



Parliament of Australia

**Report of the Parliamentary Delegation
to the
41st General Assembly of the ASEAN
Inter-Parliamentary Assembly**

8 to 10 September 2020

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Members of the Delegation

Mr Ross Vasta MP
Leader of the Delegation

Mr George Christensen MP

Mr Peter Khalil MP

Senator Jess Walsh

Ms Natalie Cooke
Delegation Secretary

Introduction

An Australian delegation usually attends the General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) as an observer. However, the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic meant that, for the first time in its history, the General Assembly was held virtually.

In 2019 the delegation to AIPA was combined with the ongoing program of delegation visits to ASEAN countries, and it had originally been intended that this approach would continue again in 2020. However, the travel restrictions imposed by the pandemic meant that this was not possible.

Instead, Australian delegation members attended the AIPA General Assembly from their own electorates, via a videoconferencing platform.

This meant that the delegation was able to observe the proceedings, and the delegation leader made an opening statement live via video link from his electorate of Bonner, in Brisbane.

The delegation wishes to thank Vietnam for hosting and organising this event and ensuring the important work of the Assembly continues, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.

41st General Assembly of AIPA

Background

AIPA was established as the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation (AIPO) in 1977, with the aim of contributing to the attainment of ASEAN goals and aspirations through inter parliamentary cooperation, and became an assembly (AIPA) in 2007. It is composed of the 10 member countries of ASEAN: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The General Assembly is held annually, with the purpose of addressing issues of mutual concern to ASEAN member countries and observer countries. This year the overarching theme of the assembly was 'Parliamentary diplomacy for a cohesive and responsive ASEAN community'.

Australia participates as an observer. Delegation members attended the opening ceremony and the two plenary sessions of the 41st assembly as well as the meeting of women parliamentarians of AIPA.

Opening ceremony and first plenary session

Following a performance showcasing music and dance from Vietnam and ASEAN member states, HE Madam Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, Chairwoman of the National Assembly and President of the 41st AIPA, made an opening address, noting that this was the first time in the 43-year history of AIPA that a General Assembly had been held virtually. She spoke of the importance of standing strong against common challenges and her hope that this general assembly would continue to translate words into action. Her

Excellency also noted that this was the first time that an AIPA Meeting of Young Parliamentarians was being held.

HE Mr Nguyen Phu Trong, State President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, underscored the importance of cohesion and resilience in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. He urged AIPA to continue its efforts to contribute to ASEAN centrality in evolving regional architecture and promote multilateralism, connectivity, international cooperation and respect for the rule of law.

HE Mr Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, encouraged the executive and legislative channels of ASEAN to continue to work together to advance the implementation of ASEAN's blueprints – including by promoting economic development and connectivity, narrowing the development gap and harmonising ASEAN policies and decisions with national development programs. He believes that, through cooperation with governments, parliamentarians should reflect the people's will in decisions concerning future directions for ASEAN development.

During the first plenary session, the leaders of the each of the member delegations made opening statements. All except Vietnam appeared via video link. Member countries were united in noting the impact of the pandemic and stressing the need to work together in a spirit of friendship, cooperation and unity.

For Brunei Darussalam, AIPA will have an important role in assisting ASEAN to adapt swiftly to the new circumstances

following the outbreak of the pandemic.

Cambodia viewed the General Assembly as an important and timely event, with the spirit of friendship and corporation prevailing even though representatives could not meet in person. The approach taken by ASEAN – a collective approach with information sharing – has been successful and regional integration should be deepened.

Indonesia emphasised the importance of social welfare and the need for friendly, peaceful and cordial cooperation and encouraged the upholding of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. It also identified emerging regional challenges, including human security and people smuggling, but noted its confidence that the community could overcome these challenges together.

Laos highly valued the theme of parliamentary diplomacy, reaffirming the importance of close cooperation to respond to traditional and non-traditional challenges. AIPA has played an important role in fostering deeper cooperation and promoting public participation in ASEAN processes. Harmonisation and the effective implementation of blueprints were identified as key, while challenges included COVID-19, natural disasters, socio-economic development and security. Supporting start-ups and jobs for the people is also essential.

HE Datuk Azhar Azizan Harun, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Parliament of Malaysia, reflected on the creation of ASEAN and the issues that face it, including the South China Sea

and money laundering. The full potential of South-East Asia remains untapped, and the onus lies on AIPA to help realise it. If ever there was a moment to showcase the power of collective action, this is it.

HE Mr T Khun Myatt, Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, highlighted how the work of AIPA in building a shared sustainable future was more important than ever. The pandemic has been a hindrance to people-to-people connection but at the same time is leading to digital transformation and promoting the exchange of information and technology. Myanmar is still undergoing a transition to a fully flourishing democracy and it is essential that AIPA members uphold the principle of mutual respect and not meddling in the affairs of individual states.

The Philippines spoke of the collective desire to build closer cooperation and of the need for the executive and legislative branches to work together during this precarious time, suggesting that the AIPA General Assembly may wish to consider an AIPA COVID response fund. AIPA must create a sense of urgency to push governments to protect the most vulnerable and should create a united parliament for the region.

HE Mr Tan Chuan-Jin, Speaker of the Parliament of Singapore, noted that through the years ASEAN has weathered setbacks and challenges by working together and is a testament to regional dialogue. He also spoke of its unique position to promote awareness and build mutual understanding, trust and confidence through its platforms. In

this context it needs to prepare for the post-COVID 'new normal'. Other challenges facing members include cyber security, climate change and trans-border haze pollution.

HE Chuan Leekpai, President of the National Assembly of Thailand, said that since the disruption of COVID there has been a focus on the short term and an apparent decline in regional coordination, which could have a negative effective. However, he strongly believes that parliaments can work together. He called for community building and strengthening where each parliament can still maintain responsibility for enactment of its own laws but the rules and regulations could be moving in the same direction.

The Vietnamese delegation concluded the statements by member countries, speaking of the need to rouse governments to act for the people and for stability. AIPA members must stand united.

Following these statements by member delegations, observers were then invited to make short opening statements. Speaking from Brisbane, Mr Vasta made a statement on behalf of Australia, a copy of which is at Appendix A. Other observers made statements, either by videoconference or by video.

Meeting of Women Parliamentarians of AIPA

The meeting considered the topic of 'Promoting the role of women parliamentarians in securing jobs and income for women workers' and was attended by 42 delegates representing all of the member countries.

