
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Report of the Parliamentary
Delegation to the 35th AIPA
General Assembly,
September 2014

July 2015
Canberra

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Foreword

The delegation to the 35th AIPA General Assembly in Laos provided a valuable opportunity to strengthen ties with parliamentarians of South East Asian and observer parliaments, and to build on Australia's cooperative relationships with ASEAN countries.

It was an honour to represent Australia as an observer country at the General Assembly, which makes an important contribution to Australia's engagement with ASEAN. The delegation was warmly received and welcomed the opportunity to have many discussions with parliamentary colleagues in the region.

The focus of the 35th AIPA General Assembly related to the role of parliamentary cooperation in contributing to the establishment of an ASEAN Community. This theme was reinforced during Australia's formal dialogue session with ASEAN member countries, which was an excellent opportunity to reinforce the many positive and productive bilateral relations Australia has with ASEAN countries.

The delegation was very ably supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, both prior to departure and while in country. In particular, the delegation is grateful to the Australian Embassy in Vientiane for making arrangements for the delegation's extensive program of meetings and activities beyond the AIPA General Assembly. These activities, which are also covered in this report, made a significant contribution to the overall success of the delegation, and enhanced the depth and breadth of matters considered by the delegation while in Laos. The delegation is also grateful to the Australian Ambassador, His Excellency John Williams, and his staff for the time they generously spent accompanying the delegation.

On behalf of the delegation, I would also like to thank the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Hon. Bronwyn Bishop MP, whose official business in Vientiane coincided with some parts of the AIPA General Assembly. The delegation is honoured that Madam Speaker was able to join us for some of the official program, and is grateful for her time and the significant contributions she

made to the delegation's effective representation of the Australian Parliament at the 35th General Assembly.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleague on the delegation, Mr Graham Perrett MP, whose long-held interest in the region and enthusiastic participation in proceedings made a valuable contribution to our formal and informal discussions during the visit.

Finally, I take this opportunity to express the delegation's gratitude to the host nation, Lao PDR, for its warm hospitality and excellent organisation of the 35th AIPA General Assembly.

Dr Dennis Jensen MP
Delegation Leader



Membership of the Delegation

Dr Dennis Jensen MP (Leader)

Mr Graham Perrett MP

Ms Peggy Danaee (Secretary)

The 35th AIPA General Assembly

Introduction

- 1.1 The 35th Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) General Assembly was held from 14 to 20 September 2014 in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR). The purpose of AIPA meetings is to address issues of mutual concern to ASEAN member and observer countries.
- 1.2 The General Assembly has been held regularly since 1978. Over 160 parliamentarians attended the 2014 General Assembly, representing 10 member countries. Also represented at the General Assembly were observer delegations from eight countries, and seven delegations as guests of the host.
- 1.3 The following summarises the issues and outcomes arising from the 35th AIPA General Assembly, with a particular focus on the issues discussed during the dialogue session between ASEAN countries and Australia.

AIPA General Assembly – Background

- 1.4 In 1977, 10 years after the formation of ASEAN, the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation (AIPO) was established by the parliaments of Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. AIPO was

formed to contribute to the attainment of the goals and aspirations of ASEAN through inter-parliamentary cooperation.

- 1.5 In order to establish a more effective and closely integrated institution, AIPO changed its status from an organisation into an assembly in 2007 and changed its name to the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, or AIPA.¹
- 1.6 The Statutes of AIPO were signed in 1977 by the Heads of Parliamentary delegations of Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. The Statutes have been amended several times since that time, most recently during this 35th General Assembly in 2014.
- 1.7 The major aims and purpose of AIPA are:
 - to promote solidarity, understanding, cooperation and close relations among Parliaments of ASEAN member countries, AIPA Special Observers, Observers and other parliamentary organisations;
 - to facilitate the achievement of the goals of the ASEAN as constituted in the ASEAN Declaration of August 1967, as well as the ASEAN Vision 2020 taking into account Bali Concord II 2003 leading to the realisation of an ASEAN Community based on three pillars: ASEAN Security Community (ASC); ASEAN Economic Community (AEC); and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC);
 - to establish and maintain exchange and dissemination of information as well as coordination, interaction, and consultations with ASEAN to offer parliamentary contributions to ASEAN integration and familiarising the peoples of Southeast Asia with policies aimed at accelerating the realisation of an ASEAN community;
 - to study, discuss and suggest solutions to problems of common interest and express its views on such issues with the aim of bringing about action and timely response by the members of AIPA;
 - to keep all AIPA member Parliaments informed of steps taken and progress achieved by each Parliament in realisation of the aims and purposes of AIPA; and
 - to promote the principles of human rights, democracy, peace, security and prosperity in ASEAN.²

1 AIPA, 'Background and History (From AIPO to AIPA)', <<http://www.aipasecretariat.org/about/background-history/>> viewed 6 March 2015.

2 AIPA, 'The Statutes of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)', <<http://www.aipasecretariat.org/about/statutes/>> viewed 6 March 2015.

1.8 AIPA comprises the following 10 ASEAN member countries:

- Brunei Darussalam;
- Cambodia;
- Indonesia;
- Lao PDR;
- Malaysia;
- Myanmar;
- Philippines;
- Singapore;
- Thailand; and
- Vietnam.

1.9 As part of the 35th AIPA General Assembly, AIPA member countries took part in dialogue sessions with the parliaments of eight observer delegations comprising:

- Australia;
- Belarus;
- China;
- India;
- Japan;
- Republic of Korea;
- Russian Federation; and
- Timor-Leste.

1.10 The AIPA Statutes require that a General Assembly of AIPA be held once a year in the country of an AIPA member parliament by rotation in the alphabetical order of the ASEAN countries. The venue and date of previous General Assemblies is shown at **Appendix A**.

Opening Ceremony

- 1.11 The opening ceremony took place on Tuesday, 16 September 2015. Welcome addresses were delivered by the President of AIPA and the Prime Minister of the Lao PDR.
- 1.12 Each General Assembly is presided over by the AIPA President, who is the Speaker or President of the AIPA member parliament hosting the Assembly. The President of the 35th AIPA General Assembly was Her Excellency Madam Pany Yothotou, President of the National Assembly of the Lao PDR.
- 1.13 In her opening address, the AIPA President highlighted the significance and relevance of the theme of the 35th General Assembly: 'Strengthening Parliamentary Cooperation in the ASEAN Community Building.' Noting aspects of the current regional and international situation, the President emphasised the role of AIPA parliamentarians in maintaining and promoting peace, stability and development in the region and the world at large.
- 1.14 The President also stressed the important role for AIPA in furthering its relationship with ASEAN, supporting ASEAN Community building under the ASEAN motto 'One Vision, One Identity, One Community,' and contributing to the overall goals of ASEAN. She encouraged the active participation and constructive contribution of all AIPA Member Parliaments, Observer Parliaments and Guests of the Host at the 35th AIPA General Assembly.
- 1.15 The Prime Minister of the Lao PDR, His Excellency Mr Thongsing Thammavong, acknowledged AIPA's significant contribution to supporting ASEAN Community building, as well as promoting cooperation within ASEAN and between ASEAN and its external partners. The Prime Minister reiterated the Lao PDR's full support of the theme 'Strengthening Parliamentary Cooperation in the ASEAN Community Building' and of the agenda items to be discussed at the 35th AIPA General Assembly.
- 1.16 The Prime Minister reaffirmed that the Lao PDR is fully committed to actively participating in ASEAN Community building, and contributing to efforts to maintain and promote peace, stability and development cooperation in the region and the world. The Prime Minister stated that, in preparing to assume the ASEAN Chairmanship in 2016, the Lao PDR welcomes the support and cooperation of ASEAN Member States, friendly countries and regional and international organisations.

