

**CHAIRMAN**—Delegates, welcome to the fifth and final plenary session of the 8th Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum. Welcome to all of you and welcome, as always, to the President of the APPF, His Excellency Mr Nakasone.

There are one or two matters we ought to clarify. You will have become accustomed every morning to getting a copy of the previous day's proceedings. I want to reassure everybody that the copy – while we are pleased that it is appropriately bound – is not in fact the final copy. If you find any errors that are concerning you in the copy of the previous day's proceedings and you wish to make any amendments or changes – obviously not to the meaning but to the way in which a particular sentence is constructed or to correct a spelling error – please notify the desk at the back and they will ensure that the change is made. I am pleased to say that, as Speaker of the House of Representatives, we have an excellent Hansard team here and errors are relatively rare, but, if you find any, this is not the final copy; it is in fact a draft copy. I hope you have also been in receipt of the daily news. I want to commend those who have been putting the daily news together for the way in which they have managed to capture the spirit of the conference.

Before we begin the business of this fifth and final session, could I also take the opportunity, as I did yesterday morning, to outline in detail the business before us, as I see it from the chair, so that everyone knows precisely what we are endeavouring to achieve in the time allotted. We have completed discussion on 18 resolutions and these will be attached to the draft communique in the chronological order in which they were adopted. As I understand it, the draft communique, which we will be considering soon, will address the issues we have discussed in agenda order. So the resolutions are attached in chronological order but the draft communique will deal with them in agenda order.

There are two outstanding resolutions to consider this morning. These are, firstly, draft resolution 1, revision 1, a draft resolution on humanitarian assistance submitted by the Australian Delegation and for which there have been amendments included at the request of China and, secondly, draft resolution 5, a draft resolution on a proposed APPF forum of public accounts committees, submitted by Australia. After we consider these last policy agenda items the agenda lists for consideration the following matters. Firstly, there is the report by Peru on the current status of the Asia-Pacific Open Information Network Technology, APOINT 2001 and, secondly, under 'Future agenda items' the executive committee has agreed to recommend to the plenary that it consider a proposal from Canada for roundtable discussions as another means of improving dialogue between APPF member countries. I also understand that the Canadian Delegation may wish to raise for future consideration the question of the exchange of parliamentary delegations between APPF member countries. As item 3 of the agenda, we should then consider matters related to the 9th annual meeting to be held in Chile in January 2001.

When we have finished the business agenda I propose to ask the Chairman of the Joint Communique Drafting Committee, Mr Alex Somlyay of Australia, to present his draft communique report and to work through the draft in the plenary. There will be a brief break before the signing and I will then invite Mr Nakasone to address the meeting and to formally close its proceedings. In accordance with normal APPF practice, a media conference will then be convened in which all delegation leaders will be included.

Could I begin the morning's proceedings by seeking the plenary's agreement to correct a small error which occurred yesterday. The meeting held yesterday afternoon just after 5 p.m. approved a draft resolution on strengthening the international financial architecture that was jointly submitted by the Japanese and the Philippine delegations. This was draft resolution 8, revision 1. It

subsequently came to my attention that a further revised draft to which a number of countries contributed amendments was in preparation when the first draft was put to the plenary for adoption. Given these circumstances and with the agreement of the plenary, I now propose to recommit this matter for consideration by the plenary. Unless there are objections I therefore intend to begin by seeking agreement to have this matter recommitted. It is not a matter that is particularly controversial but I think it should be reconsidered. There has been lone applause from Canada for which I am grateful, but I am assuming that we are happy to reconsider this matter since the revised resolution is even less controversial than the one passed by the conference.

If there is no objection, I propose then that we should consider – let me get my figures right this time – draft resolution 8, revision 2. We have in fact passed revision 1 unwittingly and revision 2 is even less offensive. I simply want to clarify that what the conference is considering and had agreed to was revision 2 and not revision 1. Is there any debate about either of these draft resolutions on strengthening the international financial architecture? As there is no debate, I will assume that the meeting is happy to pass draft resolution 8, revision 2. I thank the plenary for its consideration. We will now proceed with the agenda, which happens to be draft resolution 1, revision 1. I will recognise a delegate from Australia, in this case Mr Neville.

## **REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION**

### **International Cooperation on Global Issues**

**AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION**—Mr Chairman, Mr President and delegates, the Asia-Pacific area has more than its fair share of natural and man-made tragedies. We are at the centre of the El Nino and La Nina effects. We experience cyclones, floods, volcanic eruptions, forest fires and bushfires. A typical example, although not strictly within our region but adjoining our region, would be the recent floods in Venezuela. Another example would be the forest fires that we experienced two years ago in Indonesia. This, of course, says nothing about the even more tragic events that have centred on East Timor and Bougainville. It is not my role this morning to examine the reasons for those but to ask how we react to the human tragedy involved.

All of these circumstances provoke a response that calls for something meaningful and prompt. I am sure that you, like me, in thinking of people who are homeless, who are destitute, who are often misplaced and who are sometimes starving, go through the reaction of asking, ‘Why isn’t something happening sooner? Why aren’t we doing something about it?’ Of course, that is sometimes easier said than done. At forums like this, we labour long and sometimes even tiresomely on the details of the wording of resolutions to do with trade, intellectual property, monetary policy, regional security and the like. But, at the end of the day, we are elected representatives. We are not a government forum; we are a parliamentary forum. If we cannot react to the needs of the common people, to their most fundamental needs of housing and food, in a time of tragedy and crisis, we fail the basic test, firstly as politicians and then as a regional forum.

However, in delivering aid we stand between two great dilemmas: one is to get the aid there quickly, and the other is to establish some form of building and total rehabilitation. I know that we all experience this in our constituencies: when there is a tragedy, people come rushing in wanting to give some form of inappropriate aid. Sometimes, it is a misplaced zeal. For example, in my own constituency, when that dreadful tsunami struck the north coast of Papua New Guinea, at Aitape, I had someone come to me and offer a big consignment of bricks. The only trouble was that there is no method of getting bricks to Aitape and, if we did get them there, the people of that area do not build with brick. So, the zeal was misplaced. My constituency is also at the centre of one of Australia’s largest fruit and vegetable growing areas. People come and say, ‘I will give 5,000 cartons of tomatoes,’ or ‘I will give 5,000 cartons of some fruit.’ The trouble is that, in many of

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these disaster areas, there is no method of refrigerated delivery. There are no refrigerated warehouses available when the goods get there and there is no refrigerated form of distribution for them. So most of the stuff would be rotten in three or four days. That is at one end of the spectrum.

At the other end of the spectrum we have all these agencies of the UN and the other peak bodies like the Red Cross around the world. When one of these disasters occur we initially work through the Office of the Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs at the UN and then he triggers an organisation called the UN Disaster Assessment Committee. Once the reports come in, a whole plethora of UN agencies, such as UNESCO, go in and build classrooms and whatever, and sometimes the Red Cross is involved. Then you filter down through the process to the non-government agencies. But that all takes time. In the meantime, people are starving, people are displaced, people are without housing, they are sometimes very cold or very hot and sometimes they are without even basic sanitation and water. This is not a criticism of the efficiency of individual agencies of the UN; this is a criticism of the coordination and harmonisation of effects, not just with the UN but with other bodies.

Australia has made a big thing of this at the United Nations General Assembly over the last two years and also at the UNHCR. I will just refer to some of our presentations. We called in one meeting for greater coordination and planning of the processes to ensure smooth transition for relief activities and rehabilitation and construction to the long-term development processes. In another we said that there should be adequate coordination at the earliest stage to ensure that relief agencies' resources are not dissipated by their undertaking longer term tasks more suited for development agencies. And in another we said that Australia places emphasis on 'effective coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief activities'. I am sure other countries feel the same. At present in Paris the World Bank is convening a meeting of business leaders and NGOs to help countries respond more effectively to disaster – but would you believe that the UN is not represented? I think that lack of coordination at that level is a problem.

Between these two extremes I think organisations like the APPF have a role to fulfil. When the tidal wave hit Aitape, Australia had a medical team in Rockhampton in Central Queensland. At very short notice, that whole medical team – tents, doctors, nurses – was flown to Aitape and they set up a field hospital. We need some form of clustering in the Asia-Pacific area so that when there are disasters we can react quickly to them. So, by the time the UN has got there to establish the more planned role, at least we could have respond to the human tragedy that has occurred in those countries.

The first thing I would suggest, which might work very well with what Canada is putting before us today, is that we need to have some form of roundtable – be that the whole APPF or whether it be in regional clusters or forums. One of the subjects that we could attack right from day one could be response to humanitarian disasters. The second thing I would suggest is that, in focusing on this problem, we set up a working group. It may be too late for this conference, but perhaps one of the first things we could do at the next conference is establish a working group on humanitarian aid. The third thing I would suggest – and I address this to you, Mr Nakasone, because you are the link between conferences, between the chairman of this conference and the chairman of the next conference – is that the APPF sponsor a meeting of foreign ministers and emergency service ministers with the leading NGOs from their countries and the UN on a Pacific and Asian basis and establish mechanisms so that we respond more effectively in the Asia-Pacific area to our problems. Once again, the Canadian model being suggested today of roundtable discussions on this could be ideal for that purpose.