Interventions from delegates emphasised the central role of women parliamentarians in fostering an environment that supports women and children. Delegates spoke of the work their countries were doing to address gender inequality and noted the progress made. The importance of improving science, technology, engineering and maths skills and providing vocational education and training opportunities was also highlighted.

The meeting also heard of the significant and disproportionate impact that the COVID-19 pandemic was having on women's employment and incomes. Many member countries are taking specific actions to address this.

At the conclusion of the meeting, a resolution regarding the role of women parliamentarians in securing jobs and income for women workers was adopted.

Second plenary session and closing ceremony

The second plenary session was held on 10 September. During this session, committee reports were adopted, along with the report from the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and the report of the inaugural unofficial meeting of young parliamentarians. There are almost 220 million young people across ASEAN countries – that is, a third of the population – and young parliamentarians play a vital role in ensuring that young people are engaged and that national parliaments, and AIPA, represent young people's voices. AIPA young parliamentarians resolved to form a committee to draft rules of procedure for a meeting of young parliamentarians for

consideration at the next General Assembly.

A copy of the joint communiqué signed during the plenary session is at Appendix B.

Before the assembly closed, Morocco and Norway were admitted as official observers to the assembly.

Brunei Darussalam will host the 42nd General Assembly of AIPA next year.

Conclusion

The delegation was pleased to attend the first-ever virtual AIPA and congratulates the organisers on the smooth running of the sessions.

In 2019, for the first time the delegation to AIPA was combined with the ongoing program of visits to ASEAN countries, and prior to the travel restrictions imposed by the pandemic it had been proposed to continue that approach for the delegation to the 41st General Assembly. The delegation considers these country visits to be an important part of the parliament's international program and looks forward to them resuming when circumstances permit. Similarly, in-person attendance at forums such as AIPA allows for a richness of interaction with other delegates, both formally and

informally, that virtual participation does not.

The delegation understands that this was also the Australian Parliament's first 'virtual delegation'. In the 'new normal' imposed by the pandemic, virtual attendance will be the only way that some forms of international engagement can proceed for some time. It is important that the Parliament's engagement with other countries is able to continue, although the immediacy and depth provided by face-to-face meetings is difficult to replicate.

Ross Vasta MP
Delegation Leader

November 2021

Statement by the head of the Australian Delegation

Your Excellency Madam Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, President of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and President of the 41st AIPA

Honourable Heads of Delegations

Distinguished Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased and honoured to address this 41st ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly from my home city of Brisbane.

On behalf of the Australian delegation, I would like to express sincere thanks to Your Excellency Madam Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan and distinguished colleagues, for organising this event and ensuring the important work of the Assembly continues, despite the restrictions imposed on us by the pandemic.

Australia greatly values our role as observers to the Assembly. We have always enjoyed strong relationships with the people of ASEAN and their parliamentarians, and welcome this opportunity to deepen our friendship with you.

As representatives of the Australian community, we are keenly aware of our responsibilities to raise awareness of what ASEAN does, and its contributions to strengthening cooperation in our region.

COVID-19 has shown how critical this cooperation is. Our economic prosperity and health security are intertwined. This is a shared crisis, and we must work together to make sure that we avoid prolonged health and economic crises now and in the future.

One of the key themes of this year's Assembly is 'the role of Parliaments in promoting ASEAN cohesiveness and economic recovery post-COVID-19'.

Our delegation wholeheartedly supports ASEAN efforts on this front. The pandemic is heightening the risks we face as nations and as communities, and reducing the resilience of our institutions to respond.

ASEAN has shown impressive leadership on the pandemic, and has helped its member countries take decisive action to control the virus and put ASEAN countries in a strong position to overcome this crisis.

Effective leadership and cohesion is now more important than ever.

For the past few decades, Australia and our Southeast Asian neighbours have reaped the benefits of a peaceful and stable region. In such a diverse, dynamic and strategically important region, this peace and stability owes much to the work of ASEAN and its founding principles.

Australia has supported ASEAN from its beginning, becoming the first of ASEAN's 10 dialogue partners in 1974. We share the same vision of prosperous, secure and vibrant societies, working to advance sustainable and inclusive development, within

a peaceful region built on respect for the rule of law.

Australia and ASEAN collaborate across a range of areas critical to advancing this vision:

- strengthening regional economic integration
- promoting high-quality infrastructure projects
- working to develop smart and sustainable cities across Southeast Asia
- collaborating on energy and water resource management in the Mekong, and
- cooperating on a range of security measures, including counter-terrorism, anti-people-trafficking and regional maritime initiatives.

The Australian Government has recently announced additional support for ASEAN to:

- strengthen health security by helping the region better prevent, detect and mitigate communicable diseases
- enhance security, including through supporting vulnerable migrant worker communities, and
- boost economic recovery, including by supporting the ASEAN Post-Pandemic Recovery Plan.

ASEAN and its forums have for several decades brought countries together, opened dialogue, built trust and confidence, and allowed for collective problem-solving. ASEAN will continue to play a critical role in dealing with and resolving shared problems in the region.

In closing, I would again like to express our appreciation of this opportunity to join you today. As parliamentarians, we have unique opportunities to encourage and influence public debate on issues of importance to all our countries, such as how we build a better post-COVID world.

On behalf of the Australian delegation, I wish you a fruitful and successful Parliamentary Assembly, and hope that next year we will be able to meet in person.

Communiqué

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The 41st General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) with the theme “Parliamentary Diplomacy for a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN Community” was held virtually from 8 to 10 September 2020, Ha Noi, Viet Nam pursuant to the Statutes of AIPA and the decision of the AIPA President in consensus with AIPA Member Parliaments.

2. H.E. Mdm. Nguyễn Thị Kim Ngân, President of AIPA, President of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam presided over the 41st General Assembly of AIPA.

II. DELEGATIONS

3. The 41st General Assembly of AIPA was attended virtually by delegates from all AIPA Member Parliaments, 9 Observer Parliaments, Guests of the Host, AIPA and ASEAN Secretariats and AIPA Partners.

4. For the AIPA Member delegations, **Brunei Darussalam** was led by H.E. Pehin Dato Abdul Rahman Taib, Speaker of the Legislative Council; **Cambodia** was led by Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly; **Indonesia** was led by H.E. Mdm Puan Maharani, Speaker of the House of Representatives; **Lao People’s Democratic Republic** was led by H.E Mdm Pany Yathotou, President of the National Assembly; **Malaysia** was led by H.E. Datuk Azhar Azizan Harun, Speaker of the House of Representatives; **Myanmar** was led by H.E. Mr. T Khun Myatt, Speaker of the Union Assembly; **Philippines** was led by H.E. Alan Peter S. Cayetano, Speaker of the House of Representatives; **Singapore** was led by H.E. Mr. Tan Chuan-Jin, Speaker of the Parliament; **Thailand** was led by H.E. Mr. Chuan Leekpai, President of the National Assembly and **Viet Nam** was led by H.E. Mdm Tong Thi Phong, First Vice-President of the National Assembly.