First Plenary Session

- 1.17 The first plenary session took place on Tuesday, 16 September 2015, immediately following the opening ceremony. Following the appointment of Vice Presidents of the 35th General Assembly, the remainder of the first plenary session consisted of statements by leaders of member and observer delegations, and special guests of the host parliament.³
- 1.18 Member countries endorsed the theme of the 35th Assembly, 'Strengthening Parliamentary Cooperation in the ASEAN Community Building', highlighting the role of AIPA as the only regional forum for ASEAN parliamentarians. Member countries noted the need to further strengthen collaboration between countries to keep pace with challenges and developments in the region. Member countries praised AIPA's contribution to building a peaceful, stable, secure and prosperous ASEAN Community. Indeed, strengthening the role of AIPA and increasing parliamentary collaboration in the region was noted as being crucial in accelerating progress towards the establishment of the ASEAN Community. All countries noted the important relationship between ASEAN and AIPA and the significant role for legislators in addressing domestic concerns and highlighting the work of ASEAN and AIPA.
- 1.19 The Leader of the Australian delegation, Dr Dennis Jensen MP, expressed Australia's appreciation for the contribution ASEAN has made to peace, regional cooperation and prosperity in Southeast Asia. He congratulated ASEAN and AIPA for the pursuit of greater regional cooperation, and for efforts towards to establishment of an ASEAN Community in the areas of economic, political, security and socio-cultural cooperation. Dr Jensen noted the 40th anniversary of Australia's dialogue partnership with ASEAN, and shared details of some of the activities taking place to commemorate the anniversary.
- 1.20 Australia reinforced its commitment to its economic, political, social and institutional relationships with ASEAN, including cooperation through the ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program which provides practical support to the region in its progress towards establishing the ASEAN Economic Community by 2015.
- 1.21 Australia welcomed growing cooperation between the governments of Australia and ASEAN neighbours, especially through regular opportunities for dialogues including through the ASEAN Post Ministerial

3 Heads of the observer delegations of Timore-Leste and the Russian Federation, with the permission of the Assembly, delivered their statements during the second plenary session.

Conferences, ASEAN Regional Forum, East Asia Summit, and ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus Eight.

- 1.22 Australia was pleased to note the rapidly growing interaction between the peoples of Australia and the region, with education continuing to be a key element in Australia's cooperation with the region. Dr Jensen drew the Assembly's attention to highlighting the New Colombo Plan pilot program, which seeks to support young Australians to study and undertake internships in the Indian Ocean Asia-Pacific region.
- 1.23 Dr Jensen noted the importance of continuing dialogue and cooperation between Australia and ASEAN, and conveyed Australia's appreciation for the opportunity to renew communication between the parliaments of the region through AIPA. Dr Jensen expressed his confidence that the relationship between Australia and ASEAN would continue to benefit the countries and peoples of the region, and applauded AIPA members countries for their continued commitment to peace, stability and cooperation in the region.
- 1.24 The full text of Dr Jensen's statement is at **Appendix B**.

Committee meetings

- 1.25 At the conclusion of the first plenary session, the following committees were formed:
- Committee of Women Parliamentarians of AIPA (WAIPA);
 - Committee on Political Matters;
 - Committee on Economic Matters;
 - Committee on Social Matters;
 - Committee on Organisational Matters;
 - Committee on Dialogue with Observer Countries; and
 - Committee on Joint Communiqué.
- 1.26 The committees formed at each General Assembly consider key issues relevant to ASEAN countries. Each committee produces a statement and approves a series of resolutions for adoption by the AIPA General Assembly. Representatives of AIPA member countries provide the membership of the committees. As an observer country, Australia has no official capacity on the committees.

Dialogue Session with Australia

- 1.27 As part of the General Assembly, time was allocated for AIPA member countries to conduct dialogue sessions with each observer delegation. The topic for dialogue sessions at the 35th AIPA General Assembly was: ‘New approaches for cooperation engagement between AIPA Member Parliaments and Parliaments of observer countries.’
- 1.28 The dialogue session with Australia was chaired by the Hon. Dr Souvanpheng Boupphanouvong, Chairperson of the Economic Planning and Finance Committee, Member of National Assembly of the Lao PDR. The dialogue commenced with a statement by the Chair, after which the Australian delegation made a brief statement and invited comments from delegates representing AIPA member countries. Australia then responded to the remarks. The participants in the dialogue session and the AIPA dialogue report are provided at **Appendix C**.
- 1.29 The following section summarises the specific issues raised and comments made during the dialogue session.

Brunei Darussalam

- 1.30 Brunei Darussalam outlined its trading relationship with Australia and noted the cooperation between the two countries, emphasising the benefits of cooperation between the Parliaments of the two countries and welcoming more frequent parliamentary exchanges.
- 1.31 Australia welcomed the trade relationship with Brunei Darussalam and was pleased to note that Australia is a leading education destination for students from Brunei Darussalam. Australia expressed its commitment to continued parliamentary cooperation with Brunei Darussalam.

Cambodia

- 1.32 Cambodia acknowledged its long-standing relationship with Australia and welcomed the assistance provided by Australia over the years. Cambodia noted the importance of removing barriers to trade and discussed the ways in which countries such as Australia could assist with capacity building.
- 1.33 In particular, Cambodia noted that Australia’s parliamentary library services are comparatively advanced, and sought greater assistance from Australia with technical matters such as transcription services and translation into languages containing non-Roman characters. Cambodia

also welcomed assistance with the further development of its political system, and capacity building for women in the field of law enforcement.

- 1.34 Australia reflected on the long relationship between the two countries, and expressed its willingness to provide assistance on key issues of capacity building. Australia also noted that its assistance program was currently valued at \$79 million.

Indonesia

- 1.35 Indonesia discussed issues of importance to the region, and highlighted the importance of cultural understanding between countries of ASEAN and Western nations. Indonesia also noted that regional tensions had resulted in increased military spending.
- 1.36 Australia commented on the strength of its relationship with Indonesia and highlighted the importance of the warm relationship between the neighbouring countries.

Laos

- 1.37 Laos conveyed its appreciation for cooperation between the parliamentarians of the two countries and encouraged Australia's continued support for ASEAN. Laos acknowledged Australia as one of its largest aid providers and urged more parliamentary exchanges and more scholarships to assist in further capacity building.
- 1.38 Australia expressed its commitment to its ongoing relationship with Laos. Australia noted that it provides 50 scholarships annually to students from Laos, valued at \$6.5 million. Australia also noted that the Australian aid program focuses on human resource development through the newly established Laos Australia Institute, which provides capacity building to the Lao National Assembly as one of the key government bodies.
- 1.39 Australia reassured the Lao delegation that it would continue to provide ongoing support and cooperation, including in the areas of addressing people trafficking, disaster management, human resource development, and financial services.

Malaysia

- 1.40 Malaysia expressed its gratitude for Australia's assistance with the MH370 disaster, and noted the overall strength of the relationship between the

two countries. Malaysia sought expanded cooperation in the areas of education and tourism.

- 1.41 Australia noted that over 300,000 Malaysians had studied in Australia since the original Colombo Plan. Australia noted with great pleasure that Malaysia had agreed to opt into the New Colombo Plan from 2015. Australia welcomed its strong relationship with Malaysia.

Myanmar

- 1.42 Myanmar noted the commencement of its first Parliament in 2011 and expressed its appreciation for Australia's engagement in the past. Myanmar expressed a need for further assistance in the area of parliamentary capacity building, particularly in relation to research support for the Parliament.
- 1.43 Australia congratulated Myanmar on the commencement of its Parliament and noted with satisfaction the cooperation between the two Parliaments to date. Australia noted Myanmar's proposal for additional capacity building and expressed its commitment to assisting the Parliament of Myanmar into the future.

Philippines

- 1.44 The Philippines noted its strong relationship with Australia, and Australia's engagement in the areas of education, defence, and disaster relief in particular. The Philippines urged a more robust trade relationship between the two countries, and requested greater business cooperation in the areas of agriculture, business processes, and information technology.
- 1.45 Australia noted that its current investment in the Philippines was valued at over \$7 billion, incorporating aid investment of \$143 million. Australia expressed its wishes for further enhancement of the strong ties and close cooperation between the two countries in future.

Singapore

- 1.46 Singapore commented on its robust relationship with Australia and welcomed the New Colombo Plan for strengthening ties between Australia and ASEAN countries. Singapore welcomed more engagement between the Australian Parliament and the parliaments of the region.
- 1.47 Australia acknowledged the strong relationship it has with Singapore and welcomed the tourism linkages between the two countries. Australia

noted with pleasure that Singapore has opted in to the New Colombo Plan and expressed its hopes for the program to strengthen relations between Singapore and Australia.

Thailand

- 1.48 Thailand was pleased with its relations with Australia, and requested additional support in the area of disaster management and emergency response.
- 1.49 Australia acknowledged the request and expressed its wishes for its relationship with Thailand to continue to strengthen in coming years.

Vietnam

- 1.50 Vietnam noted its long-standing relationship with Australia. Vietnam requested greater parliamentary assistance to build law-making and scrutiny capacity within Vietnam's legislature, including parliamentarians and staff. Vietnam also referred to territorial disputes in the region, and sought further cooperation on education.
- 1.51 Australia acknowledged the long relationship between the two countries, which now spanned over 40 years. Australia noted Vietnam's requests for further cooperation, and also noted that 457 Australia Awards had been granted to Vietnamese students in 2013. Australia looked forward to an ongoing, fruitful relationship with Vietnam.