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In conclusion, Mr Chairman, I say this: if we as politicians walk away from this forum with the niceties of a resolution on our books but with no plan to make that happen effectively, then we fail as politicians and we fail as a forum.

**CHAIRMAN**—Are there interventions on draft resolution 1, revision 1? I call Papua New Guinea.

**PAPUA NEW GUINEAN DELEGATION**—I would like to support the draft resolution from the Australian Delegation. I found the speaker's concept of regional clustering very interesting. Regional clustering, with agreements that will minimise bureaucratic red tape, could be very useful. There is a need for a regional response on purely humanitarian grounds in the case of tragedies and natural disasters, because sometimes the local area does not have the capacity to respond quickly. In the instance of the Aitape disaster which he referred to, the international world community knew about it before the local member for the area knew about it. They had to get the message to him over a series of mountains before he knew about it, but the world outside knew before that. It actually took him two days to get around because of the difficulties of transportation. He was in another remote area. The regional response from MPs and parliamentarians elsewhere who are putting a force behind it can be a great help to the local parliamentarian in another area. This regional cooperation can do nothing but help people in general.

**CHAIRMAN**—Are there any other interventions on this question of humanitarian aid? If there are no other interventions, this uncontroversial motion has been adopted by the plenary session. We now turn to draft resolution 5 in the name of Australia, and I recognise Mr Charles.

(5) Other - Draft Resolution on Proposed APPF Forum of Public Accounts Committees

**AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION**—Thank you, Mr Chairman and delegates. In the Australian parliament, I have the honour to chair our Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit. 'Joint' means that the committee is made up of both members of the House of Representatives and senators, and there are members on that committee representing all four major political parties. I come to you today to propose, as the draft resolution reads, that the APPF resolve to establish a forum of the public accounts committees, or the equivalent committees, of APPF member nations, with the outcome of sharing information and expertise in the area of parliamentary scrutiny and public accountability.

In an earlier session I distributed a speech, which is in dot point form, that goes to some length to describe how our committee of public accounts and audit operates in Australia, the kinds of powers it has and the effects it can have on government outcomes. I do not intend to read that speech but simply to outline to you the reasons why I believe we should support this initiative. The initiative is not mine. It really owes its origin to John Williams, the Canadian public accounts committee chairman. Last February we had a regional forum in Western Australia comprising the Commonwealth, all of our PACs from each of our states, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand. Canada came along to our conference to share information as an observer, and John Williams proposed to me that we needed an international organisation of public accounts committees to try to help, particularly, emerging nations and those that are just feeling their way into democratic systems of government, to help them do a better job with their governments in terms of accountability and openness and, at the same time, to be able to share information so that each of us can continue to move forward. There is not much in this world that is ever static. Reform is a constant. It is not a one-shot; reform is with us all the time. I believe that parliamentarians have a very great role in determining the direction that their countries take, that the executives take, that governments take, and in determining the outcomes from those governments. I believe strongly in parliamentary systems and in the power and the expertise of elected representatives, which we all are.

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This forum this morning – in fact, just a few minutes ago – with resolution 8, revision 1 resolved to address the world's financial architecture. I believe that this resolution with respect to public accounts committees is complementary to that resolution, because your PAC committees can help make sure that pressure is brought to bear to see that the world's financial architecture is in fact reformed, and in an accountable and equitable manner. Public accounts committees in individual countries act, or should act, to increase accountability, transparency, ethics, probity and good governance. We would all agree that these are words that we bandy about easily but they are most important words. We know that, if we want to have a fair world and a better distribution of wealth, we need public accountability; we absolutely require that. Public accounts committees can also have a role in encouraging their governments to adopt sound macro and micro-economic policies to establish sound and transparent regulatory frameworks. These are also important, and they help us to move forward and help to increase transparency throughout the public sector.

I remind you that an open and accountable public sector also has the advantage of encouraging the private sector to also operate ethically and fairly. Not only do we have a need for our own government operations and for our bureaucracies to operate fairly and openly but also we want the private sector to operate in the same manner. You know that if it is impossible for a private contractor to buy a contract from a corrupt government official then the chances are that the private contractor is not going to be able to buy a private contract from a corrupt private official. So the two flow on to each other. The power of these public accounts committees can really be quite extraordinary. One of the things we have managed to accomplish in Australia is that our reports and our recommendations are on a bipartisan basis; that is to say, we reach consensus in our report writing when we undertake investigations, whether they be into account structures or some issue of ethical dealing, whether we are operating with the Auditor-General or examining whether or not a government department is operating efficiently. Our reports are unanimous, and therefore government officials and department officials have little choice but to accept our recommendation. So it is a powerful role and we can have a great part to play in the whole democratic process.

One issue surrounding this resolution that will cause some problem is the fact that our Chairman informs me that he unfortunately has not a pot of gold to help fund a secretariat for such an organisation. I have, however, taken the liberty of contacting a Vice-President of the World Bank who, while not extremely hopeful, says there might be some possibility of World Bank funding for a small secretariat to help us get this thing off the ground on the basis that, if we were successful and if we help to improve accountability around the world, the World Bank would save not only millions but perhaps billions of dollars as economies improve and do a better job within their own sector. So I cannot guarantee funding, but I for one am willing to have a go at trying. Delegates, for all the reasons I have outlined, I ask for your support for this resolution and urge its adoption.

**CHAIRMAN**—Thank you, Australia. I recognise Fiji, followed by Colombia and then Canada.

**FJIAN DELEGATION** —Thank you, Mr Chairman, for your indulgence in allowing me to make a short intervention. I assure you I will be very brief. Concerning the submission by the Australian Delegation, I refer to draft resolution No. 5 originally calling for the setting up of a public accounts forum within the APPF. Finance is everyone's business, be it domestic-level family expenditure, small business, multinational corporation account keeping or state income and expenditure. The general rule is that every dollar coming in and every dollar going out has to be accounted for. This should be the norm of the day, as are best practices of financial accountability especially among the APPF nations. I wish to commend Mr Bob Charles, the Chairman of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, for his comprehensive paper calling for a public accounts forum within the APPF. Certainly this paper has a lot of merit. Incidentally, as commented on the

independence of the Auditor-General, I am proud to report to the APPF that we in Fiji, under our new constitution, have full provision where the Auditor-General is an independent parliamentary body reporting directly to the parliament via the Speaker. Although we in Fiji have a strong public accounts committee, apart from the chairman, who is traditionally an opposition member, virtually all the other members of the 12-member committee are first term parliamentarians. This time round, we have 55 novice parliamentarians in our 71-member House of Representatives. Perhaps this is the better side of democracy. Consequently, we are therefore relying heavily on the Secretary-General for our roles and the actual *modus operandi*.

Because we believe in consistency in effective service delivery, because we believe in collaboration and consultation, because we believe in resource information sharing and especially because we believe in working as partners in promoting international democracy with our foremost issue of concern being public accountability, we the Fijian Delegation support the Australian call for the establishment of such a forum within the APPF, a forum where we can share the expertise of the Asia-Pacific members in the areas of parliamentary scrutiny and public accountability, thus meeting the high standard of transparency, openness and good governance.

With the foregoing delivery, I conclude believing that the other forum members would contribute in the affirmative without unnecessarily prolonging this debate.

**COLOMBIAN DELEGATION**—My name is Fernando Duque. I am the President of the Commission of Accounts of the House of Representatives in Colombia. This is an organisation aimed at doing the political auditing of the public accounts. At a constitutional level, our country today has the legally established public accounting systems and each year they have a consolidated balance sheet of the goods and assets of the states not only of the central government but also the centralised companies and the territorial authorities. Similarly, we can have a financial report of the debt and income and expenditure of the government. So it becomes a fundamental instrument for the general accounts.

The Colombian Delegation would like to congratulate this important initiative of the Australian Delegation to create a committee for the control of public accounts and the auditing of those accounts where each of the members of this important forum will be able to participate and share our experiences with regard to the accounts committees and how we can be more transparent in the way we are using public resources.

One of the most dangerous evils that not only the developing countries but also the major superpowers are going through is the corruption of public servants. However, if there is an auditing of the accounts, this corruption will be reduced to the benefit of the public at large. This will be through the better utilisation of resources and the investment of them in social areas where they are required, such as in education, health, public service and the generation of employment. This would benefit the poorer sectors of all our countries.

Therefore, we welcome the initiative of the Australian Delegation. Respectfully, we would like to study the possibility of Colombia participating in this committee. In Latin America, we have enormous experience with public accounting systems, the submission of accounts and the political auditing of these accounts. Each year, private companies at their general assemblies submit to their shareholders the general accounts and the income and expenditure. They show them how efficiently they have managed the resources. In the same way, it would be excellent if governments every year could submit to the people how they have utilised their resources, how efficiently that has been and what the social balance is with regard to the provision of services and, eventually, the wellbeing of the people, which is the common objective of all governments and all of us towards our people. It would also be excellent if in these accounting reports we also talk about how the natural resources

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have been managed, what moneys have been invested in ensuring the preservation of non-renewable resources and what programs have been set up for preserving biodiversity, which is a world heritage issue.

