



Canada - China Legislative Association
Association législative Canada - Chine



Canada - Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group
Groupe interparlementaire Canada - Japon

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
to the 29th General Assembly of the ASEAN
Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)**

**Canada-China Legislative Association
and Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group**

Singapore

August 18–22, 2008

Report

On the Participation of the Canadian Delegation at the 29th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) held its 29th General Assembly from August 18 to 22, 2008, in Singapore. The Canadian Parliament, which has observer status to AIPA, sent a joint delegation of the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group (CJIG) and the Canada-China Legislative Association (CCLA). The CCLA was represented by its Co-Chairs, the Honourable Joseph A. Day, Senator, and Mr. Bob Mills, M.P. The CJIG was represented by its Co-Chair, the Honourable Bryon Wilfert, P.C., M.P. The Secretary to the delegation was Mr. Paul Cardegna.

Conference activities

The Canadian delegation observed the First Plenary Session, which began with statements by the Honourable Abdullah Tarmugi, President of AIPA and Speaker of the Parliament of Singapore, and the Honourable Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of Singapore. Statements were made by the leaders of the delegations from the eight AIPA member countries (Kingdom of Cambodia, Republic of Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Republic of the Philippines, Kingdom of Thailand, Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Republic of Singapore) as well as the two AIPA Special Observer Countries (Brunei Darussalam and Union of Myanmar).

Later, during the First Plenary Session, statements were made by the leaders of the delegations from the observer nations (Australia, Canada, People's Republic of China, European Parliament, Japan, Republic of Korea, Papua New Guinea and the Russian Federation). Mr. Bob Mills, M.P. and Co-Chair of the CCLA, made a statement on behalf of the Canadian delegation, the text of which is attached as Appendix A.

On the second day of the conference the Canadian delegation observed the delegates of the AIPA nations during the meetings of the Committee on Political Matters, the Committee on Economic Matters, the Committee on Social Matters and the Committee on Organizational Matters.

Each observer nation's delegation participated in a dialogue meeting with representatives of the ASEAN member nations. The Canadian delegation met with their counterparts from the AIPA nations on Thursday, August 21, 2008 and discussed a wide range of issues. The agenda for the dialogue meeting was the following:

- (a) Regional Security
- (b) Economic and Trade Cooperation
- (c) Investment Opportunities
- (d) Environmental Issues
- (e) Information Technology Cooperation

- (f) Development Cooperation and Breakthrough of the Doha Round
- (g) Parliamentary Exchanges between AIPA Member Countries and Observer Countries

The dialogue was chaired by the Honourable Masagos Zulkifli B. M. M., Member of the Parliament of Singapore. His report summarizing the discussion's main points was presented at the Second Plenary Session and is attached as Appendix B.

The Canadian delegation participated in the Second Plenary Session, which took place on the final day of the conference. During this session, all of the reports of the committees and observer dialogues were presented to and adopted by the plenary as well as the joint communiqué for the conference which is attached as Appendix C.

The 30th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) will be held in Pattaya City, Thailand from August 2-8, 2009.

Bilateral meetings

The Canadian delegation to the 29th AIPA General Assembly also engaged in bilateral meetings with the delegations from Indonesia, Japan and Vietnam.

Indonesia:

The Canadian delegation welcomed the Indonesian delegation by noting that Indonesia is a key location for Canadian strategic investment in South East Asia and identified a strong interest in increasing parliamentary exchanges between the two countries. The two delegations discussed Indonesia's bid to become President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Canadians resolved to speak to the Canadian Branch of the IPU in support of this endeavour. The delicate subject of the participation of Burma's exiled parliamentarians at future AIPA meetings was raised, with the Indonesians identifying their support for the initiative. The Canadians expressed their frustration with the continued reluctance of the ASEAN nations to confront Burma's human rights situation and the lack of democracy in that country. The Indonesians noted that they are interested in discussing the issue but have not received any support from other ASEAN nations. Finally, both delegations noted the importance of increased trade relations and investment as being mutually beneficial.

Japan:

The meeting began with each side noting that 2008 marked the 80th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Canada. Delegates from both countries greatly anticipated the planned visit of Emperor Akihito to Canada in 2009. The Canadian delegates acknowledged and appreciated Japan's continued support for international initiatives aimed at combating terrorism, despite Japan's constitutional prohibition from offensive military operations by its armed forces. Both sides agreed that Japan and Canada should work more closely together on peacekeeping initiatives and advocated a military attaché being assigned to the Japanese Embassy in Ottawa. Trade relations were also discussed in the context of the Framework Agreement signed in

2005, which the Canadians hope will lead to a free trade agreement (FTA) despite Japanese fears of an FTA's effect on that country's agricultural industry. Finally, climate change and the need to develop cleaner forms of energy technology were discussed.

Vietnam:

The Canadian delegation noted that 2008 was the 35th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and Canada and that both countries shared a common desire to increase economic investment and joint ventures particularly with regards to environmental initiatives and tourism. The Vietnamese delegation discussed their desire to organize delegations of Vietnamese workers that would travel to Canada to enhance their skills. The Vietnamese government was working closely with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) on these initiatives. The Canadians noted that delegates and staff from the National Assembly of Vietnam had visited Canada to learn from about the Canadian Parliament and democracy. The delegates also discussed the continuing effect of climate change and Vietnam's concerns about the coastal erosion which would result from rising sea levels. Both delegations believed that reducing greenhouse gas emissions was essential to prevent future ecological degradation.

