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The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Report of the Parliamentary  
Delegation to the 38th AIPA  
General Assembly,  
September 2017

February 2018  
Canberra

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## Foreword

During this 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Australia welcomed the opportunity to attend and observe the 38th General Assembly of ASEAN's parliamentary arm.

The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), which also marked a significant milestone this year – 40 years since its establishment – held its General Assembly in Manila, the capital city of the Philippines. The well-organised Assembly and associated program allowed plentiful opportunities for the Australian delegation to renew ties with parliamentarians of Southeast Asian and observer parliaments, and to build on Australia's enduring relationships with and commitment to ASEAN countries and the region more broadly.

In addition to attending the AIPA General Assembly, the Delegation also participated in a range of side meetings, some of which were organised with the assistance of the Australian Embassy in Manila. These meetings enhanced the value of our visit.

I thank my colleague on the delegation, Senator Alex Gallacher, whose interest in foreign relations, knowledgeable participation in discussions, and collegiate approach made a valuable contribution to our visit.

Finally, I wish to record the delegation's appreciation to the host nation, the Philippines, for its generous hospitality and excellent organisation of the 38th AIPA General Assembly.

Mr George Christensen MP  
Delegation Leader



# Membership of the Delegation

Mr George Christensen MP (Leader)

Senator Alex Gallacher

Ms Peggy Danaee (Secretary)

# The 38th AIPA General Assembly

## Introduction

- 1.1 The 38th Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) General Assembly was held from 14 to 20 September 2017 in Manila, Philippines. 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 150 parliamentarians attended the 2017 General Assembly, representing 10 member countries. Also represented at the General Assembly were observer delegations from nine parliaments, and six delegations as guests of the host.
- 1.3 The following summarises some of the issues and outcomes arising from the 38th 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.<sup>1</sup>
- 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 in 2014.
- 1.7 The key aims and purposes 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 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.<sup>2</sup>

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1 AIPA, 'Background and History (From AIPO to AIPA)', <<http://www.aipasecretariat.org/about-us/background-history>> viewed 20 October 2017.

2 ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 'The Statutes of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)', <<http://www.aipasecretariat.org/about-us/statutes/>> viewed 10 October 2017.

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 38th AIPA General Assembly, AIPA member countries took part in dialogue sessions with the parliaments of nine observer delegations comprising:

- Australia;
- Belarus;
- Canada;
- China;
- European Parliament;
- India;
- Japan;
- Republic of Korea; and
- Russian Federation.

1.10 The AIPA Statutes require that a General Assembly of AIPA be held once a year, and that the venue be rotated among member parliaments in alphabetical order unless otherwise determined by the Executive Committee. The venue and date of previous General Assemblies is shown at **Appendix A**.

## Courtesy call on the AIPA President

- 1.11 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 38th AIPA General Assembly was His Excellency Pantaleon D. Alvarez, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Philippines.
- 1.12 Along with representatives from other Observer delegations, Australia attended a courtesy call with Speaker Alvarez on Saturday, 16 September 2017. This was an important opportunity to reaffirm Australia's relationship with the Philippines, to congratulate AIPA on its 40th anniversary and its continued success throughout the region, and to stress the importance of ASEAN to Australia. The meeting also provided the occasion for Australia to extend its thanks to Speaker Alvarez for his Parliament's gracious hospitality.

## Opening Ceremony

- 1.13 The theme of the 38th General Assembly was AIPA and ASEAN: Partnering for inclusive change. These sentiments were emphasised throughout the opening ceremony, which took place on Saturday, 16 September 2017.
- 1.14 Welcome addresses were delivered by the President of AIPA, His Excellency Pantaleon D. Alvarez, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Philippines, and by His Excellency Aquilino Pimentel III, President of the Senate of The Philippines.
- 1.15 In his address, Senate President Pimentel commented on the extraordinary economic growth and improvement in living conditions in Southeast Asia, and noted ASEAN's success in driving these improvements.
- 1.16 President Pimentel also noted two challenges facing ASEAN and AIPA. Firstly, the diverse cultures and economies among ASEAN countries make the process of ASEAN Community building more complex, and inequality within countries remains a challenge. Secondly, President Pimentel emphasised the importance of transferring ownership of ASEAN from governments to the people, and from ministries to communities. He noted that this must be done in an inclusive way, and highlighted the key role for parliaments in this process.