Delegation comments

- 1.52 In general remarks, Australia noted the long-standing relationship between Australia and ASEAN, which commenced when Australia became ASEAN's first Dialogue Partner in 1974. Australia's support for ASEAN, and its ongoing engagement with the region, was a strong basis for cooperation.
- 1.53 Australia expressed its appreciation for its observer status at the AIPA General Assembly, and noted Australia's ongoing commitment to the region. Australia thanked dialogue participants for their thoughtful engagement with the session, and expressed its appreciation for the opportunity to hold productive and warm discussions as a dialogue partner with ASEAN neighbours.

Second plenary session and closing ceremony

- 1.54 The second plenary session and closing ceremony were held on 19 September 2014.

The Chairs of the following committees presented their respective reports: Political Matters; Economic Matters; Social Matters; Organisational Matters; Women Parliamentarians of AIPA (WAIPA); Joint Communiqué; and Dialogue with Observer Countries. The reports were adopted by the General Assembly. The following is a summary of resolutions of the committees.

Women Parliamentarians of AIPA (WAIPA)

- 1.55 The General Assembly adopted WAIPA Committee resolutions on the following issues:
- strengthening efforts in the prevention of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and children in ASEAN;
 - strengthening Women Parliamentarians' roles in ASEAN Community Building; and
 - women's leadership in Southeast Asia.

Political Matters

- 1.56 The General Assembly adopted resolutions of the Committee on Political Matters on the following issues:
- adoption of the report of the AIPA-ASEAN Interface at the 24th ASEAN Summit;
 - adoption of the Report of the 6th AIPA Caucus Meeting in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam; and
 - parliamentary cooperation in ASEAN Political-Security Community building.

Economic Matters

- 1.57 The General Assembly adopted resolutions of the Committee on Economic Matters on the following issues:
- fostering a green growth development strategy in ASEAN; and

- promoting the development of entrepreneurship in the process of narrowing the development gap in ASEAN.

Social Matters

1.58 The General Assembly adopted resolutions of the Committee on Social Matters on the following issues:

- strengthening cooperation among AIPA Member Parliaments on Ebola Virus Disease;
- enhancing legislative cooperation among AIPA Member Parliaments on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases;
- strengthening the parliamentary role in developing vocational education and skilled labour for the integration of the ASEAN labour market;
- formation of a technical working group of the AIFOCOM meeting; and
- adoption of the report of the 11th meeting of AIFOCOM.

Organisational Matters

1.59 The General Assembly adopted resolutions of the Committee on Organisational Matters on the following issues:

- amendments to the agreement on the establishment of an AIPA secretariat;
- amendments to the Statutes of AIPA;
- amendments to the Financial Rules of the AIPA secretariat;
- amendments of the AIPA staff regulations of the AIPA secretariat;
- instruction manual for staff of the AIPA secretariat;
- secretariat financial reports;
- secretariat budget proposal;
- secretariat work plan;
- Secretary General's term of office;
- Secretary General's salary;
- date and venue of the 36th AIPA General Assembly; and
- appreciation for the services of the President of AIPA.

Date and venue of the 36th AIPA General Assembly

- 1.60 It was agreed that the 36th AIPA General Assembly would be held in Malaysia from 6 to 12 September 2015.

35th AIPA General Assembly Joint Communiqué

- 1.61 The leaders of Delegations of the AIPA member countries signed the Joint Communiqué. The text of the document is at **Appendix D**.

Closing Ceremony

- 1.62 The President of AIPA and President of the National Assembly of the Lao PDR, Her Excellency Mme Pany Yathotou, gave the closing speech for the 35th Assembly. She highlighted the spirit in which the business of the Assembly was conducted, resulting in outcomes that will contribute to work of ASEAN and the building of the three pillars of the ASEAN Community. The President discussed the resolutions produced by the various committees of the 35th General Assembly and called on AIPA Member Countries and Observer Countries to more closely monitor the implementation of the resolutions. She expressed her gratitude to local authorities, AIPA Member Countries, AIPA Secretariat, and all those responsible for organising a successful 35th AIPA General Assembly.
- 1.63 The gavel, symbol of the AIPA presidency, was then handed to the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malaysia, represented by the Head of Delegation, His Excellency Datuk Seri Ronald Kiandee, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malaysia.

Conclusion

- 1.64 The Delegation considers that the 35th AIPA General Assembly provided a valuable forum for strengthening bonds between the parliaments of ASEAN countries. The Assembly presented Australia with an excellent opportunity to discuss matters of mutual importance with ASEAN countries, and to strengthen and renew friendships with parliamentarians in the region.

- 1.65 It was clear to the Delegation that the transformation and integration of ASEAN is a key priority and consideration in the development of the region. This impression was reinforced during the Delegation's side visits, which are detailed in Chapter 2 of this report.
- 1.66 The Delegation greatly valued the opportunity to discuss various aspects of Australia's important relationships with neighbouring countries. Australia's presence at the Assembly and role in the region were noted by several delegations, and the Delegation considers the Australian Parliament's involvement with AIPA to be an important part of Australia's overall engagement with ASEAN.
- 1.67 The Delegation expresses its sincere appreciation to the hosting nation, Lao PDR, for its warm hospitality and a professionally conducted and successful 35th AIPA General Assembly.

Figure 1.1 The Delegation and Madam Speaker



Additional activities

- 2.1 In addition to its participation at the 35th AIPA General Assembly, the delegation took the opportunity to make two other official visits while in Vientiane and to meet with representatives of Australian businesses and not-for-profit organisations operating in Laos. The visits and meeting are discussed in more detail below.

Meetings with organisations operating in Laos

- 2.2 The delegation had the opportunity to meet with business representatives and volunteers working in Laos to discuss local experiences, challenges and opportunities.
- 2.3 Together with Madam Speaker, who was in Vientiane on official business, on Monday 15 September the delegation met with Australian business representatives working in Laos, including those representing:
- Australia New Zealand Business Association;
 - Phu Bia Mining;
 - ANZ Laos;
 - Australian Laboratory Services Minerals;
 - Milsearch Laos;
 - McDonald Steed McGrath Lawyers;
 - Laos Australia Institute (managed by Coffey); and
 - Vientiane International School.

- 2.4 The delegation heard about various aspects of the local economy, including regional and historical perspectives. The delegation was also pleased to be informed about the range of opportunities being taken up by Australian businesses in Laos.

Figure 2.1 Meeting with Australian business representatives



- 2.5 On Wednesday 17 September, the delegation met with volunteers from Australian Business Volunteers (ABV) and Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID), working with the following host organisations:
- Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Planning and Investment;
 - Vientiane Capital Commission for Advancement of Women, Mother and Child Secretariat;
 - Population Education and Development Association;
 - Association for Autism;
 - Vientiane Youth Clinic, Lao Women's Union;
 - Deaf and Hard of Hearing Unit, Lao Disabled People Association;
 - Rural Research and Development Promoting Knowledge Association;

- Ministry of Education and Sports;
- Pakpasak Technical College; and
- Lao Disabled Women Centre.

2.6 The delegation appreciated the opportunity to hear from volunteers about the range of important development work being done in Laos, including projects relating to health, education, and services for women and children.

Figure 2.2 Meeting with Australian volunteers working in Laos



2.7 Later that day, the delegation – together with Madam Speaker – also met with representatives of Australian non-government organisations (NGOs) operating in Laos. The delegation welcomed discussions about some of the operating environment’s challenges for NGOs, the extent of collaboration between organisations, and the local benefits delivered by Australian NGOs.

Figure 2.3 Meeting with Australian non-government organisations operating in Laos



Cooperative Orthotic and Prosthetic Enterprise

- 2.8 The Cooperative Orthotic and Prosthetic Enterprise (COPE) was established in 1997 by an agreement between the Ministry for Health in the Lao PDR and several non-government organisations. COPE was created to provide orthotic and prosthetic devices to survivors of unexploded ordnances. COPE is now a local not-for-profit organisation that works with the Lao Centre of Medical Rehabilitation and provincial rehabilitation centres to provide people with disabilities access to orthotic and prosthetic devices and rehabilitation services.
- 2.9 COPE is based in Vientiane, where it also runs a visitor centre. About 85 per cent of COPE's funding comes from large donor organisations, including Australian aid.
- 2.10 During its visit to the visitor centre, the delegation was given a guided tour of the facility and had the opportunity to discuss the historical basis for COPE's services, the evolution of the service over time, some of the challenges of service delivery particularly in rural and more remote parts of Laos, and details of the services currently provided by COPE.