5. For the Observer delegations, **Australia** was led by Mr. Ross Vasta; **Belarus** was led by H.E. Mr. Vladimir Andreichenko, Chairman of the House of Representatives; **Canada** was led by Hon. Mr. Han Dong; **People’s Republic of China** was led by Hon. Mr. Fuli Chen; **European Parliaments** was led by Hon. Mr. Daniel Caspary; **India** was led by Hon. Dr. Satya Pal Singh; **Japanese** Speaker of the House of Councilors Santo Akiko sent her Message; **Republic of Korea** was led by Hon. Mr. Hoyoung Joo; **New Zealand** was led by H.E. Mr. Rt Hon Trevor Mallard, Speaker of the House of Representatives; **Russian Federation** was led by Mr. Konstantin Kosachev and H.E. Mr. Aniceto Longuinhos Guterres Lopes, President of the National Assembly of **Timor-Leste sent his Message** to the General Assembly.

6. The delegation from **AIPA Secretariat** was led by Hon. Nguyen Tuong Van, Secretary General of AIPA.

7. For the delegation of Guest of the Host, **Kazakhstan** was led by H.E. Mr. Nurlan Nigmatulin, Chairman of the Majilis of the Parliament; **Morocco** was led by H.E. Mr.

Habib El Malki, President of the House of Representatives; and **Norway** was led by H.E. Mrs. Tone Wilhelmsen Troen, President of the Parliament; **United Nations** was led by Mr. Fabrizio Hochschild; the **ASEAN Secretariat** was led by Deputy Secretary General Mr. Kung Phoak; **Inter-Parliamentary Union** was led by Secretary General Mr. Martin Chungong.

8. For the delegation of AIPA Partner, **Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA)** was led by Hon. Mr. Hidetoshi Nishimura; **Freeland** was led by Mr. Steven Galster; **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)** was led by Ms. Julia Schulte and **Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia (PIC)** was led by Mr. Dararith Kim-Yeat.

III. OPENING CEREMONY

9. The Opening Ceremony of the 41st General Assembly of AIPA was held on Tuesday, 8 September 2020, commencing at 08.30 am. H.E.Mdm. Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, President of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, President of AIPA delivered her opening speech. H.E. Nguyễn Phú Trọng, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party, State President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam delivered his welcome video message. H.E. Nguyễn Xuân Phúc, the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Chairman of ASEAN 2020 delivered his speech.

Opening Speech

10. In her Opening Speech, H.E. Mdm. Nguyễn Thị Kim Ngân, President of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, President of AIPA, expressed her high appreciation for the efforts, determination and cooperation of AIPA Member Parliaments to attend the 41st General Assembly of AIPA, the first virtual Assembly in the 43-year history of AIPA, a proof of cohesiveness and responsiveness of AIPA and ASEAN against the background of serious impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region and the world in the pursuit of happiness for ASEAN people.

11. She also emphasised the significance of the 41st AIPA theme of *“Parliamentary diplomacy for a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN Community”*, which showcased the AIPA’s and Member Parliaments’ consensus to support ASEAN Governments in overcoming difficulties, promote solidarity, cooperation, for an ASEAN Community of prosperity and sustainable development. The common goals of development of ASEAN Community to 2025 and beyond set tasks for parliamentarians to further unite, cooperate, jointly emphasise a sense of responsibility, empathy and sharing in AIPA.

12. She urged AIPA Member Parliaments to (i) put the interest of the people at the center of all our actions, in a spirit of respect for domestic and international law; (ii) work closely with ASEAN in the ASEAN Community building; (iii) expand cooperation with regional and international inter-parliamentary organizations, (iv) help to reform and improve the effectiveness of AIPA in light of *“turning words into actions”* for a brighter future through the development of an AIPA vision; (v) articulate the goal of

more effective parliamentary diplomacy for peace, stability, cooperation and sustainable development, for cohesiveness, responsiveness and increased resilience within ASEAN. She also underscored the importance of information and communication about AIPA, ASEAN to the public, which helps to raise mutual understanding and reinforce mutual confidence, a critical foundation for ASEAN regional integration.

Welcoming Remarks

13. H.E. Nguyễn Phú Trọng, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party, the State President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam welcomed the delegates to the 41st General Assembly held virtually and expressed his appreciation and complimented the efforts to hold the 41st AIPA General Assembly, which illustrates the resolve of the National Assembly of Viet Nam and AIPA Member Parliaments to join hands in solidarity to overcome difficulties, to promote cooperation and development of the ASEAN Community. He stressed that against the rapid and extraordinarily profound changes, particularly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and major powers strategic competition, the whirlwind development of science and technology, digital transformation across the globe present countries with both opportunities and challenges, ASEAN and AIPA should underscore the importance of cohesion, resilience to respond to the new situation, adjustment to the new circumstances to meet the ever-rising aspirations of our people, businesses and international friends.

14. He also highlighted that as legislators, parliamentarians are the highest representatives of the people, reflecting their voices and wishes. He congratulated AIPA's 43 years of development in joining hands with ASEAN and contributing practically to the Association's milestones of development. He said that an ASEAN that is strong, the driver of regional, international cooperation and playing central role is not only a pillar of support for Viet Nam, but also its goal. He said that it is time for AIPA to continue its efforts to contribute to ASEAN centrality in the evolving regional architecture, promote multilateralism, connectivity, international cooperation, absolute respect for the rule-of-law, for peace, stability and prosperity in the region and the world.