Conclusion

The delegation felt that its participation at the conference gave it a better understanding of the issues facing ASEAN nations. The time spent with their ASEAN colleagues was an excellent opportunity for Canadian parliamentarians to forge and strengthen bilateral and multilateral relations with the nations of Southeast Asia.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Joseph Day, Senator
Co-Chair
Canada-China Legislative Association

Hon. Marie-P Poulin, Senator
Co-Chair
Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group

Mr. Bob Mills, M.P.
Co-Chair
Canada-China Legislative Association

Hon. Bryon Wilfert, P.C., M.P.
Co-Chair
Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-China Legislative Association Canada-Japan Inter-parliamentary Group
ACTIVITY	29 th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)
DESTINATION	Singapore
DATES	August 18-22, 2008
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Joseph Day, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Hon. Bryon Wilfert, P.C., M.P. Mr. Bob Mills, M.P.
STAFF	Mr. Paul Cardegna, Secretary to the delegation
TRANSPORTATION	\$42, 063.65
ACCOMMODATION	\$2, 877.05
HOSPITALITY	\$171.46
PER DIEMS	\$1, 256.97
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$531.75
TOTAL	\$46, 950.51
ASSOCIATION	Canada-China Legislative Association Canada-Japan Inter-parliamentary Group

Appendix A

**SPEECH GIVEN BY MR. BOB MILLS, M.P.
CO-LEADER OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION
TO THE 29TH ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
IN SINGAPORE
AUGUST 20, 2008**

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to express our great pleasure and delight at being invited to participate in the 29th annual meeting of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly. Further dialogue between countries only helps to increase and solidify the friendships that we have fostered over the past 30 years with the member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Canada's continued presence at this forum provides our Parliamentarians with a unique opportunity to further understand the issues facing the ASEAN nations. It is only by face-to-face communication that we can learn more about each other.

While our countries are separated by an ocean, we are unified on many fronts, and our objectives intersect on a number of key issues. We share concerns about the international trading system, international security, the environment and sustainable development, poverty, and information and technology cooperation.

It is important to note that, as Canadian Parliamentarians, we do not set government policy. Nevertheless, we do play a role in international relations, mostly through the work of our parliamentary committees. Many issues that have an international dimension are raised within our committees, and it is in this regard that it is vitally important to continue to facilitate dialogue between ASEAN and Canada's Parliamentarians. By better understanding the ASEAN region, we can better perform our functions within parliamentary committees.

As I previously mentioned, the relationship between Canada and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations has historically been one of cooperation, and we continue to hold this relationship in very high regard. The strength of the partnership between Canada and Southeast Asia was recently demonstrated by Canada's immediate response to the devastation caused by cyclone Nargis, the earthquake in China and other natural disasters in the region.

Economic and trade cooperation is clearly a vital part of the relationship between Canada and the countries of Southeast Asia. We recognize that Southeast Asia presents a significant opportunity for Canada. Your economic progress has been impressive, and between them, the ASEAN countries represent a diverse and growing market of some 560 million people.

As cooperation is increased between the ASEAN nations and your partners in Asia, Canada would like to increase its presence in the region. Increased trade would also help narrow the development gap in some of the ASEAN countries.

We recognize that investment opportunities are an important aspect of our economic relationship. They are also a vital component of economic growth and development in the region. More than that, foreign investment creates important links to Southeast Asia for Canadian companies, consumers, and workers.

Canadian investments represent a vote of confidence in the region by Canadian business people. Of course, in order to invest, companies need to be able to count on sound investment rules that provide stability, transparency, predictability, and protection for Canadian companies. For that reason, Canada has consistently supported a strong, rules-based system.

Canadian Parliamentarians recognize that in this era of global integration, security problems have a ripple effect, impacting the lives of those in the country in which they occur, but also influencing policy and behaviour in other parts of the world. Regional conflicts, energy security, terrorist financing, health pandemics, arms and drug trafficking – all these issues can have an impact on Canada's security, as well as that of our partners. Consequently, we recognize that there is a need to work closely with our partners to address situations that might lead to problems, either here or elsewhere.

Trafficking in illicit drugs and terrorist financing are two security issues that Canada is working with its international partners to combat. Other issues include corruption, cyber-crime, money laundering, and human trafficking. During our meetings here, we are interested in discussing the ways Canada and ASEAN countries can cooperate in the on-going fight against these global scourges.

Environmental issues are increasingly important components of our relationship. Canadians are mindful of the impact natural disasters can have. The tsunami, the recent earthquakes in Japan, Indonesia and China and Cyclone Nargis remind us all of how quickly disaster can strike.

By cooperating with each other, there is the chance we can reduce the impact of such events. In our discussions, we hope to learn more about the measures you are taking to prepare for natural disasters and to reduce the impact that human activity is having on the environment.

The Parliamentarians of Canada recognize that information and technology cooperation is the key to solving many of the issues facing the world today. We realize the value of sharing technology and best practices, in order to help each other cope with on-going and evolving problems.

When it comes to protecting the environment, for example, information and technology will be crucial in mitigating climate change. Clean energy technologies hold great promise for minimizing humans' impact on the environment. Developing alternate sources of energy by using technology will help developed countries and developing countries alike in their quest for energy self-sufficiency. Canada has many companies that specialize in these new technologies such as garbage processing, as well as solar and wind power generation.

Canada has been part of the G8+5 Dialogue Group set up in 2005 by Tony Blair. It is critical that the world come together and agree to launch negotiations for a post-2012 agreement. There must be an end date for negotiations of 2009 in Copenhagen, as decided in Bali.

Let me clearly state Canada's position: Canada believes that a post-2012 climate change agreement should include binding emissions reduction obligations for all major emitter countries (including the USA, China and India) and provide flexibility in terms of approaches and tools to achieve this goal. Other important elements of this framework which Canada will continue to promote in international negotiations include:

- the consideration of national circumstances,
- the promotion of clean technology,
- the use of market mechanisms to provide cost-effective incentives for emission reductions including reduced deforestation (which represent 20% of the problem) and
- integration of adaptation to climate change considerations in national development plans.

Let me highlight our key messages:

(1) climate change is real and is the defining issue facing our generation. Canada stands ready to do its part. Canada has released the details of our regulatory framework for air emissions, which is expected to reduce absolute greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2020 and 60-70% by 2050, relative to 2006 levels. This is equivalent to a 50% reduction relative to 1990 levels

(2) Canada is committed to working toward an agreement by 2009.