The Colombian Delegation fully supports this draft resolution because we believe that this committee is extremely important in our struggle against the corruption of public servants. When we have clear accounts, there is no possibility of corruption. When there are no accounts, corruption reigns because no-one can control it. Once again, we request that we may participate with you in this committee to share the experiences that we today have in our country. Thank you very much.

**CANADIAN DELEGATION**—On behalf of the Canadian Delegation and as a former Chair of the Canadian public accounts committee, I commend in principle the Australian Delegation for presenting this resolution. The concept of exchanging information is important. However, we have some reservations or questions about the mechanism for implementing the resolution. The last point I want to raise is the fact that this resolution may be applicable to other countries that are not members of the APPF. For example, Canada works closely with its counterpart committee in the British House of Commons. Perhaps we need a broader body for this resolution. In conclusion, we support the principle of the exchange of information. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN**—Thank you, Canada. Are there any other interventions? I did not understand Canada to be necessarily seeking any amendment to this but indicating that it wanted an opportunity to further discuss this. If there are no interventions and there is no objection to the resolution moved by Mr Charles on behalf of the Australian Delegation, I presume that the plenary session passes it without reservation.

### **Cooperation in other fields**

#### **The Current Status of the Asia Pacific Open Information Network Technology (APOINT 2001) – Report by Peru**

**CHAIRMAN**—I thank the plenary session. I call on Mr Oswaldo Sandoval to present the current status of the Asia-Pacific Open Information Network Technology, otherwise known as APOINT 2001.

**PERUVIAN DELEGATION**—Thank you, Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, colleagues and Mr Nakasone. I would like to be as brief as possible in giving to you the report of the Technological Working Committee. Before doing so, I would like to explain to you what the Technological Working Committee's task is, since there are several members of the APPF who have probably come to this conference for the first time. In a conference in Thailand a few years ago there was a consensus that this organisation required certain means of communication and, specifically, certain means by which a legislative exchange procedure should be started. One of the persons who must be recognised as inspiring the legislative exchange procedure is Congressman Surin from Thailand who, in the meantime, has become Minister for Foreign Affairs. That is the reason why we do not see him anymore at these conferences. I think he should be recognised as one of the persons who put forward the idea and pushed for it at the beginning.

Because of the interests of the different members, the plenary decided to form a committee composed of Australia, Japan, Korea, Thailand and Peru. Peru was entrusted with the chairmanship of the organisation. In the conference in Korea, the Technological Working Committee produced a document that was originally inspired by Japan. It is called the APOINT 2001 Plan. APOINT stands for Asia-Pacific Open Information Network Plan and 2001 was the time that was the objective for this procedure to be placed in order.

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It is against this background that I would like to explain to you that the Peruvian Delegation, while in Korea, offered to develop the first webpage and to host it. It was approved by the General Assembly, so the Congress of the Republic of Peru has developed this webpage, is maintaining it and is hosting it at no cost to APPF. All the costs arising from the development of the page and the hosting of it, and any subsequent investments that are required, are all borne by the Peruvian parliament, and it is definitely our pleasure to do so.

Having said this, I would like to say that the committee met before this meeting. I would like to thank the delegates from the Australian, Japanese, Korean and Thai delegations for their strong support to the committee. I would like, if you will allow me, to emphasise the special efforts made by John Forrest from the parliament of Australia who not only has shown extraordinary interest but also has been a tremendous contributor to the success – if there should be any – of the work done by the Technological Working Committee. I would also like to mention Professor Yasuhide Yamanouchi, an adviser to the Japanese Delegation, whose contribution is also to be noted.

I would like to very briefly tell you what our webpage does and the advancements that we have made to it since the last time that we made a similar presentation in Lima. I will finish up by telling you what are the recommendations that the committee has to offer to the assembly for, hopefully, their approval.

I would like to tell you – and this was explained to me by the technicians – that unfortunately the quality of the projection is not the best. I can assure you that in the computer it looks very nice. The reason is that they had to balance the type of projection that was required for the total conference – and you have seen the beautiful pictures of us that are coming out – and that required certain equipment that is probably not the best for showing the webpage. Please bear with me. You may not be able to read some of the things that are shown there, but if you get a chance you could go up to the Internet Café – which, by the way, is a terrific idea and I congratulate the hosts for the extraordinary efforts they have made. You can see the webpage there, or when you go home anywhere in the world.

*The APPF web site was then demonstrated -*

**PERUVIAN DELEGATION**—This is the webpage of the APPF. It has several things to show. First of all, there is a welcome message by President Yasuhiro Nakasone. There is the explanation of what the APPF is all about. There is also a brief history of the APPF. Here, we can update continuously the history of the organisation which is already, of course, several years old. If we do not keep track of our various endeavours, the history may be lost.

There are some milestone declarations. As some of you may recall, it was considered to be very important that the Tokyo Declaration, which is the foundation ‘act’ of the APPF, be here. So is the Vancouver Declaration, which is a document that was produced during the Vancouver conference, in which we state what the vision and the mission of the APPF is.

We also have links to the home pages of all APPF member countries, in the cases where there are home pages. We will take a look at Australia: here is the home page of Australia. Here we have our host, the Speaker. Just as I have done this, any of us can go to the webpages of any of the member countries through the APPF webpage and thus be able to find out what is happening in the various parliaments.

I would like to tell you, to give you an idea of what the Technological Working Committee has done, about the Fiji webpage. Fiji did not have the means to produce a webpage. Through an

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offer that the Peruvian Delegation made a couple of years ago, we had a small program whereby the Fijian parliament sent some of their experts to Peru and, with our technological assistance, they developed their own webpage. This webpage of Fiji is also hosted by the Peruvian Congress.

This is very interesting because we intend to be able to help those countries that do not have a webpage. When this program was started, there were 10 countries that did not have a webpage. Now I am happy to report that only four countries do not have a webpage. I would like to emphasise here the offer made not only by the Peruvian Congress but also by Korea; they have offered to help Laos, the Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea and Vietnam to develop and host their webpages. Also, during the time from the last assembly to now, we have added to the system the webpage of Colombia, who as you may recall has become a new member since the last General Assembly in Lima.

We have another section which is related to the areas of interest of this organisation. You may recall that in the original instances of APPF there were six areas of endeavour that this organisation was based with – political and security issues, economy, environment, law and order, human rights, and educational and cultural exchanges. This is why most of our resolutions are based on these six areas of interest.

In the webpage we also have the rules of procedure, everything related to membership, the structure and role of APPF, the procedures in which the organisation is run, the presidency and the Executive Committee. In fact, we have updated the Executive Committee by-laws in order to show the changes that were made during the General Assembly that we had in Lima. Listed is a composition of the present Executive Committee and the terms for which they have been appointed. Also there are the working groups, but at this point there is only one working group, which is the Technological Working Committee. So, again, we have the organisation, the annual meeting, the presidency, the Executive Committee, the working group and the Technological Working Committee, and the roles are explained there.

We have also the different annual meetings that have taken place. Let us not forget that APPF is an organisation that does not have a general secretariat. The parliamentary members do not have to pay any fees. However, we must keep the records of the organisation. Where are they kept? In the webpage. We have here all the information since the inaugural session of APPF in 1993. We have the information on the participants, the program that took place at that time, the report and even a photo gallery of the inaugural event that took place in Japan in 1993. There are some photos on the webpage that are at our disposal by Mr Tanaka, the assistant to President Nakasone. They are very helpful for all of us to remember what we looked like 10 years ago, eventually 15 years ago. It is a bit slow to download the photos, so I will go ahead and show you the rest.

We also have information on the General Assembly in Manila, Philippines in 1994. Again, we have the names of all the participants, the program, the joint communique and a photo gallery. Next is Acapulco, Mexico in 1995; Cha-Am, Thailand in 1996; Vancouver, Canada in 1997; Seoul, Korea in 1998; and then Lima, Peru in 1999. In each one of these sections, we have all the proceedings of the meetings. This is very helpful so that you all can check and see what was said in any specific issue at any given moment. For instance, I am showing you the proceedings of the sixth plenary session on Thursday, 12 January 1999 from 9 o'clock to 12 o'clock in Lima, Peru. All the proceedings are there. It is just like that for every meeting every year. We believe that to be extremely helpful in order for all of us to keep track of what happened. The same holds true for the joint communique. It is important to see how we progress with the joint communiqués of the different times.

Likewise, we have all the resolutions that were approved during the time in which the meeting took place. In this case, for instance, in the first resolution that was approved last year there was a commendation to the peaceful settlement reached by Peru and Ecuador. It is similar, thanks to you, to the one that we had today between Peru and Chile – all the resolutions. As has been established in all the cases, we have a photo gallery. We have one here in Canberra as well. As I

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said, the screen resolution is not so good. But I can assure you that the inauguration with President Fujimori – Mr Nakasone speaking – comes out quite well on computer. There are many other pictures that anybody can download and print in their own home if they so wish.

Also, we have the information on all the different Executive Committee meetings that took place. There are reports of each one of them with information regarding the schedule, the participants and the report on what was said and, again, there is a photo gallery. We also have information on the working groups – in this case the Technological Working Group – and, again, we have reports on each one of the meetings with detailed information on what was said.