- 1.17 President Pimentel also emphasised the key role of teamwork as the basis for progress and problem-solving in the region. He urged the Assembly to turn its cooperative efforts to considering the key issues of illegal drugs, terrorism and trafficking in the region.
- 1.18 In his opening address, Speaker Alvarez observed that his term as AIPA President had coincided with the 50th anniversary of ASEAN and the 40th anniversary of AIPA. Speaker Alvarez noted that these milestones offered an opportunity to reflect on collective achievements and to look forward to common challenges in years to come.
- 1.19 Speaker Alvarez referred to the common goal of establishing an ASEAN Community by 2025, and the underlying vision for broader regional integration. He noted that stronger collective action was required to navigate the regional challenges, which included terrorism, violent extremism, and maritime disputes.
- 1.20 Speaker Alvarez stated that the vision for an ASEAN Community had brought greater visibility for AIPA and an elevated role for legislators in the region. He highlighted the importance of building a new architecture of cooperation with ASEAN.
- 1.21 In his opening address, the AIPA President also emphasised the requirement for inclusion. He underscored the importance of meeting the needs of marginalised people within ASEAN countries, and of doing so in a transparent way. Indeed, Speaker Alvarez stressed that this was important for ensuring ASEAN's legitimacy within the community.

## **First Plenary Session**

- 1.22 The first plenary session took place on Saturday, 16 September 2017, immediately following the opening ceremony. Following the appointment of Vice Presidents of the 38th General Assembly, statements were made by leaders of member and observer delegations, and by special guests of the host parliament.
- 1.23 Member countries noted progress towards the establishment of an ASEAN Community; endorsed the theme of the 38th Assembly, 'AIPA and ASEAN: Partnering for inclusive change'; highlighted key challenges for the region, including territorial disputes and violent extremism; emphasised the importance of legislative and executive bodies – such as AIPA and ASEAN – working together, particularly to improve the lives of the most marginalised people in the region; and expressed support for the

expansion of cooperation in the use of science and technology for peaceful purposes.

- 1.24 Maritime disputes were also raised. Indonesia reaffirmed its status as a non-claimant state in relation to the dispute in the South China Sea, while urging all parties to work together to bring about a peaceful resolution. The Philippines also advocated for the peaceful resolution of such disputes in accordance with international law.
- 1.25 The humanitarian situation in parts of Myanmar was also discussed. Indonesia condemned what it saw as the systematic attacks on ethnic Rohingyas in Rakhine State, and urged the government of Myanmar to work with the United Nations and international humanitarian organisations. Indonesia also noted that the humanitarian situation in Myanmar had implications for bordering countries. For its part, Myanmar referred to its ongoing democratic reforms and noted that a policy statement would soon be issued regarding the security situation in Rakhine State. Myanmar implored ASEAN Members and Observers to refrain from drawing hasty conclusions about the government of Myanmar.
- 1.26 All countries reinforced AIPA's important contributions to maintaining peace and stability in the region, promoting cultural exchange and understanding, enhancing cooperation on transnational matters, and improving prosperity in the region.
- 1.27 In his statement to the General Assembly, the Leader of the Australian delegation, Mr George Christensen MP, noted that ASEAN had been progressing regional cooperation for 50 years, and was pleased to mark 40 years of AIPA's contribution to these regional goals.
- 1.28 Australia noted with pleasure its long and multi-faceted engagement with Southeast Asian nations – both in bilateral terms and through ASEAN. Australia also highlighted the importance of its Strategic Partnership with ASEAN, and looked forward to the ASEAN–Australia Special Summit in the coming year.
- 1.29 Australia highlighted some of the economic, institutional, social, and political foundations of its deep relationship with ASEAN. In particular, Australia was pleased to note the assistance it has provided in combatting terrorism, violent extremism, and transnational crime in the region, as well as capacity building in the area of disaster management.
- 1.30 Australia reinforced its commitment to ongoing dialogue and cooperation with ASEAN, and welcomed the opportunity to renew ties between the parliaments of the region through AIPA. Mr Christensen 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 for their continued commitment to peace, stability and cooperation in the region.

- 1.31 The full text of the Australian delegation's statement is at **Appendix B**.
- 1.32 Following statements by AIPA Member and Observer delegations, the Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN, His Excellency Dr A. K. P. Mochtan, made a statement on behalf of the ASEAN Secretariat. In his statement, Dr Mochtan emphasised the strengths of AIPA and its contributions to the region. He noted, however, that such successes were the culmination of decades of consistent efforts and constructive commitment by legislators from across the region. He therefore urged continued vigilance and goodwill.

## Committee meetings

- 1.33 During the first plenary session, the following committees were formed:
- Committee of Women Parliamentarians of AIPA (WAIPA);
  - Committee on Economic Matters;
  - Committee on Social Matters;
  - Committee on Organizational Matters; and
  - Committee on the Joint Communiqué.
- 1.34 Somewhat unusually, at this 38th General Assembly of AIPA, no Committee on Political Matters was formed and no agenda for such a committee was agreed by the AIPA Executive Committee.
- 1.35 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

- 1.36 As part of the General Assembly, time was allocated for AIPA member countries to conduct dialogue sessions with each observer delegation. The topics for dialogue sessions at the 38th AIPA General Assembly were:
- continue robust dynamic cooperation with ASEAN Dialogue Partners; and
  - strengthen cooperation in disaster management, combatting transnational crimes, particularly on cyber security, combatting terrorism and violent extremism, and trafficking in persons.
- 1.37 The dialogue session with Australia was chaired by the Hon. Linabelle Ruth R. Villarica, Member of the House of Representatives of the Parliament of the Philippines. The dialogue commenced with the Australian delegation making a brief statement and inviting comments from delegates representing AIPA member countries. Australia then responded to those comments and further discussion ensued.
- 1.38 Details of the participants in the dialogue session are provided in the AIPA dialogue report, which appears at **Appendix C**. The following section summarises some of the specific issues raised during the dialogue session.