15. H.E. Nguyễn Xuân Phúc, the Prime Minister of Viet Nam expressed his gratitude to Mdm. Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, the President of the 41st AIPA for her important contributions and to the leaders of AIPA Member Parliaments for their active participation at the ASEAN-AIPA Interface at the 36th ASEAN Summit in 26th June, 2020. He appreciated the role of AIPA to support ASEAN in maintaining an environment of peace, security, stability, cooperation and development, and strengthening the bond among peoples of the countries in the region. By Commending the theme of AIPA-41: "*Parliamentary Diplomacy for a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN Community*", an expression of the strong commitment and support of AIPA and Member Parliaments towards the efforts of the governments and people of ASEAN for a united and resilient ASEAN that respond effectively to the opportunities and challenges ahead, he highlighted key areas of cooperation between AIPA and the ASEAN including the following:

First, advance the implementation of the Blueprints across the the three pillars and the realization of the *ASEAN Community Vision 2025* by mainstreaming and harmonizing the policies and decisions of ASEAN with national development programs. *Second*, the parliamentarians of AIPA should reflect the people’s will in the decisions concerning the future directions for ASEAN development and a people-centered ASEAN Community Vision beyond 2025. *Third*, join hands with ASEAN governments to build a rules-based Community that upholds the rule of law, equality and mutual respect, and settles disputes and differences through peaceful means on the basis of respect for international law. He also welcomed broader relations with partners, through which ASEAN should always maintain its centrality in the region and *finally*, promote connectivity among people, enrich the ASEAN values and cultural identity for a cohesive, caring and sharing ASEAN Community. He stressed that despite difficulties, Viet Nam was committed to fulfilling its role as the ASEAN Chair 2020 and reiterated his confidence that given the common effort of the member governments and parliaments, ASEAN shall continue to steadily move forward on the path to build a community of solidarity, resilience, cohesion and responsiveness, for peace, development, and prosperity.

IV. VICE-PRESIDENTS OF 41ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

16. Pursuant to Article 10 of the Statutes of AIPA, the General Assembly elected the Leaders of Delegations of the AIPA Member Parliaments as Vice-Presidents of the 41st General Assembly of AIPA.

V. STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DELEGATIONS OF AIPA MEMBER PARLIAMENTS

The Heads of Delegations of the AIPA Member Parliaments delivered their respective statements at the First Plenary session of the 41st General Assembly.

Brunei Darussalam

14 H.E. Pehin Dato Abdul Rahman Taib delivered a statement to the 41st AIPA General Assembly. In his statement, he highlighted that this year’s theme “Parliamentary Diplomacy for Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN”, is very relevant to the current context as we face unprecedented challenges in adapting to the new normal.

15 H.E. Pehin Dato Abdul Rahman Taib emphasized that the global impact of the pandemic on health, education and the economy has fundamentally changed the way in which we lead our daily lives. In response to that, H.E. invited AIPA Member Parliaments to maintain a forward-looking approach and carefully adapt to ensure the continuity of AIPA’s work by upholding the true ASEAN spirit of “Unity in Diversity”. He believed that AIPA will be able to assist ASEAN to overcome the challenges ahead and respond adeptly to the impending future.

16 The Speaker also reminded AIPA Member Parliaments to continue fostering cooperation among relevant stakeholders by encouraging timely exchanges of lessons learned in relation to mitigating the effects of COVID-19, while also acknowledging post-pandemic challenges and devising pre-emptive measures to

safeguard the interests of our people. Closing his statement, H.E Pehin Dato Abdul Rahman Taib mentioned that Brunei Darussalam will continue to support the endeavors and efforts by AIPA Member Parliaments in addressing the global and regional challenges through partnerships and diplomacy.

Cambodia

17 The statement of Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia highlighted several important points. He believed that the parliaments play an important role in making ASEAN rules-based and people-oriented institution.

18 He stated that COVID-19 brought challenges and impacted social and economic globally. He believed that ASEAN member parliaments should enhance international cooperation for common interests and benefits. He informed that the pandemic has been actively controlled with collective efforts, through the establishment of COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund. He mentioned that in tackling COVID-19, it requires significant funding, Cambodia practical experience in mobilizing resources through fostering and encouraging contribution from public institutions, the private sector, development partners, NGOs toward people in need and society as a whole. This is Cambodia's culture of sharing, solidarity and national unity.

19 He believed that ASEAN should further deepen regional integration to facilitate the flow of goods, services and people; although in the current situation ASEAN has managed to maintain its supply chain of goods. He also informed that Cambodia has redirected its development strategy based on comparative and competitive advantaged, focusing more on agriculture & agro-industry, digital transformation and domestic tourism. He stated that Cambodian Parliament upholds the continuous efforts of ASEAN, focusing on maintaining and promoting peace, security and stability in the region, as well as the settlement of disputes based on the principle of international law and diplomacy and avoiding the use of force. He also mentioned that Cambodia supports young AIPA parliamentarians to participate in all AIPA meetings. He believed that youth plays significant roles in national development and ASEAN Community.

Indonesia

20. Her Excellency Puan Maharani the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia conveyed her utmost appreciation to the National Assembly of Vietnam for hosting the 41st AIPA General Assembly. In her statement she emphasized on the important role of Parliament in encouraging ASEAN Member States governments to deliver adequate policy to curb the spread of COVID-19, reduce greater economic impact and ensuring social welfare as well as performing legislative duty through passing bills related to fiscal stimulus or strengthening social safety net. She said that Parliament should also improve oversight to ensure that those laws would be implemented, and their benefits would be felt by the people.

21. She stated on the importance of maintaining security and stability as an important factor in the development and growth in the region. She recalled that to

keep Southeast Asia to be peaceful, friendly and harmonious region, ASEAN Member States should prioritize on peaceful settlement, avoid tension, exercise self-restraint and encourage confidence building measures. The speaker also reminded on the importance to uphold the United Nation Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982 as reference in determining maritime entitlements, sovereign rights and legitimate interests over maritime zones while fostering The South China Sea Code of Conduct as the mutually agreeable platform for dialogue between ASEAN and China on South China Sea.

22. She believed that in order for ASEAN to become Cohesive and Responsive, ASEAN Member States should enhance capacity to be the first in line to respond any emerging regional challenges including human trafficking and people smuggling of displaced persons in the region as the excess of the situation in Rakhine, before it become internationalized. She further stated that Parliamentary encouragement to the issue is crucial as the delicate matter is feared could further hinder the efforts of curbing the spread of COVID-19. She also believed that as one community ASEAN will be able to overcome this difficult time and address other regional challenges with the spirit of 'Gotong Royong' a traditional Indonesian term for working collectively. She prayed that God will grant ASEAN Member Parliaments the strength and health in the service of ASEAN people in this time of pandemic.

Lao's People Democratic Republic

20. Her Excellency Pany Yathotou, the President of the National Assembly, appreciated the theme of the 41st AIPA General Assembly: "Parliamentary Diplomacy for Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN", which contributes to the commitment of 36th ASEAN Summit and promotes cooperation and partnership within ASEAN Member States. She further highlighted the vital role of AIPA in promoting parliamentary diplomacy through the adoption of numerous important resolutions of the AIPA General Assembly aiming at the realisation of cohesive and responsive ASEAN community. These undertakings strengthen the socio-economic and political-security cooperation at the regional level on the basis of consensus building; promote public participation in the ASEAN community building process; encourage the harmonised and responsive legislations as well as exchange the best practices and experience among member parliaments.

