint efforts by international community by strengthening cooperation between governments and other related agencies in intelligence sharing, and capacity building for the law enforcement forces.
11. In the second plenary session on Economic and Trade matters, the Honorable Mr. Vuong Dinh Hue, Deputy Prime Minister of Viet Nam delivered his keynote speech on positive developments in economic cooperation and regional economic integration. The Meeting welcomed a report by Viet Nam on the deliverables of APEC 2017, including the 25th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Da Nang, Viet Nam in November 2017. Delegations agreed that despite many difficulties and uncertainties, Asia-Pacific region remained the world’s most dynamic with high growth rate and deeper economic regional integration. Delegations stressed that APPF should

enhance cooperation to further free and open trade and investment toward the realization of the Free Trade Area of the Asia - Pacific (FTAAP); building a comprehensively connected and integrated Asia - Pacific; promoting quality and resilient infrastructure, sub-region and remote area connectivity. Another common theme was the optimization of global value chains. Delegates highlighted measures to strengthen Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises' (MSMEs) competitiveness and innovation and facilitate MSMEs' access to finance, technology and management; fostering policies and legal frameworks for start-ups and women's leadership role in MSMEs, particularly urge the governments to accelerate administrative reform, and to improve the investment environment.

12. Delegates stressed stronger cooperation in sustainable management and effective usage of natural resources, including trans-boundary water resources, land, forests, oceans etc., which contribute to secure long-term and sustainable food supply. Furthermore, it is necessary to promote sustainable rural-urban development, build communities resilient to natural disasters, diversify agricultural sector, increase investment to boost productivity and quality, and broaden the market of agricultural products.
13. In the third plenary session on Regional Cooperation, the Honorable Deputy Prime Minister Vu Duc Dam delivered the keynote address on climate action, cultural and tourism cooperation. Delegations expressed their deep concern over climate change and extreme weather events, which requires stronger joint efforts on disaster risk reduction to respond to climate change and mitigate its impacts and proposed strengthened cooperation in culture and tourism for sustainable development. IPU Secretary General Martin Chungong delivered his remarks emphasizing the significance of the parliamentary partnership and regional cooperation.
14. Regarding APPF Work, delegations emphasized the role of APPF in promoting partnership for sustainable development and inclusive growth in the Asia-Pacific as APPF Parliamentarians represent the aspiration and interests of the people in the region, for the good of all.
15. At the final session, the 26th Annual Meeting unanimously applauded the kind invitation of the Cambodian National Assembly to host the 27th Annual Meeting in Siem Reap in January 2019.
16. The Meeting was briefed on the outcomes of the Drafting Committee and 4 Working Groups throughout the Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting adopted Ha Noi Declaration, the Amended APPF Rules of Procedures which stipulate that the Meeting of Women parliamentarians will be held on the occasion of the APPF Annual Meeting to foster discussion and experience exchange related to topics of common interest to women parliamentarians, and 13 resolutions.
17. At the Closing Session, the Cambodian Head of Delegation delivered his acceptance speech for being the next Host of APPF in 2019. The Annual Meeting expressed highest appreciation and gratitude to the Viet Nam National Assembly for its outstanding organization and hospitality, especially to H.E Madam. Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, President of the Viet Nam National Assembly for her exemplary Presidency of the 26th Annual Meeting and the staff for their hard work and excellent care for all participants, which contributed to the success of the Annual Meeting.

18. In her concluding remarks, the President of the 26th Annual Meeting congratulated the delegates and commended them for their important contributions to the plenary sessions, Drafting Committee and Working Groups, thus bringing about a productive, cooperative and inclusive Annual Meeting.

Signed in Ha Noi, Viet Nam on 20 January 2018

 Australia	 Cambodia
 Canada	 Chile
 China	 Fiji
 Indonesia	 Japan
 Laos	 Malaysia
 Mexico	 Micronesia
 Mongolia	 New Zealand
 The Philippines	 Republic of Korea
 Russia	 Singapore
 Thailand	 Viet Nam