One of the latter points is publications. We have very few publications. For instance, those interested in the Technological Working Committee can go to the *APOINT 2001 operative plan*. The book is about this thick. All the information is in the computer – the vision for the Asia-Pacific for the 21st century, the view and mission of the Technological Working Committee in accordance with the APPF, the route towards the establishment of APOINT 2001, et cetera. All the information that is required is there, including some technological information on how we have visualised the development of this tool. We are reporting to you on the update of our work, which comprises a much extended plan which is to be finalised by the year 2001. The details are on the webpage, as has been mentioned.

Also we have another book that we presented: the report of the 7th annual meeting. All the information is there. The same holds true for this publication, *The information technology applied to the integration of the APPF*. When we were preparing the procedures for establishing the webpage of Fiji, we prepared a manual. It is a manual for the preparation and the usage of the Internet system for a parliament. We have placed the document on the Internet so that any country can go to it, look at it and use it as much as they wish. We also have a public forum site. Those who are familiar with the Internet know that a public forum is a place where you register and different members can comment on issues, in this case related to APPF.

Finally, we have related links. We have many links here that are related to parliamentary organisations and organisations that are related to the Asia-Pacific. For instance, we are linked to the webpage of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, better known as APEC. We are also linked to the web site of Fiji – we placed it there because it was brand new. We have links to ASEAN, PECC, PBEC, the United Nations and other types of parliamentary organisations. All the links are there. We can go into more detail in each one of them – as deep as we wish. What is interesting here is that we have in one resource all the webpages of all the parliaments of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum.

I would like now to go to an area of interest and concern to all of us – the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum Legislative Exchange. This has been one of the most important issues that we have dealt with, and we have advanced already, as we were directed to do at the last meeting in Lima. I will tell you very briefly what we have done and explain to you the changes that we are now offering to you as stated by the committee and as proposed to you. The idea is to have a database whereby everybody can compare legislation related to the six areas of interest of APPF. We have this database based on these topics: economy, education and cultural exchanges, environment, human rights, law and order, and politics and security.

Let us look at what we see in economy. Supposedly, we should have there all the different countries and then, if we go to any of the given countries, we can find a database of laws in English. For instance, in Peru we have advanced a bit. For instance, we have here a law relating to the regulation of a program of migration investment. This is the complete law translated into English so that anybody who wants to compare it may look at it. The problem that we have is that it is a

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tremendous task for each parliament to translate the different laws that may be needed for other members. As you have seen, only the Congress of the Republic of Peru has already advanced some information on the different topics. Other parliaments have not done it because – and I agree with this – it is quite a task to translate laws when you really do not know whether they are going to be used or compared. In any case, the system has been established so that you can look at the information by topic or you can look at the information by country. Here again, you would have to have the different countries listed if we had advanced in the way that was established originally. But this has not been possible because it is a difficult task.

So during the meeting of the Technological Working Committee that we had before the general assembly on Monday we entertained a proposal from Australia. They placed a very interesting document together along with a document placed by Japan. What we are proposing is to change the system, keep the essence of the objective - that is, to have a legislative exchange - but to use a different system. We are proposing to use what is called a web crawler. I will go one step backwards, if you allow me.

First of all, we define what areas and what type of laws we want to have in the webpage. Let us say that I want to check a law related to foreign investment. I place the words 'foreign investment' into the field and a crawler looks into the databases of all the different parliaments and finds those keywords. It then extracts the different laws related to that issue in the native language of the parliament. Then, since I am the one who is interested in the law, it will be my task to translate it into my language or into the English language since I am going to be the beneficiary of it. We think that the person who is looking for the information should be the one that will go through the effort of making the translation, because doing it the other way around – after a year's experience – has proven not to be practical. That is what we are proposing. Later on, John Forrest may want to elaborate a bit more, since Australia is the one that proposed this procedure, which was approved unanimously by the Technological Working Committee. We find that the legislative exchange is probably the best tool of the APOINT 2001 Plan. We want to encourage everybody to help us put it into effect as soon as possible.

I would like to continue on another matter. In the last general assembly we received, I believe from Canada, a direction to produce an electronic directory. We do have an electronic directory already, but we have a little problem: we do not have all the information that is needed to be placed into the electronic directory. Here are the countries, members of the APPF. The idea is to go, in this case, to Canada. Here we have all the emails of all the parliamentarians who are related to the APPF. In this way we can easily communicate with one another. That is why yesterday we circulated a form, a yellow page, on which we are encouraging you to give us your email address. Then we will place it in the directory so that the directory will be useful to everyone.

Likewise, I would like to tell you – and I do not want to get too technical – that we have agreed, on the basis of a report presented by Mr Yamanouchi on behalf of the Japanese Delegation, to develop a multilingual network environment. That is a procedure whereby we will be able to use existing software, made by Microsoft, which is already on the Internet and, instead of having to develop our own software, we will be able to use the different fonts of the different languages of the member countries. I do not want to go into more detail because then I would have to get too technical, and that would be boring. Mr Chairman, if you agree, it would be much better if I were to entertain questions that members may have in order to, by answering those questions, probably get to the points of greater interest to the membership.

But before doing so, allow me to show you something that the Australian parliament has put together for this conference. This is a webpage within a webpage. Here we are looking at a webpage

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on which we have all the information about this conference. We have here the program. Through part of the webpage, as I have said, for instance in my office, they are monitoring what is happening in this conference just by going through their Internet site. We have here the agenda, information on travel and accommodation for this conference, the venue and the proceedings. We have all the reports and papers that have been developed up till now. We have all the draft resolutions that have been presented. We have all the theme papers. So all the documents that you all have received here during the conference are also on the Internet. We have the information on the technological working group.

This is something interesting: we have the live broadcast. You may recall that during the conference we are being beamed in the form of a live broadcast from here; that broadcast is also going through the Internet. So in our offices, if they have the necessary equipment, they will have been able to go to a live broadcast of what is happening here. It may take a little while to download, so I will not go into it. But I want to tell you that, in order to receive the sound and video broadcast of this conference through the Internet, our parliament, the Parliament of Peru, purchased new software and a new server. We now have in place the software LotusNotes R5 and a new server in order to make this possible.

We also have here the newsletters. Every day you have received the newsletter that has been produced by Australia. These newsletters are also on the Internet. Further, we have the photo gallery which unfortunately has enabled our parliaments to see that we have had a lot of fun. If the press gets hold of some of these pictures, some of us may be in trouble when we get back home.

This effort by the Australian parliament is to be commended. As we have been attending this conference all of the information has been placed in the webpage, so, as I said, our parliaments have been able to find out what we have been doing all this time. There is something else that I want to tell you: we also want to encourage all members to translate the APPF webpage to their own language. We believe that, since this webpage is in English of course in our own countries, those countries that do not have English as their national language will be disadvantaged by not being able to take advantage of a webpage. To give you an illustration, in Peru we have translated the APPF webpage into Spanish so that our press and our constituency can see what the APPF is all about. They can also have access, in the English language, to all the information that is in the webpage. It may be that you do not have to translate everything – probably you need only translate the things that are more important and more noticeable.

There is something else that we would like to state: at the last general assembly it was requested that members place a direct link in their own parliament's webpage to the APPF webpage so that anybody visiting that webpage could link to the webpage of the APPF. I must report that, unfortunately, only three countries have so far complied with the agreement of last year: Australia, Japan and Peru. We would like to encourage you. It is very easy and very simple to place a link directly to the webpage. Finally, there are a few recommendations from the Technological Working Committee to the general assembly. First of all, the committee encourages all of those countries that would like a webpage to make the final effort so that we will have all the member parliaments on the Internet. I would like to stress here that the parliaments of both Peru and Japan have offered to help in the process of developing and hosting the webpage at no cost to the parliament that does not have the webpage. Further, we would like to stress that we need to have at least one person from each parliament – if it is a technician, all the better – in order for us to be able to communicate and to know whom to communicate with. Sometimes we have problems in that we send an email to a parliamentarian who attended this conference but who is probably no longer involved in the issue. As the host country for the webpage of the APPF, it then takes us too long to coordinate issues relating to the Technological Working Committee.

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Another recommendation is for you to please provide us with your email addresses in order for the electronic directory to be completed. We are also recommending that the legislative exchange system be changed to the procedure that I outlined just before. Finally, we want the meeting to recognise the importance of information exchange through digitalised material in the multilingual and multicultural network environment. The meeting is encouraging the use of software for this purpose by member countries and related institutions. This has been the report of the Technological Working Committee. I would like to once again convey our thanks to the member parliaments of the Technological Working Committee. If you will allow it, Mr Chairman, I would be more than happy to answer, if I can, any questions that there may be from the membership. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN**—Thank you, Mr Sandoval. I also thank the plenary session because they have expressed the very sentiments that I was feeling about what has been, Mr Sandoval, a very informative and fruitful presentation. I do not want to spend too much time on questions, important as they are, but I certainly recognise the call from the Japanese Delegation and from Mr Forrest. I am not sure whether you are wanting to make a contribution or ask questions. Perhaps, if there are specific, brief questions to Mr Sandoval, I will allow those, and then I think we should invite others to make observations. Are there specific questions on the presentation? As there are not, we will go to observations. I recognise Japan, followed by Australia and Canada.