(3) In order to hope to meet the ultimate objective of the Climate Change Convention by 2050, it is now clear that action solely by traditional "developed countries" cannot achieve this goal.

(4) All major emitters such as the USA and emerging economies, including China, India, Brazil and others must accept binding greenhouse gas reduction obligations if the global climate challenge is to be met. However, it should reflect the reality of national circumstances.

(5) The next international agreement will need to be realistic and provide countries with more tools and greater flexibility so that emissions reductions can be made economically viable and technologically feasible.

(6) Finally, the time for talk is over and we now need action and a long-term vision, much as you in the ASEAN are developing a long-term vision for your cooperation.

Inter-parliamentary dialogue is important to Canada's Parliamentarians, and many of us participate in a number of parliamentary associations and inter-parliamentary groups. Among these are the Canada-Japan Parliamentary Group, Co-Chaired by the Honourable Bryon Wilfert, P.M., M.P. and Canada-China Legislative Association, represented by the Honourable Joseph A. Day, Senator and myself.

I would like to conclude by extending my deepest gratitude for welcoming us to this gathering and the wonderful job Singapore has done as our host. The meetings that we have had with our Southeast Asian counterparts have been enlightening, and as a result, we have developed a better understanding of the issues that you are facing. I can't miss this opportunity to congratulate China on an exceptional job of hosting the Olympic Games. I attended the opening on August 8 and it was truly sensational. Congratulations to Singapore on your medal as well. We take great pride in being continuously invited back to participate in this forum, and hope that we can continue to facilitate dialogue between us. On behalf of my colleagues, the Honourable Bryon Wilfert and the Honourable Joseph Day as well as Mr. Paul Cardegna, the Secretary to the Delegation, I thank you.

Appendix B

REPORT ON THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN AIPA AND CANADA

Your Excellency, the President of the 28th AIPA, distinguished Parliamentarians:

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Dialogue between AIPA and the delegation from Canada was convened in the Pink Azalea Room, Shangri-La Hotel, Singapore, on 21 August 2008, between 2.00pm to 4.00pm.

2. INTRODUCTION OF DELEGATES

The Chairman of the Dialogue, Mr Masagos Zulkifli B M M, welcomed the delegates to the dialogue with Canada. Subsequently, the members of the AIPA, observers and the representatives from Canada introduced themselves.

The dialogue was attended by the following delegates:

Canada

Mr Bob Mills

Mr Joseph A. Day

Mr Bryon Wilfert

Mr Paul Cardegna

Cambodia

Mr Chhit Kim Yeat

Mr Chan Savan

Indonesia

Mrs Saidah Sakwan

Mrs Yoyoh Yusroh

Laos

Prof Dr Phonethep Pholsena

Malaysia

Mdm Fuziah Salleh

Singapore

Ms Eunice Olsen

Ms Ellen Lee

Philippines

Mr Jesus Crispin Remulla

Ms Reyliana G Nicolas

Thailand

Mr Somboon Uthaiwankul

Vietnam

Mr Vu Viet Ngoan

3. DISCUSSION

The Chairman of the Dialogue invited Canada to give an opening remark. Canada expressed their gratitude to the delegates for attending the dialogue.

All delegates expressed their gratitude to Canada for their assistance to their countries. During the discussion the delegates focus on the topics that they considered important to their countries.

Cambodia

The delegate from Cambodia expressed his gratitude to the Parliament of Canada for their contribution in different fields towards the reconstruction of Cambodia. He highlighted several projects assisted by the Government of Canada such as food, health, education, CIDA programme, etc.

Cambodia delegate shared that they are encountering problem with the WTO Doha Round as the farmers of Asia still face problems in the international market due to agriculture subsidies competition in the developed countries. He sought Canada's assistance to eliminate the above subsidies.

Cambodia also raised the issue on providing Canadian scholarships to Cambodian students in the field of mining and electrical engineering. This was mentioned in last year's AIPA dialogue with Canada. He mentioned that Cambodia had not received any response from Canada on this issue and would appreciate Canada's further assistance.

Response from Canada

The delegate from Canada thanked Cambodia for their comments and highlighted that Canada and Cambodia had been working together for many years.

With regard to the issue on providing scholarships for Cambodia students, Canada highlighted that there were several universities in Canada that had scholarships. He would like Cambodia to highlight which university they would be interested in and Canada would follow up on the matter. The Canada delegate also shared that several universities in Canada had been doing outreach and had sent professors to other countries to provide training.

They highlighted other areas of interest which Canada and Cambodia could work together. Examples were deforestation and accumulation of garbage. Such issues

would need to be dealt with immediately. Canada said that they could share information on how to turn garbage into resource and how to manage commodity like forest and use it for economic benefit. However, it would be important to convince the public that the issue should be an area of concern and it would require regional cooperation.

Malaysia

The Malaysia delegate highlighted the issue of empowering parliamentarians. She shared that Malaysia was going through a different political landscape and there would be a need to strengthen parliament institutions. She also raised the issue on food security and rising food prices. She would like to seek Canada's advice on these matters and share on areas which Canada could offer help in.

Response from Canada

The Canada delegate said that there would be a need to look at different issues in terms of parliamentarian empowerment. It would be important to ensure that there were right tools such as staff, resources and rules that support the Parliamentarian.

Canada shared that they had been active in helping other countries build their capacity. They could help by providing exchange programmes to find out how secretariats, committees, parliamentary processes and procedures were carried out. Canada would take note of the request and follow up if interested countries could indicate their specific areas of interest.

Canada said that technology could help improve the issue of food and fuel, and this would be an area which Canada could help in.

Vietnam

The delegate from Vietnam raised the issue on agricultural subsidy, and trade and investment in less developed countries. He also asked Canada if they could provide assistance to the less developed countries to improve their legal framework.

Response from Canada

The Canada delegate highlighted the need to have greater transparency and improve legal framework that would support trade and investment in Asia. Many investors would not want to invest in countries that might not have proper legal framework to support them in a fair manner. He said that CIDA had been helping countries like Vietnam to improve their legal framework and Canada had been helping China in building up their legal system.

