

## 26<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING ASIA-PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

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### SUPPORTING THE MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES (MSMEs) IN THE DIGITAL AGE

(Sponsored by Malaysia, Chile, Mexico)

The 26th Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum;

**Affirming** Resolution APPF25/RES.08 which was adopted in January 2017 during the 25th Annual Meeting of the APPF in Natadola, Fiji on promoting sustainable growth in the Asia-Pacific region through the digital economy;

**Reaffirming** Resolution APPF24/RES.09 which was adopted in January 2016 during the 24th Annual Meeting of the APPF in Vancouver, Canada on fostering and strengthening connectivity towards closer economic collaboration and shared prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region;

**Keeping in mind** the Resolution A/RES/71/279 adopted in 2017 by the United Nations General Assembly where the critical role that the MSMEs have in the success of the 2030 Sustainable Development Program is acknowledged;

**Recalling** the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the states in September 2015, specifically Goals N° 8 and N° 9 and their aims of “achieving higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation”, “encourage the formalization and growth of micro, small and medium - sized enterprises” and “significantly increase the access to information technologies and communications, and strive to provide universal and affordable access to internet to less developed countries by 2020”;

**Emphasizing** APEC Framework on Human Resources Development in the Digital Age and APEC Action Agenda on Advancing Economic, Financial and Social Inclusion in the APEC region in line with the 2017 APEC Senior Officials' Meeting Report;

**Calling** APEC Strategy for Green, Sustainable and Innovative MSMEs under the first-sub theme of the 24<sup>th</sup> APEC SME Ministerial Meeting in Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam in September 2017 on encouraging public-private partnership to produce an enabling environment approach which is cost-effective and green awareness;

**Further recalling** APEC Economic Leaders' endorsement of the "Boracay Action Agenda to Globalize MSME's" adopted in Manila, Nov 2015 where they committed to continue to focus on globalization and modernization of MSMEs as stated in the Boracay Action Agenda to Globalise MSMEs;

**Recognizing** that the digital economy, including e-commerce is opening up opportunities as well as introducing challenges for MSMEs to connect to global value chains, allowing access to regional and global markets;

**Understanding** that certain market limitations greatly affect the MSMEs, such as difficulties in having access to information and financing, and that the states have a role in the overcoming of these inequities;

**Noting** that the digital technologies are needed to support the global economy, acting as a cost-effective platform and catalyst for innovation, supporting new business models and expanding trade opportunities for MSMEs.

## **RESOLVES TO:**

1. **Affirm** all APPF Member States to foster closer economic collaboration, strengthen small business competitiveness and boost innovative and inclusive growth in the region;
2. **Reaffirm** all APPF Member States aspirations towards balanced, inclusive, sustainable, innovative and secure growth in the region in support of MSMEs' development;
3. **Encourage** APPF Member States to judiciously utilise the opportunities created by the development of new technologies and digitalization including those related to Internet and Digital Economy, but not confined, to Fourth Industrial Revolution and e-Commerce;
4. **Recognize** that the proper integration of the MSMEs into the digital world and electronic commerce has the power to stimulate competition and increase productivity of smaller companies;
5. **Urge** the member states of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum to provide universal and affordable access to internet through efficient digital services and infrastructure;

6. **Urge** the member states of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum to preserve the principles of net neutrality in order to ensure equal opportunities for MSMEs;
7. **Further encourage** APPF Member States to support the creation of human capital equipped with the necessary skills for the digital age through the development of innovative training programs and the sharing of best practices in the area of teaching, learning, including distance-learning;
8. **Motivate** APPF Member States to adopt innovative approaches through government incentives, public-private partnerships with businesses in integrating MSMEs into the digital economy;
9. **Urge** APPF Member States to expand regional cooperation in trade and investment by providing MSMEs' accessibility to finance, know – how and regional markets;
10. **Encourage** APPF Member States to create and foster an enabling environment for MSMEs to engage green awareness, promoting compliance with international standard and integrated regional framework development at domestic and regional levels;
11. **Encourage** APPF Member States to create and foster an enabling environment for MSMEs led by women, youth and minority groups to encourage gender and ethnic equality and inclusiveness;
12. **Vividly encourage** the Asia Pacific parliaments and governments to create a legal and entrepreneurial atmosphere favorable for the full development of electronic commerce, providing certainties in regard to legal responsibility, data protection and copyrights, all issues of especial relevance to the MSMEs;
13. **Acknowledge** the important function that the regional coordination has in supporting the MSMEs with the use of electronic commerce, as it allows the exchange of information and experiences about laws, regulations and programs;
14. **Affirm** APPF Member States to urge MSMEs to fully capitalise on the benefits and opportunities offered by Free Trade Agreements, particularly the incentives provided by the government in international ventures.