**JAPANESE DELEGATION**—I am Taro Aso. The Japanese Delegation was listening with a great deal of interest to the comprehensive report of Mr Oswaldo Sandoval, the leader of the Peruvian Delegation. As Mr Sandoval explained, APOINT 2001, initially proposed by Japan, is progressing successfully. We are extremely appreciative of the efforts of Peru, under the strong leadership of Mr Sandoval, and we hope to see the great contribution of the Peruvian parliament continue into the future.

I would like to touch upon the Y2K issue in this context. Y2K was the first potential large-scale social system disaster. This new kind of disaster might be more obvious as human society becomes much more dependent on artificial social infrastructures such as computer networks. The lack of experience in human society in this regard makes appropriate response difficult. Continuous information exchange among APPF member countries is desirable to combat those new social crises.

I would like to make a brief report on the so-called Y2K transition in Japan on this occasion. The Y2K transition in Japan was calm, as in other areas of the world. More than two million people in Japan watched at their workplace during the turnover to the new century. According to official statistics, in the first five days of January 47 Y2K incidents were reported in Japan in the five critical social sectors - namely, electricity, telecommunications, finance, transportation and medical services. This number was remarkably small.

The present conditions allow us to make the following observations. Firstly, the large-scale mobilisation of resources to this issue seemed to be effective. The worldwide investment in Y2K remediation was estimated to be around \$US30 billion to \$US60 billion. It is debatable whether this amount was indeed necessary, but we should note that Y2K failure would have been categorically inescapable if appropriate modifications had not been made. Secondly, this process indicated a certain robustness in modern industry infrastructure and the human capacity to control it, at least so far. Thirdly, international cooperation was helpful. This included the actions of the United Nations and the World Bank through the International Y2K Cooperation Centre in Washington DC in collecting situation reports and making them available worldwide through the Internet. The International Atomic Agency promoted Y2K remediation among world nuclear operators. The International Energy Agency announced a plan for coordinated use in national strategic oil reserves.

Bilateral and multilateral cooperation was also remarkable. This included US-Russian joint monitoring of strategic missile safety and APEC's regional Y2K promotion campaign. This is a brief report from the Japanese Delegation on this issue.

**CHAIRMAN**—With great respect to my Japanese friends, I do not know that it had a great deal to do with the issue that we are currently considering, but I was prepared to hear them out. I now recognise Australia.

**AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION**—I am John Forrest from the Australian Delegation. Australia is very pleased to support the report which has been presented to us by Mr Sandoval. As a participant in the working group – along with Peru, Korea and Thailand – Australia has been a very enthusiastic supporter of APOINT 2001 and, in particular, of the legislative exchange program. It has been very satisfying over the course of this conference to work on the working group, along with my Australian colleague Mr Harry Jenkins. We have made considerable progress in finding a method to increase the possibility of a much improved pace in the development of the legislative exchange program.

I can think of two examples of why Australia is so keen on this particular method of electronic exchange of information. In our own country here, we have struggled with the very significant issue of native title. I am not wanting to open up a debate on that because there would be a divergence of opinion amongst our own delegation on the matter, but we have been very interested in the activities of our Canadian friends in dealing with the custodianship or ownership of pre-existing rights and so forth of their indigenous occupants. In fact, the standing committee which has been dealing with that matter has visited Canada and collected evidence from there. It would have been very useful in the early stages to have access to the legislation that applies to other countries. That is just one example.

Even more recently, one of our standing committees was examining the issue of the criminal activities of paedophiles who visit other countries to undertake their activities. It was examining the prospect of implementing prosecution here in Australia of offenders who have offended in another country. The committee had to go to a lot of trouble to establish what the laws were in various countries, particularly some of those of our near neighbours. It would have been very beneficial to have this form of electronic legislative exchange operating to make that process a lot easier. They are just two examples. I am sure delegates could think of others in their own countries where they would have liked to have seen what near neighbours and other countries were doing. I think that, if it is possible to make our region a better place in which to live and a better place in which to raise our children, it is very useful to share our experiences.

Before proceeding, I would like the conference – I think that delegates have already done this in the usual manner, by way of acclamation – to move a vote of appreciation of Oswaldo Sandoval. I can remember the presentation that he made – in a similar way that he has done at this conference – in Lima, Peru, last year, when he lifted my own vision of the potential of the APOINT 2001 plan. I think it has been his personal enthusiasm and drive that have achieved much of what has been achieved so far. Enormous progress has been made.

There are really only two important things for us to do now as delegates. The first thing is to ensure that, when we return to our respective countries, our email addresses are delivered to the central administrator in Peru. Yesterday there was a yellow form circulated to every delegate. Delegates can assist by ensuring that their email address is recorded on that and left at the information desk in the Members Hall before they leave the conference. I am very grateful that many of you have already done that. The second thing that you can do is to – in accordance with the recommendations that the working group has made – ensure that there is a technical person

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available in your own country. Much of what undergirds this whole process is very technical. All of us in this wide audience are at different stages in our understanding of the way in which the Internet operates. Some of us are proficient enough to click on and do a bit of browsing, read our emails and reply to them; others are more enthusiastic and understand the interesting language that is behind the Internet. So, rather than being technical about it, I think it is best to leave the technical aspects to a specialist. That is something that you can do when you return to your countries: ensure that your secretariats forward the address of that particular person.

Can I also encourage you to think about the revised arrangements that Australia has suggested which, we are very pleased to see, have received the support of the working group. The Internet is not something that we ought to be fearful of. It is a very useful tool which enables us to overcome the geographic diversity that separates us. I would encourage all members, having made personal contacts at this conference and at previous conferences, through the year to use that email index to keep an ongoing contact with each other. I think it is very important that we continue to build on the good will with which forums like this provide us.

The second thing concerns the operation of the legislative exchange system. Without getting too technical about it, there are two aspects of getting the legislative exchange program operating that have always concerned Australia. The first thing is that many countries are faced with the prospect of translating their legislation from their own native language into English, which is the common language of the APPF. That may well require them to translate a piece of legislation that possibly nobody might ever look at – certainly, there would be some elements of legislation that people would be very interested in but not all elements – and that is an onerous and very costly exercise. What we are proposing offers the opportunity for searching to be done by using the web browser or the web crawler, as Mr Sandoval has referred to it, in the native language of your own country. Whilst there is a fair bit of development work to be done on this, Australia is very keen to do what it can to show some leadership on this because we are very enthusiastic about getting this legislative exchange program operating.

What we are doing here at APPF is probably something that other interparliamentary associations – the IPU and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to mention just some – will be watching very carefully. The other parliamentary associations that you are involved in will also be watching very closely what we are doing here at APPF. If we can use this technique to make the world an even smaller place for the exchange of our legal frameworks between our different countries, we are going to do a lot to contribute to international goodwill. So I would just encourage delegates to do what I did after seeing in Lima last year what the vision was for APOINT 2001; that is, to capture part of the vision and the enthusiasm that Mr Sandoval has.

The original intention of APOINT 2001 was to have it operating by the turn of the century. Bear in mind that in Santiago next year that will be upon us so in the next 12 months each of us needs to ensure that our secretariats back home get busy and do what they can to ensure that when the technical working group reports in Santiago in January next year it can report some significant progress on this last remaining element of the total aspect of what has been presented to us today. I would encourage all delegates to ensure that that occurs.

Mr Chairman, I was going to ask that the forum might consider, in the normal manner by acclamation, a vote of thanks to Oswaldo Sandoval but, as the forum has already done that, it seems a bit superfluous. However, I can only reiterate that the APPF owes Mr Sandoval an enormous amount. He has extended himself – as I know he has gone to extra trouble in his own parliament to ensure that appropriations were made available to ensure that he could achieve this – and I think we ought to take a lead from that individually to ensure that his enthusiasm and leadership are not wasted so that by next year a substantial amount of the legislative exchange program is operating

and we can boast a little when we all get together again in Santiago. Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN**—Thank you, Mr Forrest. Just before recognising Canada and without any reflection on Canada at all, can I say that I allowed my Australian colleague to go a little longer in this debate than I had intended because of the kind references made to Mr Forrest by Mr Sandoval. I am inviting members to keep their remarks relatively brief if there are other participants other than Canada. Canada, would you please proceed.

**CANADIAN DELEGATION**—Mr Chairman, my comments will be brief. I must say that I have noticed that you are very liberal when it comes to some of the chairing, and we commend you for that.

*A delegate interjecting – As Liberals.*

**CANADIAN DELEGATION**—As Liberals, we certainly do. We certainly, first of all, would like to congratulate Mr Sandoval for his leadership and vision with regard to this particular issue. Certainly we commend the work of the Technological Working Group and the recommendations that have been presented to us. Canada is pleased to announce that it will soon have its own website, specifically for the Canadian section of APPF. We will have links with the home website of APPF, as well as with Canadian federal government departments. This will facilitate the exchange of information with our fellow APPF member states. We are also in discussions with Mr Forrest, from the Australian parliament, with regard to a service provider that we have in Montreal. He is prepared to look at adopting it for some APPF needs. We again would like to say that this is an important development for this organisation, and we look forward to continuing collaboration in this regard.

**CHAIRMAN**—Thank you, Canada. The conference has already indicated a great deal of enthusiasm, and rightly, for the work done by Mr Sandoval and his Technological Working Committee. It remains simply for me to indicate that I believe that the plenary agrees that the Technological Working Party paper should be adopted.