In terms of trading subsidy, the US and European Union had been having heavy subsidies. Canada hoped that trading subsidy would be eliminated in due course.

Singapore

The delegate from Singapore asked on how Canada had been communicating their environmental policies to the public. The Singapore delegate (Rapporteur) sought Canada's view on how to work with other countries on climate issues such as following

the Kyoto Protocol. He also asked Canada to comment on their effort to protect the Arctic Circle.

Response from Canada

The Canada delegate said that one way to encourage greater ownership in environmental issues would be to display environmental friendly initiatives for the public. Together with government support, countries could also get corporations on board and help them see how their business could benefit from their involvement. Initiatives should start from the grassroots and schools. In addition, there had to be political will in this area. Canada could share resources and information on this matter.

Canada delegate said that there had been more support on climate issues. For example, US had been involved and China had changed their position and had paid more attention to environmental issues. Canada highlighted that it was an international problem and it would be important for everyone to work together on this issue and share best practices.

He added that Canada had been looking into the issue of the Arctic Circle and had put in a substantial amount of money to deal with different issues including the Arctic Circle. There were plans to build an International Science Centre on the Arctic and work with US to establish science and technology to deal with the issue. He said that the eight countries within the Arctic recognised the importance and planned to set in place rules for the Arctic.

Indonesia

The Indonesia delegate raised the issue of climate change and sought Canada's advice and help in this area.

Response from Canada

The Canada delegate said that they recognise that Canada played an important role and would share relevant information. However, there would be a need for countries to recognise what could and could not be done and be more forward looking.

He added that intellectual property would be an important issue with regard to transfer of technology. He highlighted that large amount of money was used to develop technologies and it would be important to ensure that laws were put in place to protect intellectual property when corporations go into other countries to help them.

Philippines

The delegate from Philippines highlighted the issue of environmental management as many countries had set up industries in Philippines but environmental waste was not well managed. They also raised the issue of human resource management, highlighting the problem of unclear migration criteria which resulted in many Filipinos becoming unemployed. Many ended up doing menial work instead of using their profession.

Response from Canada

Canada delegate said that this issue applies for Canadian as well. Canadian who migrate to another province would need to have their qualifications reviewed and they might not be able to work in their previous profession. The Canadian Government planned to work with the province on this matter.

With regard to environmental issues, Canada would put in place legislation to ensure that there would be environmental cost and reclamation. Big corporations had also put in place measures to address this issue.

Canada acknowledge that there's a large Filipino community in Canada and thank their support.

Laos

The delegate from Laos sought Canada's recommendation and assistance in the area of trade and investment, human resource and tourism.

Response from Canada

Canada recognised that foreign investment would be a good opportunity to enhance the life of the people in Laos. However, it would be important for Laos to put in place regulation and legal framework to facilitate and support the investment. He encouraged Laos to join WTO in view of the opportunities available. He said that Canada would be willing to help Laos look into the criteria for membership.

Malaysia

Malaysia delegate asked Canada to share their experience on poverty eradication. They recognised the need to review poverty line and were committed to poverty eradication. One of the issues they had been facing was housing and she sought Canada's advice

on how to resolve the issue of housing and ways to erect cheap housing within a short time.

Response from Canada

Canada delegate shared that there were constitution to support poverty eradication. For example, Canada had a housing policy and initiatives to set up pre-fabricated homes quickly which helped to resolve housing problems. There were also policies which allowed tax relief for people who could not afford to pay tax. Canada had also leveraged on NGO's expertise. They had also provided incentives in the form of tax relief to encourage the rich and corporations to donate money.

Most importantly, he said that countries would need to set poverty eradication as a priority, set in place poverty reduction policies and infrastructure support to resolve this issue. Countries could also look at best practices and learn from others.

The Report of the AIPA and Canada Dialogue is hereby presented for the consideration and approval of the 29th AIPA General Assembly.

Thank you.

MR MASAGOS ZULKIFLI B M M

CHAIRMAN

DR LIM WEE KIAK

RAPPORTEUR

Appendix C

Joint Communiqué

INTRODUCTION

1 Pursuant to the decision of the 28th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) held in Malaysia on 18-24 August 2007, and in accordance with the Statutes of AIPA, the 29th General Assembly was held in Singapore on 18-24 August 2008.

2 Speaker Mr Abdullah Tarmugi of the Parliament of the Republic of Singapore, the AIPA President, presided over the 29th AIPA General Assembly.

3 The 30th AIPA General Assembly would be held in Pattaya City, Thailand from 2 – 8 August 2009.

WELCOME ADDRESS

4 In his welcoming speech, the President of AIPA and the Speaker of the Parliament of Singapore, Mr Abdullah Tarmugi, extended a warm welcome to all delegates and observers to the 29th AIPA General Assembly. He reaffirmed the importance of the ASEAN Charter and the role AIPA could play in the establishment of the ASEAN Community based on the principles of consensus, mutual respect, the rule of law, democracy and human rights.

5 He called for the parliamentarians, who are in close contact with the grassroots, to be a means for two-way dialogue between governments and the people in building a people-centred ASEAN. He also urged parliamentarians to support the implementation of ASEAN agreements and the expeditious ratification of the ASEAN Charter by the 14th ASEAN Summit in Bangkok.

6 He emphasized the importance of dialogue with ASEAN's and AIPA's external partners, as a means to foster mutual understanding. He also emphasised the responsibility of the parliamentarians in shaping the ASEAN course during this exciting period of change and nurturing the growing ASEAN identity among their constituents, particularly the youths, in order to ensure that the next generation will be an "ASEAN generation".

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

7 The Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore, Mr Lee Hsien Loong, opened the 29th AIPA General Assembly on 20 August 2008. In his opening address, he outlined the many initiatives undertaken by ASEAN in its efforts towards greater regional integration, including the ASEAN Charter and the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint, which paves the way for ASEAN to become a single market and production base by 2015. He called for the expeditious ratification of the ASEAN Charter by all member states. Noting that it is not the time for ASEAN to rest on its laurels given the competition from China and India, he stressed the need for ASEAN to become a strong and integrated region, to make it a more attractive and worthwhile economic partner for MNCs and other countries and regional organisations.