Figure 2.4 A COPE officer explains the landmine clearance process



Ban Houayxai Mine

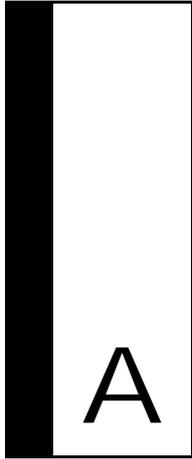
- 2.11 The Ban Houayxai (BHX) Mine in the north of Laos is the gold–silver operation of Phu Bia Mining (PBM), which is a member of the PanAust group of companies. BHX comprises an open-cut mine and processing plant, which in 2014 processed 4.5 million tonnes of ore, producing over 100,000 ounces of gold, and over 900,000 ounces of silver.
- 2.12 On the way to visiting the BHX operation, the delegation welcomed the opportunity to visit some local infrastructure to which PBM had contributed, including the local community health centre, the Ban Ngiew school, and agriculture and microfinance projects. The delegation noted PBM’s aim to ensure the longer term sustainability of its contributions to the local community.

Figure 2.5 The delegation hears about a local agriculture project



2.13 At the BHX operation, the delegation was given a tour of the mine, processing facilities, and security control room. The delegation also received briefings on BHX's achievements, the high standards of workplace health and safety required by PBM, and some of the challenges and opportunities relating to the local operating climate. The delegation also heard about some of PBM's and PanAust's other operations in Laos and abroad.

Dr Dennis Jensen MP
Delegation Leader
July 2015



Appendix A: Date and venue of AIPA General Assemblies

Since its inception in 1977, AIPA has held annual meetings of its General Assembly as follows:

- 1st General Assembly of AIPO in Singapore, 26–28 September 1978
- 2nd General Assembly of AIPO in Bangkok, Thailand, 27 September to 3 October 1979
- 3rd General Assembly of AIPO in Jakarta, Indonesia, 2–6 September 1980
- 4th General Assembly of AIPO in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2–6 February 1982
- 5th General Assembly of AIPO in Manila, Philippines, 5–9 April 1983
- 6th General Assembly of AIPO in Singapore, 5–7 October 1983
- 7th General Assembly of AIPO in Bangkok, Thailand, 2–6 October 1984
- 8th General Assembly of AIPO in Jakarta, Indonesia, 22–29 September 1985
- 9th General Assembly of AIPO in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 24–30 January 1988
- 10th General Assembly of AIPO in Manila, Philippines, 21–26 August 1989
- 11th General Assembly of AIPO in Singapore, 10–15 September 1990
- 12th General Assembly of AIPO in Bangkok, Thailand, 18–23 November 1991
- 13th General Assembly of AIPO in Jakarta, Indonesia, 21–26 September 1992
- 14th General Assembly of AIPO in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 19–26 September 1993
- 15th General Assembly of AIPO in Manila, Philippines, 19–24 September 1994
- 16th General Assembly of AIPO in Singapore, 18–23 September 1995
- 17th General Assembly of AIPO in Phuket, Thailand, 16–21 September 1996

- 18th General Assembly of AIPO in Bali, Indonesia, 1–6 September 1997
- 19th General Assembly of AIPO in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 24–28 August 1998
- 20th General Assembly of AIPO in Manila, Philippines, 19–24 September 1999
- 21st General Assembly of AIPO in Singapore, 10–15 September 2000
- 22nd General Assembly of AIPO in Bangkok, Thailand, 2–7 September 2001
- 23rd General Assembly of AIPO in Hanoi, Vietnam, 8–13 September 2002
- 24th General Assembly of AIPO in Jakarta, Indonesia, 7–12 September 2003
- 25th General Assembly of AIPO in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 12–17 September 2004
- 26th General Assembly of AIPO in Vientiane, Lao PDR, 18–23 September 2005
- 27th General Assembly of AIPA in Cebu, Philippines, 10–15 September 2006
- 28th General Assembly of AIPA in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 18–24 August 2007
- 29th General Assembly of AIPA in Singapore, 19–24 August 2008
- 30th General Assembly of AIPA in Pattaya City, Thailand, 2–8 August 2009
- 31st General Assembly of AIPA in Hanoi, Vietnam, 19–25 September 2010
- 32nd General Assembly of AIPA in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 18–24 September 2011
- 33rd General Assembly of AIPA in Lombok, Indonesia, 16–22 September 2012
- 34th General Assembly of AIPA in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, 17–23 September 2013
- 35th General Assembly of AIPA in Vientiane, Lao PDR, 14–20 September 2014



Appendix B: Statement by Leader of the Australian Delegation

It is a great pleasure and honour to address the 35th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly here in Vientiane. On behalf of the Australian delegation, allow me to express our sincere appreciation to Your Excellency Madame President, and the people of the Lao PDR, for the warm hospitality extended to us.

The Assembly is taking place at a significant time for ASEAN and for Australia's relations with ASEAN. As it moves past its forty-seventh birthday, ASEAN is continuing to make great progress towards regional cooperation – reflected in its historic adoption of the ASEAN Charter back in 2007, and in its pursuit of an ASEAN Community in the areas of economic, political, security and socio-cultural cooperation. Our participation in this Assembly provides us with an opportunity to renew our friendships and to reaffirm the very valuable relationships and cooperation which Australia has with ASEAN.

Australia appreciates greatly the contribution which ASEAN has made to peace, regional cooperation and prosperity in Southeast Asia. Australia is proud to have been the first country to establish a multilateral relationship with ASEAN – in 1974 – and this year thus marks the 40th anniversary of Australia's dialogue partnership with ASEAN.

The Australia-ASEAN 40th anniversary is being promoted through a range of events. These include a business forum, visits to Australia by the ASEAN Secretary-General and other senior ASEAN officials, and an ASEAN-Australia Connectivity workshop, along with regular ministerial meetings with ASEAN by the Foreign Minister and the Minister for Trade. Anniversary celebrations will culminate in a special leaders' Commemorative Summit in Myanmar in November.

Throughout these 40 years, Australia's commitment to ASEAN and its contribution to peace and prosperity has been repeatedly emphasised, including our accession to the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in December 2005 and by the 'Joint Declaration on the ASEAN-Australia Comprehensive Partnership' which our countries signed in Manila on 1 August 2007. Earlier this year in Canberra, representatives of ASEAN and Australia began implementing the Plan of Action under this Partnership for 2015 to 2019, which will focus on deepening political, security, economic, and people-to-people cooperation. The new level of cooperation is underlined by the fact that Australia appointed its first resident Ambassador to ASEAN in 2013. Ambassador Simon Merrifield now actively promotes Australia-ASEAN relations in Jakarta.

Our peoples and governments share and continually develop a very wide range of common interests. A highlight of our contemporary relationship was the signing of the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement in February 2009. At a time when all of our countries were grappling with the impact and aftermath of the global financial crisis, this agreement opened up a new basis for our relationship. Today, Australia is heavily engaged with ASEAN in Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership negotiations.

Our economic relations continue to burgeon. In 2013, ASEAN's total merchandise trade with Australia was worth more than A\$70 billion and our trade in services was worth an additional \$22 billion. The two-way investment relationship is now valued at some \$150 billion. Our Free Trade Agreement binds Australia closer together with the more than 620 million people in ASEAN and their economies. This and future agreements will make a major contribution to further reducing trade barriers, and will help underpin our peoples' relationships and prosperity into the future.

Trade and investment are only part of the comprehensive relationship between our governments and peoples. Australia has welcomed the regular dialogues with our ASEAN neighbours through the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conferences, the most recent of which has just been held in Myanmar. We also highly value the opportunity to be able to join as founding members the ASEAN Regional Forum and the East Asia Summit. In recent years, Australia has co-chaired three of the four ARF Inter-Sessional Meetings with our regional neighbours: on disaster relief, with Indonesia; on counter-terrorism and transnational crime, with Vietnam; and on non-proliferation and disarmament, with the Philippines and Japan.

Australia looks forward to the continuing evolution of regional cooperation, in which ASEAN has played such a crucial role, and have been glad to see some recent developments. We welcomed the expansion of the membership of the East Asia Summit and the advent of the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus Eight, which brings together the East Asia Summit countries. This promises to be a very

valuable addition to regional security architecture, and in 2013, Australia hosted the inaugural ADMM-Plus Maritime Security Field Training Exercise.

Our networks of bilateral and multilateral relations with ASEAN enable Australia to develop and advance the many interests we have in common – including a commitment to peace and security, and the vital efforts underway to eliminate trafficking in people and the trade in narcotics. In Myanmar in March this year, a new five-year program was initiated – called the Australia–Asia Program to Combat Trafficking in Persons and valued at A\$50 million, the program is aimed at combatting trafficking in persons through enhancing policy, legal and outreach capability in the region.

In the past decade we have needed to expand our cooperation to oppose terrorism. Australia has provided technical assistance and capacity-building activities to ASEAN member countries through regional training centres such as: the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation; the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism in Kuala Lumpur; and the International Law Enforcement Academy in Bangkok.