#### Future Agenda Items

**CHAIRMAN**—We have two items from Canada. I would suggest that we discuss first the issue of roundtables. If Canada wish to do it in any other order, I am happy to accommodate them.

**CANADIAN DELEGATION**—I think your suggestion is a good one, Mr Chairman, thank you. President Nakasone reported at the beginning of our deliberations the results of the Executive Committee meeting. He indicated that the committee had recommended that an opportunity be provided for discussion in the plenary of the proposal for adding a roundtable discussion to the activities of APPF at its annual meeting. I will speak to that and at the conclusion of my remarks ask the plenary to make a recommendation that the Executive Committee be asked to arrange a roundtable discussion at the time of the next annual meeting, to be held in Chile.

The background to this, very briefly, is that we have now been meeting for eight years, and the principal work, understandably, of our forum is to meet to discuss resolutions put forward by member countries and, hopefully, to bring about a consensus agreement amongst members of the forum on something that can be a matter of record for us all. It is necessarily a sensitive matter in terms of the understandable differences that always exist on the difficult issues that the forum is bold enough and has the courage to deal with. They involve areas in which countries that are less developed, developing and developed naturally have different views. One of the principal values of

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the forum, from my point of view, is that we come to understand one another's point of view better and, understanding it, we go home and pass judgment on laws that our governments present to our parliaments and deal with them in a better way than we would have, were it not for the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum.

I think that one of the additional activities we would value if we started it – and I will propose that we ask the Executive Committee to arrange such an event on a trial basis or on a first-time basis – would be an opportunity to meet, with our interpreters present and with the approval of the Executive Committee, to discuss probably a single subject with no objective of reaching a consensus conclusion. I think this would permit interveners to be more frank, to provide more information and to reveal more of the reasons for their position than we are able to do in the meeting of the forum where we have as our objective achieving a consensus. I believe that such a roundtable should always be on a subject that is complementary to the work of the forum which is set by the Executive Committee and approved before the meeting by the plenary session. It should not be a matter of surprise to any participant in the APPF. In that context, I confirm that I have had discussions with several APPF member countries, including China, who have, I think, made the valid point that the topic to be discussed at the roundtable should be one that participating countries know about well in advance. The topic would of course normally be introduced by someone. In the proposal that Canada has circulated in support of this recommendation, as an example of a presentation that might begin a roundtable presentation I have used representative Houghton's presentation at the forum meetings in Lima on the issue of the international financial crisis which originated in this region.

Colleagues, there are many topics that would lend themselves to this, such as the issue of climate change, where we have a view of developed countries that is in conflict in many cases with developing countries. The issue of the WTO, which saw a spirited exchange in the forum, is also an example of north/south, developed/developing/less developed differences where I think a roundtable discussion would give us an insight, a point of view, from the various parties who must agree on this which would be very valuable to us. Other issues include financial architecture; APPF parliamentary exchanges; and the issue of response to natural disasters which require immediate humanitarian aid, which has been used as an example by Australia. I could go on, but I will not in the interest of time.

To conclude, I would ask the plenary to make a recommendation to the Executive Committee that it arrange for a roundtable discussion, which I believe could be held most conveniently on the first day that we gather when the Executive Committee meeting is held. It usually takes half of the day. The other half of the day could I think be usefully used for this purpose. Interpreters would be available. I emphasise that the Executive Committee would be responsible for determining whether it happens and, if it is to happen, what the topic should be. Ample notice – perhaps several months notice – should be given to APPF member countries that it is going to happen and what the topic is. We should keep it among APPF countries. The topic could be introduced by a member country or someone from a member country that has special expertise in an area that we would wish to explore through a roundtable discussion.

I know that we are at a point in our deliberations where time is at a premium. I am going to conclude with a request of the plenary that it make a recommendation – as Canada has indicated in the proposal that was distributed earlier in the week – that, at the next annual meeting of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum, the Executive Committee arrange for an opportunity to have a roundtable discussion, complementary to the agenda that it sets, and that that roundtable discussion, with or without a presenter to begin the discussion, be held with no view to reaching a consensus

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decision but rather have as its main purpose the objective of participants gaining a better understanding of the points of view of member countries on a particular topic.

**CHAIRMAN**—You have a copy of and have heard the proposal from Canada for roundtable discussions to be recommended to the Executive Committee. Are there any other observations people want to make?

**PRESIDENT**—Regarding the proposal to have a roundtable forum, I believe the remarks just made were very good. I was able to learn a lot. I would really like to have it realised in some format. The reason is this: we are parliamentarians and what we are discussing goes beyond government policies. Our discussions are based upon a long-term perspective. We are speaking from free positions; we are not necessarily bound by the government position. That is how we are having our discussion here, with your personal ideas and your views with respect to the world, various regions, culture and artistic activities – there are so many topics around us. The resolution is one way of dealing with those issues, but another way is to have a completely free flow of discussion. This is a good opportunity for us to mutually learn from one another. I think it is very important. What is the thinking of a particular person from a particular country? These are the kinds of things about which we could learn a lot in a forum like this.

My feeling is that the speaker will notify the Executive Committee prior to their remarks in their roundtable presentation, and they will come up with a request for the particular topic they wish to speak about. The Executive Committee will select certain topics, we will bring back that information to the plenary and then those people who wish to take part in the roundtable will be decided. In the case of the roundtable, the remarks would be completely free. Of course, items have to be narrowed down to a certain extent, but the basic rule is free discussion. In the roundtable presentation we would have a very animated question and answer session. I believe this would be a very good opportunity for us to learn about any topic. So, at the next round of the Executive Committee, we would like to come up with some concrete ideas which we will come back to you about at the next plenary round of meetings. If you are in agreement, I would like to handle this matter in the way I have described to you.

**CHAIRMAN**—Thank you, Mr President, for your intervention. I see no disagreement and, as the plenary has indicated, the meeting generally concurs not only with the Canadian suggestion but also with the way in which you have elaborated it being implemented. Before I call on representatives from the Canadian Delegation to propose the other item that they have under ‘Future agenda items’, can I invite the Chilean Delegation to come to the top table. This will allow them to be appropriately recognised as our likely hosts for the next conference and to briefly put their proposals to us. Canada has the call.

**CANADIAN DELEGATION**—I call on my colleague Sarkis Assadourian to deal with this. This is a matter that he would like to have seen come before us as a resolution but we were out of time. Accordingly, we appreciate very much this opportunity to be able to bring it to the plenary.

**CANADIAN DELEGATION**—As we have been debating the issues over the last few days, it occurred to me that it might be a good idea to expand on the programs we have among nations generally and relate the matter specifically to Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum members. The idea is that we exchange parliamentary delegations, and also parliamentary staff members, on an individual basis. For example, people from Laos could visit Canada to study our system of government; Canada could send a delegation to Laos to study their system of government. No matter what kinds of computer presentations we may have, I do not think that can substitute for human knowledge and human exchange. So my proposal was to encourage this kind of exchange among member countries here so that we can have a much better understanding and more

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cooperation among nations, for the benefit of the population in this region and members of this forum. I hope that we can have the support of this conference to go ahead – probably next year or the year after that – and start to implement an exchange program for members of parliament and their staff, on an individual basis. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN**—We do not have a paper on this proposal from Canada, so I do not intend to allow debate or intervention on it. I consider the matter is now listed on the record of this meeting and it can therefore reasonably be considered by the Executive Committee as a proposal if any structure is necessary to encourage this sort of exchange.

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**SESSION III – CONVENING OF THE 9TH ANNUAL MEETING**

**CHAIRMAN**—We move to agenda item 3, which is the convening of the 9th annual meeting. As you are aware from the comments made in the plenary session on Wednesday, we have an invitation from our friends in Chile for the meeting to be convened there next year. I hand the floor to Chile to elaborate on the document that I believe has been circulated to everybody.

**CHILEAN DELEGATION**—For our country, Chile, it is an immense honour to be able to hold the 9th annual meeting of the APPF, which is extremely important as it has achieved high levels of development. We have been able to study the issues that pertain to us all. It is a terrific organisation. We have seen the work established here in Australia and also in Peru and other countries. It is our particular interest that there exist already a variety of topics that are so important and transcendent to us all. Whilst aware of the proposal presented by Canada and the remarks of our dear President, Mr Nakasone, we hope and believe that in Chile, if you feel it is appropriate, we should study and analyse subjects that will allow us to draw conclusions of greater detail, and also at the same time act on them, if in due course it is thought appropriate, with international organisations or with governments in order to come to the resolution of conflicts or to address issues that are affecting our geographical areas.

We feel a great need to do things right, so we want to make progress by giving each of the heads of delegations a folder and a brochure on the work that we seek to address and carry out in Chile. We have already established a webpage and a web site with email addresses and contacts listed. We have heard the remarks made by the representative of Peru, Mr Sandoval, whom we commend immensely for the work undertaken by Peru, by him and his colleagues. We would like to fully integrate our web site in relation to the work carried out by our Peruvian colleagues and Australian colleagues, on which we would like to present our congratulations. This is something that we are going to look into in the next few days. If you could let us have any information you may have, we will include it. It is in this spirit that we are hopeful to be able to have your cooperation.