8 Drawing on the experience of the EU, PM Lee stressed the importance of strong domestic support to sustain ASEAN's integration efforts. Such domestic support would rest on an appreciation by ASEAN's citizens of the relevance of ASEAN to their daily lives, and should continue to be fostered through frequent interactions, business ties, and people-to-people exchanges.

9 PM Lee lauded the vision and ideals of AIPA founders, and emphasized that their objective of creating an integrated and successful community remained relevant today. They had seen the need to take a larger view of the region's interests beyond national and domestic considerations. While parliamentarians may belong to different political parties, ASEAN cooperation is a non-partisan issue which all can support. In this regard, he emphasized the key role of national parliaments in moving ASEAN closer to our common goals by supporting the ratification and implementation of ASEAN agreements, including the Charter, and enlisting public support for the ASEAN vision. He also stressed AIPA's role in promoting better person-to-person ties and greater understanding among the parliamentarians as they served the important role of "bridges between the people of different ASEAN countries".

10 PM Lee expressed his confidence that if parliamentarians could continue to lead and manage domestic sentiments, stand firm against xenophobic attitudes, and support policies which keep our economies open and integrated, the region would be able to achieve continued growth, stability and development; and ASEAN's relevance and strategic weight will be enhanced. He concluded by wishing the ASEAN parliamentarians meaningful, fruitful and enjoyable discussions.

DELEGATIONS

11 The delegations from the Kingdom of Cambodia led by Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly; Indonesia led by Mr Agung Laksono, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Lao People's Democratic Republic led by Mr Thongsing Thammavong, President of National Assembly of Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia led by Datuk Wan Junaidi bin Tuanku Jaafar, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives; Philippines led by Mr Prospero Nograles, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Singapore led by Mr Matthias Yao Chih, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Singapore; Thailand led by Mr Chai Chidchob, President of the National Assembly; Vietnam led by Mrs Tong Thi Phong, Vice-President of the National Assembly, attended the General Assembly.

12 Also present were Special Observer Delegations from Brunei Darussalam led by Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Indera Mahkota Pengiran Anak (Dr) Haji Kemaludin, Speaker of Legislative Council; and Myanmar led by Dr Tun Shin, Deputy Attorney General. The Observer Delegations were: Australia led by Ms Sharon Bird, MP; Canada led jointly by Mr Bob Mills, MP, and Mr Bryon Wilfert, MP; People's Republic of China led by Mr Zha Peixin, MP; European Parliament led by Mr Hartmut Nassauer, Chairman EP-ASEAN Delegation; Japan led by Mr Youetsu Suzuki, MP; Republic of Korea led by Mr Shin Hak Yong, MP; Papua New Guinea led by Mr Sai Besoo, MP; and Russian Federation led by Mr Sergey Shishkarev, Head of the Committee of the State Duma.

VICE-PRESIDENTS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

13 The General Assembly elected the following as Vice-Presidents: Cambodia, Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin; Indonesia, Mr Agung Laksono; Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mr Thongsing Thammavong; Malaysia, Datuk Wan Junaidi bin Tuanku Jaafar; Philippines, Mr Prospero Nograles; Singapore, Mr Matthias Yao Chih; Thailand, Mr Chai Chidchob; and Vietnam, Mrs Tong Thi Phong.

STATEMENTS OF HEADS OF DELEGATIONS

14 The Heads of the Delegations of Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Brunei Darussalam and Myanmar delivered their respective statements during the First Plenary Session of the General Assembly.

Cambodia

15 Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia and Leader of the Cambodian Delegation, extended his greetings to all delegates to the 29th AIPA General Assembly. He expressed his optimism in achieving greater harmonisation among the ASEAN member countries by way of strengthening economy, preserving culture, bettering civilization while bringing together collective bodies to unite with one vision, one identity and one community as ASEAN moves towards establishing the ASEAN Community. He stressed on the strong commitment and important role of AIPA member states to intensify community building consistent with the ASEAN Charter and its Preamble. He highlighted the need for the Assembly to focus on two issues: the problem of adopting and implementing anti-drug laws in the respective member countries and establishing "an integrated approach" between ASEAN and AIPA to ensure the sustainability and effective implementation of the AIPA resolutions.

Indonesia

16 In his speech, Mr Agung Laksono, Speaker of the House of Representatives and Leader of the Indonesian Delegation, expressed its hope for a more powerful AIPA that will play a significant role towards the accomplishment of ASEAN Community in 2015. In his view, the spirit of solidarity among the members, the strengthening relations among member states to solve territorial problems, and the annual meeting with dialogue partners from nine parliaments show that AIPA's existence and its relations with the ASEAN Secretariat have proceeded well.

17 He shared with delegates the complexity of some issues, such as the food price crisis, and energy security, confronting the world and ASEAN. He stressed on Indonesia's positive experience in addressing the gender issue, and the need for parliamentarians to continue strengthening and advocating greater democracy and human rights, and the promotion of inter-racial and inter-faith dialogue in the region. AIPA as a regional parliamentary forum should address these issues and find ways and sustainable solutions to these issues. He also emphasized the responsibility of parliamentarians to fully capitalize on their positions in improving democracy, creating social justice and improving law and order in their respective countries. With regard to the Charter, he noted that Indonesia was one of the three countries that have not ratified. He reaffirmed Indonesia's support for the AIPA President for taking concrete

steps towards the advancement of the AIPA and the Government of member states to uphold the Charter. He extended Indonesia's support to the AIPA Secretary General to realize a full transformation of AIPA into a more effective and closely integrated institution.