Together with Singapore, we are also co-chairing the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Counter-Terrorism for 2014–2017. Aid continues to play a valuable role in both humanitarian assistance and in helping to build the infrastructure, institutions and skills which support further growth and poverty reduction. Australia's Official Development Assistance to developing ASEAN member states, including bilateral and regional programs, is expected to reach over A\$1.2 billion in 2014–15.

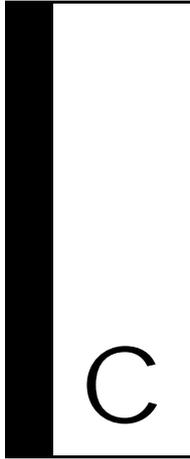
Australia is also supporting your ambition to achieve the 'ASEAN Economic Community' by 2015. The current, second phase of the ASEAN–Australia Development Cooperation Program is providing high level policy advice, research and implementation support to assist ASEAN in key areas of economic cooperation, including harmonisation of standards, elimination of tariffs, and reduction of non-tariff barriers.

As cooperation between our governments continues, relations between our peoples are also being expanded and deepened. Education is a key element in our cooperation: we have been glad to host over 100,000 students from ASEAN countries who have come to study in Australia, and Australia awards over 1,000 scholarships annually to citizens of ASEAN countries under the 'Australia Awards'. Within Australia, ASEAN students have been very active, organising two ASEAN–Australia Youth Summits in recent years as well as a local ASEAN Games this year. Australia thus continues to play a role as a key venue where young ASEAN scholars – the region's future leaders – come together to enhance relations among ASEAN nations.

ASEAN countries have been a popular tourist destination for Australians for many years. We also continue to welcome warmly visits from our ASEAN neighbours and we are pleased to note that the number of ASEAN visitors to Australia continues to grow.

I would like to draw special attention to a new initiative by Australia. We are pleased to announce the launch of the New Colombo Plan pilot program to support young Australians to study and undertake internships in the Indian Ocean Asia-Pacific region. This will support intensified people-to-people links between Australia and the nations of ASEAN. Australia has committed \$100 million over five years to implement the New Colombo Plan which will be rolled out more broadly across the region from 2015. It is hoped that this program will encourage greater interaction and mutual understanding between our peoples.

The rapidly growing interaction between our peoples underscores the importance of continuing dialogue and cooperation. As ASEAN progresses through its fifth decade, we warmly welcome the opportunity you are providing for us to renew the communication between our parliaments. We are confident that the relationship between Australia and ASEAN will continue to benefit our countries and peoples, and we applaud ASEAN nations for their continued commitment to peace, stability and cooperation in the region.



Appendix C: AIPA Report on the Dialogue with Australia

ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly 35th General Assembly 14–20 September 2014, Vientiane, Lao PDR

REPORT ON DIALOGUE WITH AUSTRALIA

Chairperson of the Dialogue session was the Hon. Dr Souvanpheng Boupphanouvong, Chairperson of the Economic Planning and Finance Committee, Member of National Assembly of the Lao PDR. The dialogue session began at 1.30 pm at Vientiane Capital Room, Don Chan Palace Hotel, Vientiane, Lao PDR on 17 September 2014.

DELEGATES OF OBSERVER: AUSTRALIA

Australia

Hon. Bronwyn Bishop
Hon. Dr Dennis Jensen
Hon. Graham Perrett
Mr Damien Jones
Ms Peggy Danaee

DELEGATES OF AIPA MEMBER COUNTRIES**Brunei Darussalam**

Hon. Dato Paduka Haji Abullah Haji Md Ja'afar

Hon. Pehin Haji Zainal

Hon. Haji Abd Rahman

Mr Zaidah Petra

Cambodia

Hon. Vy

Mrs Nun Thavy

Indonesia

Hon. Mr Muhammad Oheo Sinapoy

Hon. Mr Jefirston R. Riwu Kore

Laos

Hon. Ketkeo Sihalath

Hon. Ms Bandith Pathoumvanh

Hon. Ms Khamphong Mounvongsay

Malaysia

Hon. Datuk Linda Tsen Thau Lin

Hon. Fuziah Salleh

Myanmar

Hon. Mr Nyunt Tin

Hon. Ms Myint Myint San

Philippines

Hon. Mr Nicasio M. Aliping, Jr

Singapore

Hon. Baey Yam Keng

Hon. Mrs Lina Chiam

Thailand

Hon. ACM. Charlie Chandrung

Vietnam

Hon. Ha Minh Hue

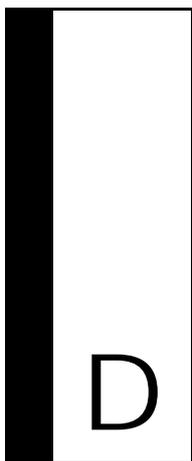
THE MEETING DISCUSSED THE FOLLOWING ISSUES:

1. Maintaining the friendly cooperation between Australia and AIPA Countries.
2. Welcoming Australian long term commitment in the heart of AIPA Countries.
3. Promoting cooperation on education which contributes to the regional understanding and integration, and emphasizing that the educational cooperation between Australia and the AIPA Member Countries is strong and dynamic.
4. Supporting capacity building of women in the police force and within the legal system.
5. Welcoming the implementation of the new Colombo Plan which would give young Australians opportunities to study in AIPA countries.
6. Emphasizing that Australia has a very good understanding of the cultural diversity and identity in ASEAN.
7. Supporting the parliaments of AIPA Countries as critical and key factors to enhance the democratic and oversight functions of this institution.
8. Emphasizing that the exchanges of experiences, learning of best practices between parliamentarians visiting Australian parliament as well as high ranking Australian parliamentarians visiting AIPA Member Parliaments is important and will continue.
9. Deepening parliamentary exchanges based on useful working programs in order to share information, knowledge and experiences in the parliamentary work.
10. Providing parliamentary capacities and skills for parliamentary staff in Jaw making, oversight functions, research services and library systems
11. Undertaking efforts to deepen the economic linkage between AIPA Countries and Australia and opening more trade opportunities to develop the existing potentials.
12. Looking forward for stronger Australian investment in AIPA Countries.
13. Highly appreciating Australians' support on Disaster Management, emergency response and regional security cooperation.
14. Highly recognizing Australians' support on the rescue mission of Malaysia Airlines.

As there were no further comments from any of delegates, the Chairperson called the dialogue session to a close at 3.00 p.m.

The Report of the Dialogue with Australia was presented to the 35th AIPA General Assembly.

**Hon. Mme Dr Souvanhpheng BOUPPHANOUVONG
CHAIRPERSON**



Appendix D: 35th AIPA Joint Communiqué

ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly 35th General Assembly 14–20 September 2014, Vientiane, Laos

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

INTRODUCTION

1. Pursuant to the decision of the 34th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) held in Brunei Darussalam on 17–23 September 2013, and in accordance with the Statutes of AIPA, the 35th General Assembly was held in Vientiane, Lao PDR, on 14–20 September 2014 under the theme, “Strengthening Parliamentary Cooperation in the ASEAN Community Building”.
2. Her Excellency Mme Pany Yathotou, President of the National Assembly of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and President of AIPA, presided over the 35th AIPA General Assembly

DELEGATIONS

3. The Delegations were from: **Brunei Darussalam** led by H.E. Mr Pehin Dato Isa bin. Ibrahim, Speaker of the Legislative Council; the **Kingdom of Cambodia** led by Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly; the **Republic of Indonesia** led by H.E. Dr Pramono Anung, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives; the **Lao People’s Democratic Republic** led by H.E. Dr Saysomphone Phomvihane, Vice-President of the National Assembly; **Malaysia** led by H.E. Datuk Seri Ronald Kiandee, Deputy

Speaker of the House of Representatives; **the Republic of the Union of Myanmar** led by H.E. Mr Thura Shwe Mann, Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw; **the Republic of the Philippines** led by H.E. Mr Giorgidi B. Aggabao, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives; **the Republic of Singapore** led by H.E. Mme Halimah Yacob, Speaker of the Parliament; the **Kingdom of Thailand** led by H.E. Mr Peerasak Porjit, Second Vice-President of the National Legislative Assembly; and the **Socialist Republic of Viet Nam** led by H.E. Mr Nguyen Sinh Hung, President of the National Assembly.