The meeting will be held in Valparaiso next year. We do not have congresses throughout the world every year. We have visited this building and it has been magnificent to be here. We hope that you will equally like the building where the 9th annual meeting will be held. I hope you will find it attractive and also find it a useful venue in which to reach conclusions. Chile is at your disposal with all of the information and assistance you may require. We have the staff to provide you with the assistance you will need and we can guarantee that the meeting will be useful and beneficial to all.

**CHAIRMAN**—Thank you, Senator Rios. As I am sure most of you know, Senator Rios is the Deputy President of the Senate in Chile. We thank you, Sir, not only for your invitation to Valparaiso on 15 to 20 January 2001 but also for the detail you have gone into in preparation of this conference. I believe that in fact the plenary session has, by its acclamation, indicated that it entirely approves not only of Chile but also of Valparaiso as the site for the conference. We look forward to meeting you there.

Can I indicate too that prior to your conference, if there is anything we can do to assist as a result of the experiences we as Australians have had in hosting this conference – there are things that have not gone well and things that we would change if we were doing it again – we would be very happy to share with you both those things which were a success and those things which we knew failed and tried to make sure that you did not know had failed, just as our Peruvian friends shared their successes and failures with us. Please feel free to keep in touch with us by email or by

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any other form of correspondence and we will certainly be happy to do all we can to offer any assistance if it is needed.

There is a touch of irony that I might report to the meeting, that is, having had a detailed explanation from Mr Oswaldo Sandoval of just what modern technology can do for us, there is a delay of about five minutes – perhaps 10 minutes – on the draft communique because of a small glitch in the computer. Do not despair my friends because right now the communique is being photocopied. The glitch has been solved, but I thought it a little ironic that modern technology had effectively tripped us up as well as facilitating what we were trying to achieve at this conference. We can of course meet all deadlines, so this is not a matter of embarrassment to the chair, but I should indicate that currently we have no other immediate agenda items to turn to and we await the arrival of the draft communique.

If I might take a few moments of your time, the conference is now drawing to a conclusion and, as the person fortunate enough to be the chairman of the conference, many of you have been very kind in complimenting me on what has happened over the last few days. But I have to tell you – and all of those of you who are here as parliamentarians will know – that this conference does not happen because the chairman does the right thing; the conference happens because an awful lot of people, some of whom you see and many of whom you do not see, have been so diligent in support of the conference organisers and therefore in support of ourselves.

Since we have a few moments, I take this opportunity to acknowledge a number of people. This is a very dangerous thing to do because we are bound to overlook some. I acknowledge a number of people who have made possible what has happened over the last three days, many of whom were also involved in the conference of Presiding Officers which preceded this conference. Mr President, I must first compliment you and your staff for the way in which you have offered every assistance in the organisation of this conference. Mr Nakasone has always been available to me as the chairman, has been very generous in allowing me a great deal of latitude for the decisions I have made and has always been happy to offer counsel and advice if sought. I am grateful to you, Sir, for your leadership and drive in this conference. I am particularly grateful to your office, particularly Mr Tanaka for his assistance in making the arrangements initially for this meeting.

There has been a huge team of support people. They need to be acknowledged. I have tried to make a list of them. I trust that I have not overlooked anybody in the process. There are those who have every day set up the conference room, tidied the conference room and made arrangements for our accommodation in this room. I want to acknowledge them. I recognise those who have offered the interpreter service. I know that on the first day I expressed some mild exasperation with some technological hitch. That was immediately corrected. There have been no hitches since. In fact, the service has been excellent. I want to recognise that.

We have had a very professional document production team. As you have been aware, as these documents have come out, they have been readily available both on your desks and in your pigeonholes. I thank those involved in that. In this instance, I single out Robyn Webber for recognition of the role she has played in making the document production team work. This is where it gets very dangerous, because when I single out a person, there is a range of others. Trevor, who has been directly involved, said, 'Don't forget Robyn McClelland.' I also acknowledge Robyn. A range of people have been so helpful in this process.

The parliament of Australia has come to expect attendant staff that are available to meet parliamentarians' needs. They never fail us, and they have been particularly good during this conference. The security staff have also managed in a very unobtrusive way to ensure that all our security needs have been met. Beyond this room, as you aware, in the Members Hall we have had

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the information desk team led by Catherine Cornish. I acknowledge them. I also acknowledge the work done outside this room by Hansard in taking all that we have been having to say, putting it in hard copy form and making sure that it was promptly available to each of us at least by the next morning.

I acknowledge those who have staffed the Internet Café and made available to you all the information technology that you would want and given some guidance on how to best maximise that information technology. I recognise those from the Parliament House staff who have been available to meet you at airports or hotels or to arrange transport. This has applied both in Sydney and Canberra.

I acknowledged earlier the newsletter team. I thank them for their production facilities. I recognise those who have been liaison staff in each of the hotels in Sydney and Canberra and those who have coordinated the functions we have had in this House and in Canberra and Sydney. On that note, I also recognise those responsible for the opening ceremonies, the signage, the flowers and the banners and all those other things that we can so easily take for granted.

We have had a great deal of assistance from staff who I trust your spouses and accompanying persons have acknowledged have been dutiful in organising the accompanying persons program. While once again it is dangerous to single out people, I acknowledge the role of my accompanying person and spouse. She may not have volunteered for this when almost 30 years ago she said 'I do', but she has been very dutiful in supporting me and, I hope, in supporting each of you and your accompanying staff.

Some of our friends from other countries will not entirely realise, but this is a holiday period in Australia. For that reason, I have been grateful to the staff from each of the parliamentary departments who have given up holiday time to be here and to support this program. I have been grateful to my parliamentary colleagues from Australia, who would normally be on leave at this time. I single out Mr Somlyay, the leader, and Mr Martin, the deputy leader, and all my parliamentary colleagues from Australia who have played a very useful role in ensuring that there are enough Australians around to answer questions about the various eccentricities of our lifestyle and country and, I hope, to be your hosts. I have to say that I think you would find it difficult to know whether most of my Australian colleagues are government or opposition members from the tone of this conference. That is very healthy. I particularly acknowledge Mr Martin's role. As a former Speaker of the House, he has frequently been very helpful and encouraging to me as a Speaker from the other side of parliament. That generosity should be publicly acknowledged. Finally, I also recognise those who have met all our needs at morning teas, lunches and dinners – the caterers and the musicians.

At the risk of overstating the role of anybody, I would be remiss if I did not single out and thank Trevor Rowe on my right, Mr Peter Gibson on my left, and my own Speaker office staff: Margaret Atkin, who was here earlier, and Celeste Italiano, for the role that they have played in this, spending the last six months ensuring that the things we thought should happen would happen.

**PERUVIAN DELEGATION**—Maybe this is an appropriate time, having been asked by some of our colleagues as the host of the last meeting in Lima, to thank you, Mr Speaker, and to thank President Margaret Reid for your hospitality and for the professionalism with which you have arranged this extraordinary conference for us. We thank you also for the leadership that you have shown in getting this conference through and for the energy and, at the same time, the warmth with which you have directed the meetings. You are to be complimented, Mr Chairman. I know I express the thinking and the position of all the delegates when I tell you that, even though you were kind enough last year to tell us that it would be difficult for you to outdo what we humbly did in our

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country, you have outperformed the 7th Annual Meeting. We say this proudly, because the one that has gained is APPF. I do hope that our Chilean delegates will outperform Australia next year. By doing so, we will be making this organisation better - an organisation that, as we all know, was created and is being led successfully by Mr Yasuhiro Nakasone, former Prime Minister of Japan.

I want to tell you, Mr Chairman, how impressed we have been not only by your country but also by your wonderful parliament. As I expressed yesterday when we were visiting President Margaret Reid's offices, every parliamentarian at a given moment in his political career wishes to become either a Speaker of a House or President of a Senate. But here in Australia you have an extra incentive to reach that position, and that is to be able to have those wonderful suites that you have here as your offices. I would also like to stress how wonderful you have been to our spouses by providing the social events that they have attended and with which I know they have been delighted.

Just to finish, Mr Chairman, not only have you provided leadership and fine organisation, but you have provided something which is very valuable to all of us: you have provided us with your friendship, for which you are to be commended. I would like to ask my colleagues to stand up to give you and Madam President a round of applause for the wonderful conference you have provided us with.

**CHAIRMAN**—Thank you, Mr Sandoval, Mr Nakasone and delegates. Mr Sandoval, as I hope you are aware, we thought we had a great mentor in Peru. You have been very generous in your assessment of our conference. Let me share that generosity with our Chilean friends and say that we wish them every success in Chile and that we will do, as our Peruvian friends did, everything to ensure that their conference is the most memorable one that the APPF has had.

I have an indication from my staff that the draft communique is five to 10 minutes away. I could endeavour to simply fill in the time, but I am reassured by my secretary that the President, Mr Nakasone, would like to say a word.

**PRESIDENT**—First of all, this 8th APPF general meeting has been a great success. We owe this great success to the parliamentarians of Australia, Speaker Andrew and President Reid, among others. We particularly owe our success to the outstanding leadership of these two people. I would also like to thank the staff members who worked so hard on the preparation for this conference. I know this is the summer vacation. Despite this, people made so much effort. I would also like to thank my colleague parliamentarians of Australia for sharing their precious time during this summer vacation.