21. She emphasised the commitment of the National Assembly of Laos towards the translation of Declaration of the Special ASEAN Summit on COVID-19 into national frameworks by focusing on the surveillance, control and responsive measures against the COVID-19 outbreak and adopting legislation framework, promoting public awareness of the preventive and responsive measures against the epidemic while promoting the participation of the public and private sectors and strictly implement preventive measures in the fight against COVID-19.

22. On her final note, the President of the Lao National Assembly underlined the role of AIPA Member Parliaments through parliamentary diplomacy to encourage the Government of ASEAN Member States to implement measures and translate commitment of the ASEAN Leaders as well as the Heads of AIPA towards

tangible results, thereby contributing to maintain peace, stability, security and sustainable prosperity in the region and the world at large. She also appreciated the ASEAN Member States, ASEAN's Dialogue Partners, friendly countries and international organisations for valuable support and technical and financial assistance.

Malaysia

23. His Excellency Datuk Azhar Azizan Harun started his statement with a brief background on the formation of ASEAN and the principles that catalysed the establishment of the organization. Following upon that, the statement highlighted the importance of ASEAN as a pillar of strength for the region to its member states that is subsequently followed by AIPA's active involvement in achieving the goals and objectives set out by ASEAN.

24. The Speaker further illustrated the unique importance of parliamentary diplomacy as a tool to resolve regional issues and adversity as well as the roles and expectations of parliamentarians to ensure that the guiding principles of ASEAN remain at the forefront of the efforts of its member states.

25. His statement then closed with a call to action for the region to strive for greater regional representation through better interstate cooperation and committed participation to realise the ASEAN Vision.

Myanmar

26. His Excellency Mr. T. Khun Myatt, Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar delivered a message to the 41st General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA). In his message, the Speaker stated that Myanmar supports the theme of 41st AIPA General Assembly and emphasised the need of coordination within ASEAN to overcome the challenges posed by COVID-19.

27. The Speaker appreciated the ASEAN member states for their concerted efforts and stressed the importance of the precautionary measures by Myanmar in combating the COVID-19 Pandemic. He added that although the COVID-19 has caused hindrance to the people to people connectivity, it has opened windows of opportunities for digital connectivity. He underscored the importance of solidarity, mutual respect and noninterference in the internal affairs of the member states.

28. The Speaker also reiterated Myanmar's democratic transition process and the need of time and patience for the flourishing democracy. He also mentioned that Myanmar Hluttaw is ready to stand with AIPA member parliaments in addressing the regional and global challenges.

Philippines

28. In his statement, House Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano emphasised that unity and neighborly cooperation are the flagship and main objectives of AIPA and ASEAN. More importantly in these times of crises, Speaker Cayetano said that the executive

and legislative branches of governments act in unison to stop the COVID-19 pandemic, caring for those afflicted, assisting the hungry and the jobless, and jumpstarting the economies which ground to a halt due to various community quarantine measures. He stated that branches of government must continue to complement each other in crafting a clear and effective comprehensive recovery plan that is resilient, sustainable, and inclusive. And for the region, Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano stressed that AIPA must continue to support ASEAN in its recovery framework to bring the region back to its feet after this COVID-19 setback.

29. As a response to the pandemic, Speaker Cayetano mentioned that the country passed a key legislation in March 2020 mandating a whole-of-government approach to counter the pandemic. President Rodrigo Roa Duterte lauded the Philippine Congress for enacting the *“Bayanihan to Heal as One Act”* which enabled the government to implement timely emergency measures to mitigate the impact of the crisis. Speaker Cayetano also underscored the fact that the House of Representatives pioneered the use of available conference technologies to pass on third and final reading the key legislative measures intended to help the government defeat the virus and counteract all its negative effects on the people.

Singapore

30. H.E. Mr. Tan Chuan-Jin, Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Singapore opened his speech with observations on the effects and profound implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, and how it has changed the way we live. Despite the global imposition of containment measures and travel restrictions to stem the spread of the pandemic, ASEAN Member States quickly rose to the occasion to support one another. In this vein, he noted that Vietnam’s ASEAN Chairmanship theme of *“Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN”* was especially relevant and underscored how ASEAN needed to work in concert and respond to the pandemic outbreak in an effective and timely manner.

31. Mr Tan reminded all AIPA members of their important role as parliamentarians in representing the needs of their citizens and supporting their respective countries’ responses to the pandemic. He also urged AIPA members to promote understanding and awareness of ASEAN amongst their constituents and communicate the continued importance of the ASEAN Community, as regional and international cooperation would be critical in restoring transnational travel, supply chain connectivity and economic activity in the wake of the pandemic. He noted that it was more pertinent than ever that AIPA should be used to foster greater cooperation amongst ASEAN Member States and build mutual understanding, trust and confidence, so that ASEAN could weather this storm together.

32. In this regard, he urged AIPA members not lose sight of the need to cooperate in areas of common interest such as cybersecurity, the development of smart cities, and regional economic integration and transboundary challenges such as climate change, transboundary haze pollution and transboundary crime for the post-COVID-19 normal. This would ensure that ASEAN remained resilient and relevant in the decades to come.

Thailand

33. H.E. Mr. Chuan Leekpai said in tackling the COVID-19 situation, we are focusing on immediate internal needs - inevitably with external relations being less urgent. This could adversely affect the unity and centrality of ASEAN, particularly when it is being confronted with difficulties resulting from geopolitical and strategic uncertainty. He expressed his strong belief that parliaments could work closely during this difficult time to achieve common objectives, as follows.

34. First, parliaments must strengthen their closeness to the people, thereby reaffirming ASEAN's vision for a people-centered community and allowing ourselves to fulfill the mandate to oversee and provide insights for the executive branch. Second, at the regional level, it is preferable for AIPA to exchange knowledge and experiences among Members of Parliament. Finally, the ASEAN states are urged to harmonise laws to ensure that the same or similar rules and regulations are moving in the same direction. In this way ASEAN unity and centrality can be persevered and strengthened.