Lao People's Democratic Republic

18 Mr Thongsing Thammavong, President of the National Assembly and Leader of the Lao PDR Delegation, congratulated the Parliament of Singapore for the excellent preparation of the 29th AIPA General Assembly and commended the government of Singapore for the significant progress achieved during its Chairmanship of ASEAN over the previous year, particularly the signing of the ASEAN Charter and progress made in enhancing ASEAN political and security community (APSC). He noted, however, that there is room for further enhancing ASEAN cooperation in particular areas, such as regional response to disaster relief assistance, the challenges in global economic volatility affecting the region and other pressing challenges including environmental degradation and avian influenza. Although individual national responses have been impressive, he felt that a more comprehensive regional response to such events is needed. AIPA and its member parliaments thus have a key role in addressing these challenges and supporting ongoing ASEAN integration. As majority of the national parliaments have ratified the Charter, he said that the focus for them must be to systematically review their respective national legislations to ensure that they are consistent and monitor the implementation of the Charter. For its part, the National Assembly of Lao PDR looks forward to hosting the 17th Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) in January 2009 and invites all AIPA delegates to the event.

Malaysia

19 Datuk Wan Junaidi bin Tuanku Jaafar, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives and Leader of the Malaysian Delegation, spoke on behalf of the Speaker of Dewan Rakyat Malaysia. He referred to the Vientiane Action Programme and the Plans of Action, the High Level Task Force, the ASEAN Charter, Economic Blueprint, Political-Security and Socio-Cultural Community, hoping that all member states ratify the Charter and putting in concerted efforts to realize the dream of one vision, one identity, one caring and sharing community by 2020.

20 He reiterated the request for AIPA to be given the status of an equal partner in regional and ASEAN community-building such as being invited to all levels of ASEAN meetings as a special observer.

21 Following the Charter, ASEAN had established High Level Panel to study the formation of a Human Rights Body and Legal Experts Group on the Charter. It had initiated a mechanism for ASEAN integration such as economic community by 2015, ASEAN +3, Chiang Mai Initiative, management of financial crisis and the greater role of parliamentarians. We must exploit the potentials and opportunities of 500 million population in ASEAN as the European Union had done with 489.2 million Europeans.

Philippines

22 Mr Prospero Nograles, Speaker of the House of Representatives and Leader of the Philippine Delegation, lauded the vision of AIPA founders and stressed on its continued relevance today. He noted ASEAN's evolvement and its progress in pursuing the vision of becoming a single community by the year 2015. Noting that the Blueprint for the ASEAN Economic Community has already been finished and the senior officials are now working on similar "blueprints" for the political and socio-cultural pillars, he expressed confidence that ASEAN will establish a clear roadmap in its quest to build one caring and sharing community by end 2008. He urged AIPA not only to support the realisation of a powerful ASEAN community but work on the commitment to achieve the common goal of "One ASEAN Vision" among its member countries by 2015.

23 Given the ongoing food and energy crises, he proposed that the need to develop a food security plan in consultation with experts and stakeholders. The plan must be realistic, clear and complete with schedules and timelines. He emphasised the need for ASEAN to work together closely to reduce its dependence on conventional fuels through intensified energy efficiency and conservation programmes and developing hydropower, expanding renewable energy systems and biofuel production and utilisation. There is strong ground to establish an integrated energy market in the region. He expressed support for the finalising, adoption and ratification of the proposed ASEAN Energy Security Agreement approved by the Energy Ministers of ASEAN during the ASEAN Summit in December. He also highlighted Philippines' interest in the drafting of the terms of Reference of the ASEAN Human Rights Body and looked forward to the completion of this draft by next year. He pointed out that AIPA and ASEAN both believe in the thrust to make the region more people-oriented. In this regard, both should continue to strive harder in pushing for reforms that will grant the ordinary ASEAN citizen more participation in the decision-making process of our respective governments.

Singapore

24 Mr Matthias Yao Chih, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Singapore and Leader of the Singapore Delegation, briefly took stock of the important measures undertaken by ASEAN during the Singapore's Chairmanship of ASEAN last year, and stressed the importance of the ASEAN Charter in bringing the regional organization forward. He noted AIPA's continued role in forging intra-ASEAN ties; thus reinforcing our efforts to build an ASEAN Community. He reiterated the importance of parliamentarians' role as a conduit for the people in fulfilling ASEAN's vision to become a more people-centred organization. Parliamentarians could play a catalytic role in the community-building process and ensuring the effective implementation of ASEAN agreements at the national level. He called for AIPA to continue playing a constructive role in passing resolutions that are acceptable to member countries and reflective of the aspirations and concerns of the people.

Thailand

25 In his speech, Mr Chai Chidchob, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Thailand and Leader of the Thai Delegation, cited that AIPA has promoted and facilitated the achievement of the goals of the ASEAN as constituted in the ASEAN

Declaration of August 1967 made at Bangkok, Thailand as well as the ASEAN Vision 2020, leading to the realization of the united and strong ASEAN Community. In view that AIPA is a key consultative body of ASEAN under the ASEAN Charter, he stated that AIPA has placed importance on establishing a permanent mechanism – the AIPA Caucus - to ensure progress of common legislative initiatives. The AIPA Caucus is a move towards legal integration which would intensify a credential of AIPA as a regional legislative body with its clearly defined tasks to offer legislative initiatives to ASEAN cooperation. He also cited that Thailand as the founding member of AIPA and ASEAN will continue its utmost efforts to thrust AIPA forward into its fourth decades as the effective ASEAN regional Inter-Parliamentary Assembly.

Vietnam

26 Mrs Tong Thi Phong, Vice-President of the National Assembly of Vietnam, reiterated Vietnam's support for continued cooperation in ASEAN on energy security, food security, and environmental protection, as well as expediting the development of the ASEAN community in all three pillars. She called for the early ratification of the ASEAN Charter by all member countries and strengthening of the parliament's role to oversee the implementation of the agreements signed by the ASEAN Governments. She reminded the parliamentarians of their important role in increasing the public awareness on ASEAN and AIPA and promoting regional integration. She recommended that for AIPA to fulfil its role, the Assembly needs to improve its operational and organizational mechanisms, including the AIPA Secretariat. She assured AIPA of Vietnam's continued support and cooperation at the forum.