As I observed at this conference, there were so many occasions when I was so moved. It may be rather impertinent of me to speak so frankly. First of all, when we discussed the failure of the WTO ministerial, everybody was worried about what was going to happen after the failure. The United States and Japan followed up and we presented the resolutions to revive the momentum. This was due to the kind consideration of the United States. Not only we parliamentarians but the people of the world will feel relieved at seeing the presentation of the draft resolutions and we can feel relieved going back home taking back the adopted resolution on the WTO question. I would like to thank the American Delegation for giving such kind and thoughtful consideration at a time like this. I am much moved.

My next point is regarding the assistance to the heavily indebted poorer countries. There was another resolution on this topic. Up until now, we had not discussed this issue. This is the first time we have made any decision about this heavy indebtedness issue. I think this means that we

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have achieved something very great at this APPF meeting. I am sure that people of the heavily indebted poorer countries will be happy. I thought this was very significant.

The third point that impressed me was the matter pertaining to East Timor. Regarding the question of East Timor, according to the information we received in Japan, in the beginning Australia and Indonesia had some kind of dissonance; I heard that there was some kind of discord between the two delegations. But then I came to this APPF and I saw the passing of the resolution regarding East Timor. I could see first-hand that Australia and Indonesia were ahead of others in trying to accomplish this resolution. This was something so moving. I was so impressed. The parliamentarians of both countries are so happy, I am sure. Here in Canberra they ate together and they joined in the discussion together. I am sure that the peoples of both countries will be feeling very happy about this resolution. The APPF general meeting has provided the opportunity, following the outbreak of the East Timor issue, for parliamentarians of both countries to get together to exchange information. I believe that the APPF played a great part in restoring friendship. I would like to thank the Australian and Indonesian parliamentarians for that and it is with pleasure that I am going to report back to my colleague parliamentarians in Japan.

The next point is the resolution regarding Colombia. When the draft resolution was presented, what struck me was that this concerned internal affairs and that there could be a risk of interfering with the internal affairs of a certain country. I was a bit cautious about that, but I came to think of the recent international events, international customary law as well as international laws and peacekeeping or humanitarian policies. Certain matters have to be taken especially in the case of an emergency. I think the general trend is that certain measures would be tolerated in case of emergency.

There was a discussion about Kosovo in the past, but if a situation is so urgent the people of the region will take initiative in their humanitarian activities, and that is accepted. The United Nations also gives its blessing for such humanitarian activities. Humanitarian activities or the human rights related measures of an emergency are almost codified in the international customary law. That is what we have seen recently in the international community. In the beginning, I felt that it was meddling with international affairs, but as time went on I had a perfect understanding and I thought we should all with pleasure accept the draft resolution. I thought it was of great significance in registering our agreement to the draft resolutions. So this is the new thinking that I have come to have.

The next question was the antipersonnel landmines. Again, we had an animated discussion. The Korean people have a Korean situation to contend with. So, in that context, the treatment was very generous and yet very serious. We had a perspective into the future. I think the resolution on this question was a very important one.

So we had the Colombian question and the antipersonnel landmine question, and this plenary meeting showed flexibility and we were able to pass resolutions in goodwill. I think this is a good manifestation of the character of APPF. It is what APPF is all about.

As my final point, I would like to mention the fact that this meeting was telecast live on the Internet. This was something quite brand new. If I can download the telecast, I can use it for my constituency; I think it could be a good piece of material for my election campaign! Seriously, this will be a very valuable piece of material for the history of this organisation. This was state-of-the-art technology that our Australian friends introduced. This was something quite epoch making. Once again, I would like to offer my appreciation to our Australian friends for that.

We discussed the status of APOINT 2001. Mr Sandoval made so much effort in promoting this system. Everybody showed his and her appreciation for his contribution. He went out of his way and made so much personal sacrifice in promoting this venture, and I cannot thank him more.

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We are going to Valparaiso, Chile, next year. I hope for good success for our Chilean friends, and I am looking forward to seeing all of you in Chile. Thank you very much.

**CHAIRMAN**—Mr President, thank you for your comments, and thank you for your generous assessment of the conference. Can I say thank you too for the timeliness of your remarks as the joint communique has just arrived. We will take just one or two minutes recess to allow people to access the draft communique before we open the bid for discussion.

**Proceedings suspended from 11.16 a.m. to 11.21 a.m.**

**CHAIRMAN**—Delegates, let us now consider the draft joint communique of this, the 8th annual meeting. I hand the floor to the drafting committee chairman, the Hon. Alex Somlyay.

**AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION**—The drafting committee had three meetings with me as the chair. The countries which participated were Australia, Japan, Mexico, Canada, New Zealand, the Philippines, Vietnam, China and Thailand. I would like to specifically thank Bev Forbes, the secretary of the committee, who produced a very comprehensive first draft which enabled us to cooperatively work together and adopt the draft with a minimum of change in record time. I thank all the people who have participated for the spirit in which they dealt with each agenda item.

There are two minor issues which the conference may wish to consider. In the draft resolution on nuclear proliferation, that is resolution No. 2, Japan suggested the addition of words in paragraph 2. Apparently these words were agreed between the countries involved in drafting that draft resolution and were omitted. Those words have been included in the resolution which appears in annex 3 of the joint communique. The other matter is that we may need an additional paragraph – it is in the hands of the meeting – on the Canadian proposal to have a roundtable discussion at the next and future meetings of APPF. I commend the draft resolution to the conference.

**CHAIRMAN**—Thank you, Mr Somlyay. Before I invite discussion, it is my proposal to go through the draft communique paragraph by paragraph and let intervention occur if there are paragraphs that are causing particular concern. Paragraph 1 is self-explanatory; paragraph 2 is similarly, I would have thought, non-controversial; paragraph 3 is in the same category, as is paragraph 4. Paragraph 10 lists each of the resolutions considered in chronological order. Does anybody have any interventions on any of the other paragraphs? I recognise Mr Pyne of Australia.

**AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION**—Mr Chairman, at the risk of being pedantic, can I suggest that the word ‘recovery’ in paragraph 21 be replaced with ‘prevailing economic conditions’? It will then read, ‘Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia, the Philippines, Korea, Australia, China, Singapore, Laos, Chile, Mexico and Canada advised the meeting on their prevailing economic conditions following the Asian economic crisis that began in July 1997’. I want to make that change because there were differing reports. For example, in Australia’s case, we did not have to recover following the Asian financial crisis; we weathered the storm of the crisis.

**CHAIRMAN**—The suggestion has been made that in paragraph 21 the word ‘recovery’ be replaced with ‘prevailing economic conditions’. Mr Sandoval?

**PERUVIAN DELEGATION**—Mr Chairman, I would like to address paragraph 19. It says, ‘The meeting commended Peru and Chile on concluding a longstanding territorial dispute by peaceful agreement.’ Mr Chairman, I would very much request the withdrawal of the word ‘territorial’. I cannot find another word to better describe it, but we would very much prefer to just have it as ‘longstanding dispute by peaceful agreement’. In fact, it was not a territorial dispute but a

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problem that arose from a territorial dispute. So, in order not to confuse matters, we would very much prefer to take out the word 'territorial', if we may.

**CHAIRMAN**—I have a request from Australia that, if I may, I will just set aside for a moment. In my assessment, I believe it most likely that Mr Sandoval's request would be acceptable to the plenary session. If there is no dissent from what Mr Sandoval has said, then I will assume that the plenary session is happy for his request to be accommodated. Thank you., Mr Sandoval.

**PERUVIAN DELEGATION**—Thank you, Sir.

**CHAIRMAN**—We now turn to paragraph 21 and the suggestion that the word 'recovery' be replaced by 'prevailing economic conditions'. Is there any other intervention on that suggestion? If there is no dispute with the point made by Mr Pyne from Australia, I will presume that the meeting is happy to replace the word 'recovery' with 'prevailing economic conditions'. There appears to be no dissent.

**AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION**—I suggested at the outset that the meeting consider a paragraph to reflect on Canada's proposal to have a roundtable discussion at the next annual meeting and at future meetings. This came up when the report was being printed. To make the report complete, I suggest that it may well become paragraph –

**CHAIRMAN**—Can I intervene and say that I thought it was covered in paragraph 26, which reads:

That the meeting considered Canada's proposal for free and open round table discussion.

Are you happy that the matter is adequately covered, Mr Somlyay?

**AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION**—Yes.

**CHAIRMAN**—In that case, I indicate to the plenary session that with the two relatively minor amendments that have been made it would seem to me that, short of any other interventions, the draft communique should become the final communique of this the 8th Annual Meeting. Thank you.

*The joint communique having been acclaimed –*

**CHAIRMAN**—I invite delegates to take their seats, and we will proceed with the signing ceremony. I will join President Nakasone. We will then invite each of the delegation leaders to come to the table alphabetically, and if they wish to bring their delegation with them for a photo opportunity that is of course entirely in the APPF tradition.

*The delegates then signed the joint communique –*

**CHAIRMAN**—I thank the plenary and all delegations for their patience and for their attendance and formally declare the 8th Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum closed.

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