Viet Nam

35. H.E.Mdm. Tong Thi Phong, First Vice President of the National Assembly of Viet Nam emphasised that against the backdrop of rapid changes, the outbreak and spread of the COVID-19 pandemic causing untold losses in lives, risks of instability, ASEAN and AIPA stood testimony to the spirit of unity, mutual assistance, and companionship in times of need. The 2020 AIPA presidency was a great honor to the National Assembly of Viet Nam, as this year also marked the 25th anniversary of Viet Nam's accession to AIPA. As a responsible member, the National Assembly of Viet Nam actively conducted various activities in its year of Presidency. She welcomed ASEAN's initiatives for 2020 to maintain regional peace, security and stability, enhance regional connectivity and integration, and improve responsiveness to utilise the opportunities offered by the 4th Industrial Revolution to promote ASEAN's community awareness and identity, strengthen partnership for peace and sustainable development, and improve ASEAN's adaptability and operational effectiveness.

36. She also made some proposals for AIPA to (i) continue reinforcing a peaceful and stable environment to build a rules-based and people-centered ASEAN Community that upholds unity in rule-of-law, diversity, and solidarity by strengthening legal cooperation, enhancing monitoring and extending support to the Governments of all ASEAN countries; (ii) promote the implementation of initiatives towards a resilient and self-reliant Economic Community; (iii) stand united to overcome current challenges, and collectively support the AIPA Socio-Cultural Community in response to COVID-19 across all sectors and (iv) enhance to role and stronger participation of AIPA young parliamentarians; (v) ensure women's equal participation in Community-building and promote their access to sustainable employment and income and (vi) support AIPA's innovation and development, AIPA-ASEAN partnership, and regional and international cooperation mechanisms for the benefits of the people and the ASEAN Community.

VI. STATEMENTS OF THE HEADS OF DELEGATIONS OF OBSERVER PARLIAMENTS

37. Head of Delegation of Observer Parliaments including Australia, Belarus, Canada, People's Republic of China, European Parliament, India, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Russian Federation presented their statements live and via pre-recorded video at the First Plenary Session of the 41st General Assembly. Japanese Speaker of the House of Councillors sent her Message as she could not attend the General Assembly.

VII. STATEMENT OF THE HEADS OF DELEGATIONS OF GUEST OF THE HOST

38. Heads of Delegation of Guest of Host including H.E. Mr. Nurlan Nigmatulin, Chairman of the Mazhilis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, H.E. Habib El Malki, President of the House of Representatives of the Kingdom of Morocco; and H.E. Tone Wilhelmsen Trøen, President of Norwegian Storting delivered their respective statements. Mr. Fabrizio Hochschild Drummond sent his video message to the General Assembly. Deputy Secretary General of ASEAN Kung Phoak represented the Secretary General due to the latter's occupation with the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting taking place at the same time with the 41st AIPA General Assembly. For the first time, at this AIPA General Assembly, the Inter-Parliamentary Union Secretary General Martin Chungong participated in and delivered his statement at the First Plenary Session.

VIII. MESSAGES OF THE HEADS OF STATES/GOVERNMENTS

39. The 41st General Assembly of AIPA received messages from the following Heads of States/Governments;

- His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam
- His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah Boromneath Norodom Sihamoni, the King of the Kingdom of Cambodia
- H.E. Mr. Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia
- H.E. Mr. Bounnhang Vorachith, President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic
- H.E. Tan Sri Dato' Haji Muhyiddin bin Haji Mohd Yassin, Prime Minister of Malaysia
- H.E. U Win Myint, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
- H.E. Mr. Rodrigo Roa Duterte, President of the Republic of the Philippines
- H.E. Mdm. Halimah Yacob, President of the Republic of Singapore
- H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha (Ret.), Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand
- H.E. Mr. Nguyen Phu Trong, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

IX. COMMITTEE MEETINGS

40. The Committees proceeded with their meetings to consider the agenda assigned by the General Assembly.

Executive Committee

41. While the Executive Committee did not convene physically, the President of the Executive Committee circulated a letter to the AIPA Executive Members on 28th August, 2020 to prepare the programme, agenda and other relevant matters

pertaining to the General Assembly. After consultation with, and approval of the Executive Committee, on 3rd September, 2020, the President of Executive Committee, President of the 41st AIPA General Assembly wrote a letter to AIPA Executive Members informing that the Executive Committee adopted the Programme of Activities, Draft Agenda Items for the 41st General Assembly, Composition of Committees, the nomination of AIPA Distinguished Service Award, admission of new Observers, and the initiative to form the meeting of AIPA Young Parliamentarians. The Executive Committee also agreed to hold the 42nd General Assembly of AIPA in Brunei Darussalam, in August 2021.

42. H.E. Mdm. Nguyễn Thị Kim Ngân, President of AIPA, President of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam was the President of the Executive Committee and The Speaker of the Legislative Council of Brunei Darussalam was appointed as the Vice President of the Executive Committee.

Meeting of Women Parliamentarians of AIPA (WAIPA)

43. The Meeting on Women Parliamentarians of AIPA (WAIPA) was chaired by Hon. Mdm. Nguyen Thuy Anh, Chairperson of Social Affairs Committee of National Assembly of the S.R. Viet Nam as the Chairperson and Hon. Mrs. Le Thu Ha, Standing Member of Foreign Affairs Committee of National Assembly of the S.R. Viet Nam as the Rapporteur. The Meeting was very honoured for the presence of H.E. Mme. Tong Thi Phong, Vice President of the National Assembly of the S.R. Viet Nam, H.E. Mme. Kittisangahakbindit Khuon Sudary, Vice President of the National Assembly of Cambodia and H.E. Mme. Rose Marie “Baby” J. Arenas, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Philippines, Hon. Mme. Secretary General of AIPA and 38 delegates from ten (10) Member Parliaments.

44. In her remarks, H.E. Mdm. Tong Thi Phong stressed on the existing inequalities between women and men in accessing labour market, employment and working conditions. Likewise, she encouraged AIPA Member Parliaments to help realise global and regional commitments as well as national legal frameworks in this area with an aim to ensure more substantive gender equality and to bridge the gender gap in employment. This is a top priority if we want to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls by 2030, particularly in the context of the global COVID - 19 pandemic. To this end, “no one is left behind”.

45. The Meeting considered and approved one (01) resolution for adoption by the General Assembly: ***Resolution on the Role of Women Parliamentarians in Securing Jobs and Income for Women Workers.***

46. Delegates shared their national contexts, experiences and challenges for a better to seek common solutions to said issues for a cohesive and responsive ASEAN Community, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and encouraged the adoption of an ASEAN common perspective towards Sustainable Development Goal on Gender equality. The meeting also urged AIPA Member Parliaments to work closely with the relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies to strengthen cooperation and coordination in the promotion of decent work and increased income for women

workers. In addition, the ASEAN Member States were encouraged to develop detailed action plans, as well as monitor their implementation to ensure sustainable access to decent work and increased income for women and facilitate support mechanisms for domestic responsibilities.