Brunei Darussalam

27 Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Indera Mahkota Pengiran Anak (Dr) Haji Kemaludin, Speaker of Legislative Council and Leader of the Brunei Darussalam Delegation, expressed his appreciation for the warm hospitality accorded to his delegation. In his speech, he stressed on the important role of ASEAN in maintaining peace and stability in the region and the significance of the Charter. In his view, parliamentarians have some role to play in ensuring that ASEAN will be able to fulfil the objectives, particularly in serving the interest of the people, and addressing some of the ASEAN's concerns through creating a sense of ASEAN identity among the people by creating greater awareness of what ASEAN is and what it can do for them so that ASEAN will be more relevant and meaningful to us all. He expressed his general satisfaction with the state of ASEAN cooperation thus far in establishing linkages with external partners, trade, political and security as well as in developmental cooperation. He suggested that the ASEAN member states continue to work together to address challenges such as disaster relief management, including the Blueprints in all the three community pillars to realize the vision of an ASEAN Community by 2015. In this regard, he expressed his view that parliamentarians could contribute by narrowing the development gap among the ASEAN member states through the Initiative for ASEAN Integration. AIPA should also raise public awareness and contribute to discussions on pressing and urgent issues such as the energy security, food security and global financial uncertainty.

Myanmar

28 Dr Tun Shin, Leader of the Myanmar delegation, thanked the host for the cordial welcome and warm hospitality and appreciated the work accomplished by AIPA during the past year. He informed the General Assembly about the current status of democratization in Myanmar. He highlighted that the Constitution was approved by an overwhelming majority of 92.48% of votes in favour and it was adopted on 29 May 2008. He reiterated that the Government will continue in its unwavering efforts for the implementation of the remaining three steps of the Roadmap and the announcement made by his government to hold the free and fair multi-party general elections in 2010.

29 He also informed the General Assembly on the effect of Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar and expressed his thanks for the ASEAN countries' sympathy and support in time of need in Myanmar. He also appreciated the work of this General Assembly and its great efforts in passing the important Resolutions.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MATTERS

30 The Executive Committee considered the request by the Members of Parliament Union (Burma) to attend the AIPA General Assembly as "Special Observer" which was referred to the Executive Committee by the 28th AIPA General Assembly held in Kuala Lumpur in 2007. The Executive Committee decided that it will not be able to accede to the request at this juncture given that consensus could not be reached on the admission of the Members of Parliament Union (Burma) as "Special Observer".

POLITICAL MATTERS

31 The Assembly's deliberation on political matters covered the issues of AIPA's role and contribution to the ASEAN Charter, and the importance of strengthening democracy and the promotion and protection of human rights in ASEAN.

AIPA's Role and Contribution to the ASEAN Charter

32 The Assembly urged the expeditious ratification of the ASEAN Charter with a view to its entry into force by the 14th ASEAN Summit in December 2008. The Assembly emphasised the key role of ASEAN parliamentarians in advancing regional integration for the benefit of the peoples of ASEAN. The Assembly supported the implementation of the ASEAN Charter through the formulation and promulgation of national legislation in conformity with the Charter. The Assembly agreed to foster a rules-based regime in ASEAN under the Charter. The Assembly reaffirmed the importance of the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Strengthening Democracy, Promotion and Protection of Human Rights

33 The Assembly noted that the establishment of an ASEAN human rights body was mandated by the ASEAN Charter, and welcomed the establishment of the High Level Panel on an ASEAN human rights body. The Assembly emphasized that parliamentary democracy could only be truly meaningful if women are provided equal rights and opportunities to be represented in parliament, and strongly urged ASEAN member countries and AIPA Member Parliaments to ensure that such equality is achieved within the Millennium Development Goals Framework. The Assembly also called on all ASEAN Member Parliaments to work for democracy through open, transparent, free and fair elections and to build a knowledge-based society in order to support the practice of democracy. The Assembly also strongly urged all Parliaments to extend

their full support to work towards the establishment of the ASEAN human rights body and encouraged the contribution of all relevant stakeholders in this regard.

ECONOMIC MATTERS

34 To narrow the economic gap among Member Countries and to accelerate the economic integration of the Kingdom of Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV) into ASEAN, the Assembly encouraged the effective implementation of the 2nd IAI Work Plan 2009-2015; and the ASEAN Policy Blueprint for SME Development 2004-2014. The Assembly also urged the adoption of best practices amongst SMEs; the promotion of networking and technical exchanges; and the SMEs' participation in regional production and distribution networks.

35 The Assembly recognized that ASEAN economic integration will promote a competitive and thriving environment, which will in turn attract investors and bring about benefits to the local business community. The Assembly also emphasized that ASEAN will continue to play a key role in the Asia-Pacific region and the global environment by cultivating strong linkages with extra-ASEAN partners, in order to maximize the economic gains derived from rapid globalization for the benefit of the people of ASEAN.

36 The Assembly stressed the need to achieve higher standards of environmental friendliness for sustainable development through the development of suitable renewable and alternative energy; and energy efficiency measures. The Assembly also recognized that cooperation between Member Countries is needed to promote effective regulatory frameworks which aim to prevent the adverse impact of speculation on oil prices and other commodities like food. Finally, the Assembly agreed on the need to further strengthen regional energy security by protecting vital energy sea lanes, especially the Straits of Malacca and Singapore.

SOCIAL MATTERS

Building an ASEAN Identity

37 The Assembly resolved to promote an ASEAN identity among the peoples and leaders through ASEAN-oriented policies, programmes and events relating to the political-security, economic and socio-cultural pillars of the ASEAN community.

Poverty Eradication

38 The Assembly agreed on the need for each country to commit to developing concrete action plans, within appropriate timelines, to aid in poverty eradication.