4. The Observer Delegations from **Australia** led by Dr Dennis Jensen, Member of Parliament; the **Republic of Belarus** led by Vitaly Busko, Deputy Chairman of Standing Commission on International Affairs of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly; the **People's Republic of China** led by Chi Wang Chun, Vice Chairman of Foreign Affairs Department of National People's Congress; the **Republic of India** led by H.E. Mr Rajen Gohain, Member of Parliament of Lok Sabha; **Japan** led by Mr Shimpei Matsushita, Member of House of Councillors; the **Russian Federation** led by Mrs Valentina Matvienko, Chairperson of the Federation Council; and **Timor Leste** led by Mr Vicente Da Silva Guterres, President of the National Parliament.
5. The **Guests of the Host** include the Secretary-General of ASEAN, represented by H.E. Dr. Achmad Kurnia Prawira Mochtan, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for Community and Corporate Affairs; Mongolia led by Hon. Mr Jalbasuren Batzandan, Chairman of Standing Committee on Security and Foreign Policy; ASEAN-WEN/FREELAND/ARREST represented by Ms Sallie Yang, Legal Consultant; Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law & Development (APWLD) represented by Ms Diyana Yahaya, Programme Officer of APWLD; German Delegation (Embassy of Germany, GIZ, HSF) represented by Ms Jessica Engel; the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) represented by Ms Pham Thanh Hang, Regional Programme Officer of Asia Pacific Office.

OPENING CEREMONY

6. H.E. Mme Pany Yathotou, President of the National Assembly of the Lao PDR and President of AIPA welcomed delegates to the 35th AIPA General Assembly and highlighted the significance and relevance of the theme "Strengthening Parliamentary Cooperation in the ASEAN Community Building". Amidst current regional and international situation, the President pointed out the necessity for AIPA parliamentarians to join the efforts in maintaining and promoting peace,

stability and development in the region and the world at large. She also stressed the important role of AIPA in furthering the relationship between AIPA and ASEAN, supporting ASEAN Community building under the ASEAN Motto “One Vision, One Identity, One Community”, and contributing to the overall goal of ASEAN.

She welcomed and looked forward to the active participation and constructive contribution of all AIPA Member Parliaments, Observer Parliaments and Guests of the Host at this 35th AIPA General Assembly.

WELCOMING REMARKS

7. H.E. Mr Thongsing Thammavong, Prime Minister of Lao PDR, extended his warmest welcome to all delegates to Vientiane who attended the 35th General Assembly of AIPA, showcasing not only the importance of AIPA but also their support to Lao PDR as the host of the event. He acknowledged AIPA’s significant contribution to support the ASEAN Community Building as well as to promote cooperation within ASEAN and between ASEAN and its external partners.

He further reiterated Lao PDR’s full support to the theme “Strengthening Parliamentary Cooperation in the ASEAN Community Building” and to the agenda items to be discussed at the 35th AIPA General Assembly.

He reaffirmed that Lao PDR is fully committed to actively participating in ASEAN Community Building, joining common efforts in maintaining and promoting peace, stability and development cooperation in the region and the world. In preparation to assume ASEAN Chairmanship in 2016, Lao PDR looks forward to receiving support and cooperation from ASEAN Member States, friendly countries and regional and international organizations.

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF AIPA

8. The Meeting of the Executive Committee of AIPA, chaired by Her Excellency Mme Pany Yathotou, President of the National Assembly of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and President of AIPA, adopted the agenda and programme of activities of the 35th AIPA General Assembly and agreed on the following:
- Approving the request from the parliaments of the Russian Federation and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to present their statement at the Second Plenary on 19 September 2014.
 - Deferring the proposed resolution on “*The Adoption of National Action Plans to Implement the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and*”

Human Rights and Reaffirm State's Duty to Protect by Indonesia to the next AIPA General Assembly.

- The meeting acknowledged Indonesian nomination of Dr Nurhayati Ali Assegaf for the candidature of President of Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) 2014–2017.

VICE-PRESIDENTS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

9. As stipulated in article 8 of the Statutes, the Heads of delegations of other National Parliaments shall sit as Vice-Presidents. In the event that the President of the AIPA is unable to preside at the General Assembly for any reason whatsoever, one of the Vice-Presidents shall preside over the Assembly.

MESSAGES FROM HEADS OF STATE/GOVERNMENT

10. The 35th General Assembly of AIPA received the messages from the following Heads of State/Government: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

STATEMENTS OF HEADS OF DELEGATIONS

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

Brunei Darussalam

11. In his statement, H.E. Pehin Dato Isa bin Hj. Ibrahim, Speaker of Legislative Council of Brunei Darussalam stressed that ASEAN's major concerns has shifted from security dominated matters to socio-economic matters, especially on narrowing development gaps. Given the socio-economic disparities in the region, he highlighted the role of parliamentarians in ensuring future aspirations of ASEAN through their active engagement and consultations with all stakeholders at the local, regional and international levels. The Speaker lauded AIPA's continuing efforts in accelerating ASEAN Community building and making it a truly people-centered community. He expressed support to the 35th AIPA's theme, and emphasized that this year's theme is a continuous reflection of the need to strengthen collaborative efforts and actions by AIPA Member Countries in order to keep pace with the challenges and developments in ASEAN. The theme further signifies the important role of AIPA in the process of ASEAN's integration.

Cambodia

12. In his statement, Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia, stated that strengthening roles of AIPA and Parliamentary Cooperation is a crucial factor to accelerate the achievement of building ASEAN Community by 2015 and beyond. He further stated that a strong legal and institutional framework, promotion of a culture of mutual trust, dialogue, and a strong commitment of each member is necessary and requires parliamentarians of AIPA Member Countries to increase their role as much as possible in drafting legislation and incorporating the international commitment under the ASEAN Community into their respective national legislation, intensify mutual exchange of information and perspectives on experiences and sharing of best practices in lawmaking process and other legal instruments concerning the benefits of our ASEAN peoples, enhance relations between AIPA and ASEAN at every level and the two bodies need to have a regular meeting at the ASEAN Summit and AIPA General Assembly and other concerning meetings with a specific and focused agenda to be discussed as well as encourage the AIPA Secretariat to strengthen and promote its institutional capacity and human resources in order to assist AIPA in supporting the realization of ASEAN Community.

Indonesia

13. In his statement, H.E. Dr Pramono Anung Wibowo, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representative of Indonesia, stated that Indonesia find the theme of this 35th AIPA General Assembly, “Strengthening Parliamentary Cooperation in the ASEAN Community Building”, befitting as the ASEAN Member States are heading toward ASEAN Community in 2015. It is not an easy task to realize South East Asia that is peaceful, stable, secure, and prosperous. As 2015 is fast approaching, AIPA have to become aware of the significant challenges ahead. He emphasized that AIPA must seek the involvement and participation of the entire stakeholders, including the Parliament and all Parliaments in the region, to realize the common aspiration of the people of ASEAN. AIPA need to continue raising public awareness on the presence of ASEAN as well as public participation, including civil society groups.

He also emphasized that efforts towards building the capacity of supporting systems of national parliaments is critical in order to lay the standard of services of the region’s parliamentary institutions, which would further the realization of three ASEAN Community pillars.

In terms of politics and security, with new security threats, AIPA shall acknowledge the importance of having implementing regulations that would effectively serve to impede growing radicalization of religious practices among societies, due to fallacy in interpreting religious teachings. With regards to developments in political and security affairs, we all agree that there has emerged a new common threat due to activities of ISIS supporters in our region, although the radical movement originated in another region. In consequence, legal framework in AIPA/ASEAN countries regarding combating terrorism needs to be complemented with a new cooperation plan, developing action framework indeed requires collaboration that is complex, yet in-depth, in the fields of education, religion, social, security especially intelligence, and politics – all part of de-radicalization in the region that is necessary and urgent.

Indonesia extended its appreciation to AIPA Member States for their support on the candidacy of a Member of Indonesian House of Representatives for the Inter-Parliamentary union (IPU) Presidency. The support reflects the ASEAN spirit of solidarity and commitment to support each other's candidatures in international fora. Further, this 35th General Assembly in Laos concurs with the end office of the current period of Indonesian parliament. Indonesia expressed its sincere appreciation for the cooperation with parliamentary members in ASEAN for the past five years. The close cooperation between Indonesian House of Representatives and AIPA Member States, and with AIPA Secretariat General shall continue under the new parliamentary term of office.

Lao People's Democratic Republic

14. In his statement. H.E. Dr Xaysomphone Phomvihane, Vice-President of the National Assembly of the Lao PDR and Leader of Lao Delegation, stated that the 35th AIPA General Assembly takes place following the successful conclusion of the 47th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in August 2014 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. This year is the second time the National Assembly of the Lao PDR has the honour to host the AIPA General Assembly after the same meeting was held in 2005.

He further stated that the ASEAN Community will bring us closer in active unity and cohesiveness among the Member States of ASEAN. Our region will become one large single market, capable of attracting more investors and tourists alike, and competing with other regions, building on and enhancing the strengths and comparative advantage of each Member State to ensure more efficiency and effectiveness.