47. The Meeting urged ASEAN Member States to adopt appropriate measures to address the needs of women workers with legal mechanisms during the COVID-19 pandemic, by providing them with health services as well as protection from all forms of violence against women. AIPA Member Parliaments were called on to conduct review of national legislation and oversight framework with regard to decent work and increased income for women workers and to ensure their gender responsiveness as well as to devote greater attention to allocating more resources on policies, programs to address emerging issues to promote jobs and increased income in a changing world of work.

48. The meeting recognised the participation of WAIPA in the annual Joint Statement at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) to reaffirm the role of parliaments and parliamentarians in promoting a gender-sensitive and gender responsive ASEAN region. The delegates highlighted the role of men in promoting women's rights, gender equality, called on ASEAN Women Parliamentarians in partnership with male parliamentarians to advocate women's rights in all sectors through legislative roles by and to ensure equal access to decent work and greater income opportunities for women.

Unofficial Meeting of Young Parliamentarians of AIPA

49. The Meeting was chaired by Hon. Mr. Le Quoc Phong, Chairman of the Young Parliamentarians Group of the National Assembly of Viet Nam. Hon. Mrs. Dinh Thi Phuong Lan of the National Assembly of Viet Nam was the Rapporteur. The Meeting was honored to receive H.E. Madam Tong Thi Phong, First-Vice President of the National Assembly of Viet Nam to deliver welcoming remarks. Mrs. Nguyen Tuong Van, General Secretary of AIPA and Mr. Kung Phoak, Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) of ASEAN for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) were invited to attend as Guests of the Meeting.

50. The First Vice President of the National Assembly of Viet Nam believed that with the dynamic and creative approach of the youth in general and young parliamentarians in particular, in a new stage of development in ASEAN, the young parliamentarians should make more significant contributions to peace, stability and sustainable development.

51. The Meeting considered and approved one draft resolution which would be forwarded to the Committee of Organizational Matters to be adopted:

Resolution on the Engagement of Young Parliamentarians of AIPA in the ASEAN Community Building

52. The Meeting highlighted the important role of the youth and their contributions in national development and the achievement of sustainable development through

bold thinking and innovation. The delegates emphasised the urgent need to strengthen the voice of youths and young parliamentarians, their engagement in the socio-economic development of each ASEAN Member Country, the work of AIPA Member Parliaments and the AIPA Agenda. The Meeting also expressed the significance to strengthen the cooperation between AIPA young parliamentarians and the ASEAN Youth Forum to realise the ASEAN Work Plan on Youth 2016 - 2020 and other related plans of action in the coming years.

53. More importantly, the delegates expressed their strong support for and commended the National Assembly of Viet Nam on the initiative to establish the Meeting of Young Parliamentarians of AIPA. To this end, the Meeting agreed to collectively form an ad-hoc committee, comprised of AIPA Member Parliament Secretariats in conjunction with the AIPA Secretariat to draft the Rules of Procedures of the Meeting of Young Parliamentarians of AIPA for the consideration and adoption at the next General Assembly.

Committee on Political Matters

54. The Committee on Political Matters was chaired by Hon. Mr. Bui Thanh Son, Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly and Hon. Mr. Le Anh Tuan as the Rapporteur. H.E. General Do Ba Ty, Vice President of the National Assembly attended and delivered his welcome remarks.

55. In his welcoming remarks, H.E. General Do Ba Ty highlighted the development of AIPA over the past 43 years and AIPA's staunch support for ASEAN's regional integration and Community building process, in joint efforts for peace, stability, prosperity and sustainable development in the region. The Vice President expressed his confidence for the fruitful outcome of the Meeting, thus, contribute to the upholding AIPA's unity and solidarity, toward the overall success of the 41st General Assembly of AIPA.

56. During the Committee's meeting, AIPA Member Parliaments expressed their high appreciation and gratitude to the National Assembly of Viet Nam as the Host and Chair of the 41st AIPA General Assembly for excellent arrangements made in organizing the AIPA meetings in virtual format. The ability by AIPA Member Parliaments to convene the Meeting of the Committee of Political Matters has vividly demonstrated the commendable efforts by AIPA Member Parliaments and the Chair, National Assembly of Viet Nam to enhance the unity and solidarity of AIPA during this time of difficulties. AIPA Member Parliaments again congratulated the National Assembly of Viet Nam for its assumption of the AIPA Presidency in 2020.

57. The Committee approved six (6) Reports for adoption by the General Assembly as follows:

a) Report of the 9th AIPA Caucus

b) Report of the 10th AIPA Caucus

c) Report of the 11th AIPA Caucus

d) Report of the ASEAN-AIPA Interface at the 30th ASEAN Summit

e) Report of the ASEAN-AIPA Interface at the 34th ASEAN Summit

f) Report of the ASEAN-AIPA Interface at the 36th ASEAN Summit

58. The Committee held extensive exchanges and candid discussions on the Topic of “Parliamentary Diplomacy for Sustainable Peace, Security in ASEAN”. The Committee supported closer coordination and collaboration between the legislative and the executive branches in preserving regional peace, security and stability, reinforcing an open, inclusive, transparent, rules-based regional architecture with ASEAN at its core. The Committee also affirmed the importance of maintaining peace, security, stability, safety and freedom of navigation in and over-flight above the South China Sea, as well as upholding international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, working actively towards the

full and effective implementation of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety and the early conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC), consistent with international law including the 1982 UNCLOS.

59. The Committee discussed at lengths on the draft Resolution on “*Parliamentary Diplomacy for Sustainable Peace, Security and Prosperity in ASEAN Community*” which was consolidated based on the proposed draft resolutions from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam. The draft consolidated resolution was circulated to AIPA Member Parliaments for opinions, inputs and comments on 18th August and 6th September, 2020 respectively, before the convening of the Meeting of the Committee on Political Matters. Due to the fact that the Committee did not reach consensus on two pending paragraphs, the Draft Consolidated Resolution on “*Parliamentary Diplomacy for sustainable peace, security and prosperity in ASEAN Community*” was not adopted.