Racial and religious harmony

39 The Assembly resolved to promote peaceful coexistence and shared values of diverse cultural and religious communities, thereby agreeing to support opportunities for dialogues, as well as engage in co-operation and exchanges at local, national and regional levels so as to advance racial and religious harmony in the ASEAN community.

Environmental Sustainability

40 The Assembly amended some parts of the resolution and decided to incorporate the draft Singapore resolution into Vietnam's proposed resolution.

41 The Assembly recognized that the issues of the environment, climate change and sustainable development are interrelated and complex. The Committee agreed that all AIPA countries should co-operate in the areas of implementing environmentally sustainable practices; combating transboundary environmental pollution; improving access to safe drinking water; improving energy efficiency and increasing the cumulative forest cover in the ASEAN region.

Food security

42 The Assembly agreed to support the commitment of ASEAN Governments in implementing initiatives to mitigate effects of rising food prices in the region and to support the sharing of experiences and best practices of ASEAN Governments in doing so. The Assembly agreed that ASEAN Governments should take steps to promote reasonable pricing and to prevent profiteering in times of crisis, through the enforcement of anti-profiteering mechanisms.

Establishment of the AIPA Expert Working Group on Legal Cooperation to Combat Trafficking in Persons

43 The Assembly noted the establishment of the AIPA Expert Working Group on Legal Cooperation to Combat Trafficking in Persons and agreed that first meeting of the Expert Working Group would be held at an appropriate time.

Report of the 5th AIFOCOM Meeting on Combating the Drug Menace and Resolution on the Control of Synthetic Drug and Illicit Drug Crop Production

44 The Assembly noted the Report of the 5th AIFOCOM. They also agreed to enhance partnerships among parliamentarians, public sector, private sector and community groups to, inter-alia, enhance regulatory control of precursor chemicals, develop preventive education and build national capacities and resources to control synthetic drug and illicit drug crop production.

Review of 28th AIPA GA Resolutions on Educational Cooperation and Migration Issues

45 The Assembly agreed to remind the AIPA member countries to implement the Resolutions, *No. 28GA/2007/Soc/04 on Educational Cooperation in Human Resource Development Among AIPA Member Countries* and *No. 28GA/2007/Soc/06 on Cooperation on Migration and Protection of the Rights of the Migrant Worker*, which were adopted last year in Kuala Lumpur and to report to the next General Assembly.

ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS

46 The Assembly adopted all the Resolutions as per the Agenda.

47 The Assembly approved the salary increase of the Secretary to Secretary General from US\$ 350.00 to US\$ 550.00 per month as well as the salary increase of the Driver (Dispatch) from US\$ 145.00 to US\$ 275.00 per month.

48 The Assembly noted that the Agreement between the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia on the Privileges and Immunities of the AIPA Secretariat, the draft of which was approved by the 28th General Assembly, has not been signed as the Government of the Republic

of Indonesia is looking into the possibility of having an umbrella agreement on diplomatic privileges and immunities that would cover all ASEAN related agencies in Jakarta including the AIPA Secretariat. The Assembly agreed that the Secretary General will sign the umbrella agreement on behalf of the AIPA Secretariat.

49 On the ratification of the ASEAN Charter and the anticipated increase of AIPA's involvement in ASEAN meetings and related activities, the AIPA Secretariat was instructed to make an evaluation of the extent and levels of AIPA's participation in the ASEAN meetings including the financial implications to the AIPA Budget, and make appropriate recommendations to the 30th General Assembly.

50 The Assembly approved the establishment of the AIPA Caucus and expressed its appreciation to Malaysia for volunteering to have the honour of hosting the first meeting in 2009, the date and venue of which to be ascertained by Malaysia in due course.

51 The Thai delegation informed the meeting that the 30th General Assembly will be held in Pattaya City, Thailand from 2 to 8 August 2009.

Women Parliamentarians of AIPA (WAIPA)

Cooperation among Women in Politics and Socio-Economic Activities

52 The meeting acknowledged the importance of women and their participation in politics and socio-economic activities, and recognised the increasing number of female participation at all levels of national and political decision-making. ASEAN Member Countries and AIPA Parliaments were urged to increase women's awareness of political participation and to facilitate their involvement in political decision-making processes.

53 Following the adoption of the above resolution, Vietnam informed the meeting that they would be organising a Seminar on "Women in Law-Making Processes" in the 4th quarter of 2009.

Women, Poverty and Economic Development

54 The meeting highlighted the role of women in economic and social development and discussed initiatives to eradicate the feminisation of poverty. This could be attained via government and community-led initiatives targeted at improving the availability and accessibility of resources such as education and healthcare. In addition, the meeting reiterated the importance of supporting women-led enterprises and co-operatives. ASEAN Member Countries were urged to collaborate in providing technical assistance, information and knowledge for the empowerment of women.

Women in Power and Their Active Role in Society

55 The meeting recognised that women have made essential contributions in decision-making and in exercising leadership in all fields. There was an emphasis on the need for closer collaboration and cooperation among ASEAN Member Countries to share and exchange information, knowledge, skills, experiences and expertise. The meeting advocated the implementation of policies, frameworks and/or programmes to improve gender mainstreaming and eliminate gender stereotypes.

DIALOGUES WITH OBSERVER COUNTRIES

56 The Assembly, through its dialogue panels, conducted separate meetings with Observer countries, namely: Australia, Canada, People's Republic of China, European Parliament, Japan, Republic of Korea, Papua New Guinea and Russian Federation.

30TH AIPA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

57 The General Assembly accepted the kind offer of Thailand to host the 30th General Assembly on 2-8 August 2009 in Pattaya City.

APPRECIATION TO HOST COUNTRY

58 The Delegations attending the Assembly expressed their sincere appreciation to the Government and Parliament of Singapore as well as the people of Singapore for their warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements made for the 29th AIPA General Assembly.

ASEAN SPIRIT

59 The 29th AIPA General Assembly was held in the traditional ASEAN spirit of friendship, brotherhood and cooperation, in accordance with the concept of 'musyawarah' (deliberation) and 'muafakat' (consensus).