However, he mentioned that there are still several limitations and challenges that need to be addressed, particularly the differences in the level of economic development among member countries in terms of infrastructure, human resources and legal frameworks, so as to ensure that we can absorb the benefits of free competition, and free flow of goods and services, and labour and capital.

He noted that in recent years, we have seen enhanced cooperation and coordination between ASEAN and AIPA on various issues of ASEAN. AIPA is currently focusing its efforts to ensure that the resolutions it has adopted and will adopt are in line with the policies of ASEAN and are incorporated into the national legislation, activities and policies of ASEAN Member States. This will ensure that AIPA becomes a meaningful partner in the evolution of ASEAN.

He also stated that throughout the past 17 years as a member country of the AIPA, the Lao National Assembly has been constructively and consistently contributing to the work of AIPA in accordance with AIPA's rules and regulations. As the host of the 35th AIPA General Assembly, the Lao National Assembly received the honour to host the 11th Meeting of the AIPA Fact Finding Committee (AIFOCOM) to Combat the Drug Menace, in Vientiane in May 2014, and the meeting has successfully concluded and unanimously approved 2 documents which are the Resolution on Strengthening Legal Cooperation among parliaments in Realizing a Drug Free ASEAN and Report of the 11th Meeting of AIFOCOM.

Malaysia

15. Hon. Datuk Ronald Kiandee, Deputy Speaker of the House of the Representatives, Malaysia, thanked AIPA members for their sympathy and support in the MH17 tragedies.

In 37 years, AIPA had increased its membership to 10 nations and observers to 12 nations. It enhanced understanding and tolerance among member states in areas such as political security and trade, resolving crisis through consensus and mutual respect.

He emphasized the need for ASEAN political security community, ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community to ensure a peaceful, secure and harmonious environment, the rule of law, good governance, human rights and fundamental freedom as well as transparent and predictable business environment. AIPA could play a part in achieving these.

AIPA was chaired by a very capable lady. But the low participation of women in politics was of concern and AIPA's target of at least 30% women participation in legislatures of ASEAN states was achievable.

AIPA members should get youth involved in community issues. Malaysia had a youth Parliament and hosted the 7th World Summit on Media for Children (WSMC).

It was imperative that AIPA remained inclusive and maintained parliamentary democracy, accountability, ministerial responsibilities, parliamentary privileges and the success of respective parliaments nationally and regionally. This would be consistent with the theme of a People-Centred ASEAN for Malaysia's chairmanship of ASEAN in 2015. AIPA could play a part in a fully integrated ASEAN community, bringing changes in ASEAN's structure, administration and culture.

Myanmar

16. The Myanmar delegation headed by Rt Honourable Thura U Shwe Mann, Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Parliament) attended the 35th ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) in Vientiane, Lao PDR from 14 to 17 September 2014, and made a statement at the first plenary session. In his speech, he focused on the fact that all the AIPA delegations gathered there to reiterate their commitments for a goal of the ASEAN community in a timely manner.

The first ever ASEAN Summit in Myanmar was successfully held in May. During the summit, AIPA delegations and ASEAN Heads of State met, and the former suggested the strengthening of the ASEAN-AIPA partnership through intensive dialogues and consultations. Myanmar attached importance of the success of the Chairmanship and the building of ASEAN community. The successive General Assemblies have adopted more than 700 resolutions on political, economic, social, organizational matters as well as WAIPA, which the AIPA National Secretariats have to implement.

Philippines

17. In his statement, Hon. Giorgidi B. Aggabao, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, stated that the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) will become a reality by 2015. To achieve the goals of this integration, there must be solidarity and cooperation among the members, given the enormous tasks and benefits ahead. With a market of 600 million people and combined GDP of US\$3 trillion, the AEC could become a formidable force in the global economy.

He emphasized that the role of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) in the integration process is essential in providing a venue for dialogue towards a common reform agenda. While regional trade facilitation has been robust, there have been some delays in the ratification of signed ASEAN-wide agreements and their alignments with national domestic laws. The AIPA member nations can help ease these political economy constraints and pave the way for their effective resolution.

He mentioned that to foster the desired AEC environment, it is imperative that key regional reforms must be pursued. There is a need to promote a culture of fair competition by creating a level playing field for firms and businesses. Towards this end, the Philippines is considering relaxing the economic restrictions of its Constitution to increase foreign equity in key economic sectors. And more importantly, it is key to firm up regional commitment to expedite the resolution of recent threats to the political stability and security of the ASEAN community. With these reforms, it is expected that the gap between policy and implementation will be narrowed down and the region's investment climate be improved considerably.

Singapore

18. In her statement, H.E. Madam Halimah Yacob stated that ASEAN is approaching a milestone in the evolution of ASEAN to realise an ASEAN Community by December 2015. ASEAN remains pivotal in promoting regional cooperation, peace and stability in the region. This will continue to ensure that the Southeast Asian countries can focus their efforts on economic development. To ensure that regional integration stays on track is a whole-of-ASEAN effort and this is one area where ASEAN parliamentarians can contribute.

It is also important to keep in mind that ASEAN Community-building is an ongoing process that will continue beyond 2015. In progressing towards an ASEAN Community, it is important to develop a sense of ownership of ASEAN. As the only regional forum for ASEAN parliamentarians, AIPA can play an important role in generating greater grassroots awareness of ASEAN and its Community-building efforts. AIPA should also strengthen the existing links among the national legislatures of ASEAN Member States. By helping to raise grassroots awareness of the significance of various ASEAN policies, ASEAN parliamentarians can play a significant role in making ASEAN real and relevant in the daily lives of the peoples of ASEAN.

Thailand

19. In his speech, Honorable Mr Peerasak Porjit, Second-Vice President of the National Legislative Assembly of Thailand, outlined the political situation in the country started from the unrest situation which could lead into public disorder, threatening national security and safety. Therefore, the country must be controlled by the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) in order to cease the situation. Then the NCPO launched the 3-phased Roadmap to maintain peace and order following by comprehensive reforms to move forward the country into the sustainable progress and will finally move the country towards a fully functioning and sustainable democracy with His Majesty the King as Head of State.

As a result, he stated that the overall situation in Thailand has dramatically improved. People returned to their normal life activities, and businesses are operating normally. According to the latest poll, most of Thai people are pleased with the work of the NCPO. In addition, he truly believed that, even in a transitional period, Thailand will steadily progress in a positive direction, formulating effective policies and their implementation, to ensure a benefit of the people.

He also assured that the Thai National Legislative Assembly will participate in all activities under the AIPA framework in order to promote AIPA as an active and leading legislative regional institution in supporting the establishment of the ASEAN Community in 2015.

Viet Nam

20. In his speech at the First Plenary Session of the 35th AIPA General Assembly, H.E. Mr Nguyen Sinh Hung conveyed his warmest greetings to the General Assembly and his gratitude to the host National Assembly of Laos for their thorough preparation, and the warm and enthusiastic reception extended to the delegation.

He noted the great opportunities for peace, cooperation and development despite complicated current developments in the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and particularly in the East Sea (South China Sea). He urged ASEAN to enhance the use of existing tools and mechanisms of ASEAN to accelerate the full implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and proceed to the Code of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (COC) for peace, stability and development.

He noted with satisfaction the achievements of ASEAN member countries and the central role of ASEAN in realizing ASEAN Community by 2015

and the Post-2015 Vision. He urged AIPA to expand cooperation mechanisms between ASEAN and external partners to promptly and efficiently respond to emerging non-traditional challenges relating to environment, water resources, climate change, natural disasters, epidemics, energy security, food security, maritime security, and aviation security, etc.

Finally, he emphasized that Viet Nam National Assembly is committed to continuing with practical and effective contributions to the joint efforts to enhance the role of AIPA in building and developing the ASEAN Community of peace, stability, cooperation and prosperity.

STATEMENTS OF THE LEADERS OF OBSERVER COUNTRIES AND GUESTS OF THE HOST PARLIAMENT

The full texts of statements of the Leaders of Observer Countries and the Guests of the Host are attached to **Annex J and Annex K**.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF AIPA (WAIPA)

A. Strengthening efforts in the prevention of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and children in ASEAN

The WAIPA encouraged ASEAN and AIPA member countries to advocate the readiness to cope with secondary and tertiary prevention responses such as pre-hospital care, emergency and rehabilitation services, and treatment for sexually transmitted infections following a rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment as well as other longer term approaches to prevent domestic violence against women and children.

The WAIPA called upon ASEAN and AIPA member countries to review and amend all laws related to the protection of women and children's health and their welfare, and to undertake measures to enable cross border enforcement of laws against the trafficking of women and children, and protection of the women migrant workers and their families, women and children in conflict areas, and to provide mutual assistance to one another in the enforcement of such laws.

The WAIPA requested the AIPA Secretariat to monitor the implementation of this resolution and regularly submit progress report to the General Assembly of the AIPA.