Committee on Economic Matters

60. The Committee on Economic Matters meeting was chaired by Hon. Mr. Vu Hong Thanh, Chairman of the Economic Committee, National Assembly of Viet Nam. Hon. Mr. Duong Quoc Anh was appointed the Rapporteur of the Meeting. H.E. Mr. Phung Quoc Hien, Vice President of the National Assembly delivered his welcome remarks. The Committee considered and approved one (01) consolidated resolution for adoption by the General Assembly: ***Resolution on the role of Parliaments in promoting ASEAN Cohesiveness and Economic Recovery post COVID-19.***

61. The Committee affirmed the importance of economic connectivity in promoting ASEAN Member States’ economic growth and comprehensive recovery and also emphasised the crucial role of Parliaments in mitigating the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. the Committee resolved to facilitate the development of digital

infrastructure, digital connectivity, digital security and privacy, and digital skills and knowledge among ASEAN Member States to promote digital economy; to leverage opportunities brought about by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) in order to overcome adverse impacts of economic lockdown and social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

62. The Committee recommended AIPA Parliaments to continue reviewing and completing legal frameworks that enable trade facilitation, the regional flow of goods and uninterrupted supply chains, create open, sustainable and responsible investment policies, ensure food security and agricultural value chains, work on new and indispensable legislative frameworks to institutionalise national preparedness and response mechanisms against COVID-19 and future pandemics, promote circular economy practices and promote the use of renewable energy for sustainable development.

63. The Committee welcomed and encouraged efforts by sub-regional cooperation frameworks, including in the Mekong area, to promote equitable and sustainable development across the ASEAN Community by aligning sub-regional growth with the comprehensive development of ASEAN and also encouraged closer coordination between ASEAN sectoral bodies and sub-regional cooperation frameworks in achieving the shared goal of narrowing the development gap among and within ASEAN Member States.

Committee on Social Matters

64. The Committee on Social Matters was presided over by Mr. Phan Thanh Binh, Chairman of the Culture, Education, Youth, Adolescence and Children Committee of the National Assembly of Viet Nam as the Chairperson, and Mrs Le Thu Ha, Member of the Viet Nam National Assembly as the Rapporteur. H.E.Mdm.Tong Thi Phong, First Vice-President of the National Assembly attended the Meeting and delivered her welcome remarks. She emphasised the importance of parliamentary cooperation in supporting and promoting the building of an ASEAN Community with a shared identity, especially in coping with serious and urgent issues such as epidemic, drugs, environmental pollution, ecological imbalance, waste, and plastic waste.

65. AIPA Parliaments expressed their deep concern about the impact of COVID 19 on every aspect of the societies and share experiences of their respective countries in dealing with COVID-19. Delegates also stressed the importance of parliamentary cooperation in responding to the epidemic in the immediate time as well as for the common development of region in the long-term with emphasis on culture, education, environment protection and biodiversity.

66. The Committee discussed and adopted three (03) resolutions for adoption by the General Assembly:

a) Resolution on the Adoption of the Report of the 3rd Meeting of the AIPA Council on Dangerous Drugs (AIPACODD) and the Resolution on Turning Words into Actions towards a Drug-Free ASEAN Community.

b) Resolution on the Adoption of the Report of the Conference on Educational and Cultural Cooperation (ECC) and the Resolution on Parliamentary Partnership on Educational and Cultural Cooperation for Sustainable Development.

c) Resolution on Enhancing the AIPA's Role to Support the ASEAN SocioCultural Community in responding to COVID-19

Committee on Organisational Matters

67. The Committee on Organizational Matters was presided over by Hon. Mr. Vu Hai Ha, Vice Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, National Assembly of Viet Nam as the Chairperson, and Hon. Mrs. Mai Thi Phuong Hoa, Member of the Judicial Affairs Committee was the Rapporteur. H.E. Mr. Uong Chu Luu, Vice - President of the National Assembly of Viet Nam attended and delivered welcome remarks at the Meeting. The Vice-President stressed that AIPA has been increasingly showing its important role in assisting ASEAN to fully and effectively implement decisions by the promoting the harmonisation of laws among countries, contributing by building a united, strong, and prosperous ASEAN Community. For AIPA to fulfill its missions, the Vice-President stressed that the Committee on Organisational Matters facilitate the work of AIPA and AIPA Secretariat in the future development.

68. The Committee discussed and approved fifteen (15) following resolutions for the adoption by the General Assembly:

a) Resolution on the Financial Report 2019-2020.

b) Resolution on the Budget Estimation 2020-2021.

c) Resolution on Secretariat's Annual Report 2019-2020.

d) Resolution on Accrediting the House of Representatives of the Kingdom of Morocco as an Observer of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA).

e) Resolution on Accrediting the Parliament of Norway as an Observer of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA).

f) Resolution on the engagement of young parliamentarians of AIPA in the ASEAN Community building.

g) Resolution on the Status on the Relocation of AIPA Secretariat Premises.

h) Resolution on the Extension of Cooperation between FREELAND Foundation and AIPA Secretariat.

i) Resolution on Extension of Memorandum of Understanding to Develop AIPA's Capacity on Matters Concerning ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN Economic Integration in Various Areas between ERIA and AIPA.

j) Resolution on Establishing Joint Programs between AIPA and the International Conservation Caucus Foundation (ICCF) on Blue Economy, Economic Development and Conservation.

k) Resolution on AIPA Distinguished Service Award to Her Excellency Pany Yathotou.

l) Resolution on AIPA Distinguished Service Award to Her Excellency Mdm. Tong Thi Phong.

m) Resolution on Appreciating the hospitality and support of the House of Representatives of Indonesia to the AIPA Secretariat.

n) Resolution on Appreciating the Service of Her Excellency Mdm. Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan as President of AIPA.

o) Resolution on Date and Venue of the 42nd General Assembly.

The Committee decided to defer the following draft resolutions to the next AIPA General Assembly for further consideration:

- a) The Resolution on the Guidelines and Procedures of the AIPA-ASEAN Dialogue;
- b) Resolution on the Transformation of AIPA Secretariat; and
- c) Resolution on the Rules and Procedures for Hosting of the AIPA General Assembly.

The Committee appreciated the AIPA Secretariat for its thorough preparation.

X. 42ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF AIPA

69. The General Assembly accepted the kind offer of Brunei Darussalam to host the 42nd General Assembly of AIPA in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam in August 2021.

XI. APPRECIATION TO HOST COUNTRY

70. The Delegations attending the General Assembly expressed their sincere appreciation to the Government and the Parliament of Viet Nam for their excellent arrangements made for the 41st General Assembly of AIPA.

71. The 41st General Assembly of AIPA was held in the traditional ASEAN spirit of friendship, brotherhood and cooperation, to cohesive and responsive of ASEAN Community.