B. Resolution on Strengthening Women Parliamentarians' roles in ASEAN Community Building

The WAIPA meeting acknowledged that the role of women parliamentarians is placed under three pillars, and that they have been actively participating within

AIPA framework through various programs and activities, which is not merely gender mainstreaming in the political, legislative and administrative processes.

The WAIPA meeting urged all ASEAN Member States to increase the percentage of women in legislative, judiciary and executive branches of their respective governments in order to contribute significantly to the advances in social well-being for women and children in ASEAN, among others.

C. Resolution on Women Leadership in Southeast Asia

The WAIPA meeting recognized the imbalance in the population of women and women representation in politics and in the leadership stage of both public and private institutions and that women leadership could be further promoted and encouraged towards the achievements of MDGs, protection of human rights, sustainable development and peaceful solutions.

The WAIPA meeting recommended AIPA member countries to create more room for women including those living in rural areas, to express their aspirations and be involved in the decision making process, and men to actively contribute in women empowerment efforts, among others.

POLITICAL MATTERS

A. Adoption of the Report of the AIPA-ASEAN Interface at the 24th ASEAN Summit

The Committee considered and adopted the Report of the AIPA-ASEAN Interface at the 24th ASEAN Summit held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on 11 May 2014.

B. Adoption of the Report of the 6th AIPA Caucus Meeting in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam

The Committee considered and adopted the Report of the 6th AIPA Caucus held in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, on 17-20 June 2014.

C. Resolution on Parliamentary Cooperation in the ASEAN Political-Security Community Building

The Committee members exchanged their views pertinent to the Political-Security matters in the region.

The Committee supported ASEAN's commitment to enhance its efforts in political and security cooperation and implementation of the APSC Blueprint to ensure the realization of the ASEAN Political Security Community by 2015. The Committee also resolved to promote AIPA Member Parliaments' roles in this cause as well as in the development of ASEAN Community's Post-2015 Vision. The Committee also called on all AIPA Member Parliaments to further underscore the importance of the strengthening of ASEAN's unity and cohesiveness in advancing ASEAN's

interests and centrality in the evolving regional architecture. The Committee stressed the importance of maintenance of peace, stability, maritime security and free navigation in the South China Sea and urged all parties concerned to exercise self-restraint, settle disputes by peaceful means, without resorting to the use of force, respect international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, implement fully and effectively the DOC and work towards the early conclusion of the COC.

ECONOMIC MATTERS

A. Fostering Green Growth Development Strategy in ASEAN

The Committee of Economic Matters noted that qualitative economic growth must be related to the sustainability of natural resource development and social inclusion which is the essence of the green growth concept.

Mindful of the existing global framework on climate change and considering ASEAN's recent efforts on promoting a common legally binding agreement on green growth, the committee recommended: (i) ASEAN Member States develop national green growth strategies; (ii) implementing sustainable management systems for natural resources; (iii) focusing on low-carbon emissions in key socio-economic sectors like transport systems and city planning; and (iv) considering the establishment of an ASEAN Green Growth Centre.

The committee also urged AIPA Member Parliaments to develop relevant policies, comprehensive legal frameworks, enforcement of laws and coordination mechanisms on the protection and management of natural resources to ensure sustainable, effective and efficient uses of materials and natural resources.

B. Promoting the Development of Entrepreneurship in the process of Narrowing the Development Gap in ASEAN

The Committee recognized the regional efforts in narrowing development gaps as part of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) building. The Committee further stressed that entrepreneurs are key actors for socio-economic development. Therefore, building strong and skilled ASEAN entrepreneurs will help to effectively narrow the development gap and support wealth creation in ASEAN. Thus, the Committee recommended ASEAN Member States ensure strong political support for entrepreneurship education, consider the mobilization of new appropriate funds for further strengthening entrepreneurs' skills for CLMV countries, support the development of entrepreneurship-based curriculum in education systems, support young dynamic entrepreneurs, prioritize the support of women's entrepreneurial development, provide access to financial sources and consider the establishment of the ASEAN SME Regional Development Fund and ASEAN SMEs Service Centre.

SOCIAL MATTERS

A. Resolution on “Strengthening Cooperation among AIPA Member Parliaments on Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)”

AIPA parliamentarians expressed concerns over the outbreak of EVD, which has become a global threat and created the loss of lives and might potentially lead to epidemic and pandemic proportions in ASEAN Member States. AIPA parliamentarians called for further cooperation in legal framework development, oversight with the aim of prevention and control over EVD. They also asked ASEAN Member States to activate their national disaster/emergency management mechanisms to ensure effective control over EVD.

B. Resolution on “Enhancing Legislative Cooperation among AIPA Member Parliaments on Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases”

The resolution focuses on preventing and controlling Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in the areas of legal development, coordinating with World Health Organization and United Nation Offices, allocating appropriate resource to facilitate action plan to prevent and control of NCDs and addressing the matters through advocacy, oversight, raising awareness and dissemination of information to meet each national context on prevention and control of NCDs at large.

C. Resolution on “Strengthening Parliamentary Role in Developing Vocational Education and Skilled Labour for the Integration of ASEAN Labour Market”

The resolution recognized the need to enhance cooperation in area of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and skilled labour and also urging ASEAN Member States to strengthen regional partnership and collaboration in the field, particularly in harmonizing education standards and of accreditation system on vocational education and training and their skilled labour development in line with labour demand.

D. The adoption of the Report of the Eleventh Meeting of AIFOCOM

The Committee Meeting considered and adopted the Report of the Eleventh Meeting of AIFOCOM held in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

E. Resolution on “The Formation of Technical Working Group of the AIFOCOM Meeting”

As instructed by the 11th AIFOCOM Meeting in Vientiane, Lao PDR, AIPA Secretariat had circulated a note to all AIPA Member Parliaments for their views and comments on the establishment of the AIFOCOM Technical Working Group. Since there was no consensus, the Committee agreed to defer the matter to the next AIFOCOM Meeting in Malaysia.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

The Organizational Committee Meeting considered and adopted 12 draft Resolutions, as follows:

- A. Resolution on Amendments to the Agreement on the Establishment of an AIPA Secretariat;
- B. Resolution on Amendments to the Statutes of AIPA;
- C. Resolution on Amendments to the Financial Rules of the AIPA Secretariat;
- D. Resolution on Amendments of the AIPA Staff Regulations of the AIPA Secretariat;
- E. Resolution on Instruction Manual for Staff of the AIPA Secretariat;
- F. Resolution on Financial Reports of the AIPA Secretariat for 1 July 2013 to 30 September 2013, 1 October 2013 to 30 June 2014 and Estimated Expenditure for 1 July 2014 to 30 September 2014;
- G. Resolution on Estimated Budget for the AIPA Secretariat for the Period 1 October 2014 to 30 September 2015, Supplementary Estimate from 1 August 2015 to 30 September 2015;
- H. Resolution of Adoption of the Work plan 2014 of the AIPA Secretariat;
- I. Resolution on Date of Appointment of the Secretary General;
- J. Resolution on the Salary Increment for the Secretary General;
- K. Resolution on Date and Venue of the 36th General Assembly;
- L. Resolution on Appreciation of the Services of Her Excellency Madam Pany YATHOTOU as the President of the 35th AIPA from September 2013 to September 2014.

The committee agreed that Resolutions on the *Establishment of AIPA National Parliamentary Group/Caucus to Combat Wildlife Crime* and the matter on the *Amendment of the word "statute" to "constitution"* be discussed at the next General Assembly.

DIALOGUES WITH OBSERVER COUNTRIES

The General Assembly, through its dialogue panels, conducted separate meetings with Observer Countries, namely: Australia, Belarus, China, Republic of Korea, Russia, and Timor-Leste. The topic discussed with dialogue partner is "New approaches for cooperation engagement between AIPA Member Parliaments and Parliaments of Observer Countries".

36th AIPA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly accepted the kind offer of Malaysia to host the 36th General Assembly in Malaysia from 6 to 12 September 2015.

APPRECIATION TO THE HOST COUNTRY

The Delegations attending the General Assembly expressed their sincere appreciation to the Government and National Assembly of Lao People's Democratic Republic as well as the Lao people for their warm welcome, generous hospitality and the excellent arrangements for the 35th AIPA General Assembly.

APPRECIATION TO PRESIDENT OF THE ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

The Delegations attending the General Assembly extended their sincere gratitude and appreciation to H.E. Mme Pany Yathotou, the President of the 35th ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, President of the National Assembly of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, for her able leadership in further strengthening AIPA and AIPA-ASEAN cooperation in the spirit of solidarity, friendship, cooperation and mutual understanding, thus contributing to the common cause of ASEAN Community Building by 2015.