## Brunei Darussalam

- 1.39 Brunei Darussalam discussed diplomatic relations and cooperation with Australia, and expressed a desire to continue to strengthen cooperation and trade between the two countries.

## Cambodia

- 1.40 Cambodia discussed ongoing challenges associated with drug abuse, noting that increasingly stringent drug laws had resulted in more than 8,000 young people being arrested for relatively minor drug trafficking offences. Cambodia invited assistance from Australia in relation to addressing rehabilitation and intervention services for young people.
- 1.41 Cambodia also emphasised the importance of the rule of law, access to information, and the principle of inclusion. Cambodia called for more assistance from Australia with respect to capacity building in the areas of rule of law and anti-corruption measures.

- 1.42 Australia reinforced the importance of its strong relations and ongoing friendship with Cambodia.

## Indonesia

- 1.43 Indonesia welcomed its relations with Australia and affirmed its commitment to improved cooperation between the two countries, particularly in relation to counter-terrorism.
- 1.44 Indonesia stated that terrorism and drugs are serious challenges, and noted with regret that Indonesia had become a major market for drugs in the region. Indonesia advised that drug-related crimes are capital offences, and reaffirmed its strong stance in this regard.

## Lao PDR

- 1.45 Lao PDR conveyed its appreciation for its relationship with Australia, and noted the 75 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

## Malaysia

- 1.46 Malaysia welcomed its relationship with Australia, and expressed its appreciation for Australia's role in the search for MH370. Malaysia raised several issues in the region which might benefit from greater assistance and engagement by Australia.
- 1.47 Malaysia discussed the effects of climate change in the region, including increased flooding in Malaysia. Malaysia therefore sought more assistance from Australia in flood and disaster management.
- 1.48 Malaysia also discussed the issue of violent extremism in the region, and referred to the plight of the Rohingya people and refugees from Rakhine State in Myanmar. Malaysia called for greater assistance from Australia in responding to the humanitarian situation.
- 1.49 Malaysia also acknowledged the challenges associated with drug crime in the region, particularly those relating to methamphetamines. Malaysia raised alternative responses, including harm reduction and possible decriminalisation of some drugs. Malaysia expressed the view that some of these alternatives were worthy of further consideration.

## Myanmar

- 1.50 Myanmar welcomed its constructive relationship with Australia, and expressed its appreciation for official development assistance from

Australia in the areas of health and education. Myanmar also stated that it was facing terrorism issues in part of the country, and sought assistance from Australia in addressing these challenges.

- 1.51 Myanmar referred to its ongoing process of transitioning to full democracy, and requested patience and understanding from fellow AIPA member states during this process.
- 1.52 In light of the country's long period of military rule, Myanmar requested assistance from Australia and AIPA member states in building the capacity of public officials and parliamentary representatives, particularly in relation to effective communications.
- 1.53 Myanmar acknowledged the humanitarian issues in the Rakhine region, and noted that the government's limited capacity to effectively explain the challenges had resulted in misconceptions abroad.

## Philippines

- 1.54 The Philippines noted its strong relationship with Australia, and highlighted the importance of the Philippines–Australia Ministerial Meeting in November. Australia warmly welcomed the opportunity to strengthen bonds and to progress the Plan of Action between the two countries.
- 1.55 The Philippines called for continued support and strengthening of its relationship with Australia, particularly on the key issues of capacity building and security matters.
- 1.56 The Philippines thanked Australia for its \$50 million contribution to assistance in Marawi, and emphasised the importance of defence cooperation between the two countries.
- 1.57 The Philippines also noted that drug-related offences are a major concern for President Duterte in particular, and called for greater cooperation on drug matters in the region.

## Singapore

- 1.58 Singapore emphasised its deep and broad relationship with Australia in a range of areas. Singapore highlighted the strong people-to-people ties between the two countries.
- 1.59 Singapore also underscored the importance of regional cooperation to combat illicit drugs. Singapore noted its strong laws relating to drug use

and trafficking, and emphasised the importance of education campaigns to reduce demand for illicit drugs.

- 1.60 Singapore also called for improved regional cooperation amongst security agencies in the areas of counter-terrorism, and the protection of borders and economic spaces. Singapore noted the significance of the Strait of Malacca for global shipping, and expressed its view that the area's vulnerability to accidents and attacks necessitates close regional cooperation.

## Thailand

- 1.61 Thailand welcomed its relationship with Australia and discussed areas of mutual concern. In particular, Thailand called for greater assistance from Australia in the area of de-radicalisation, particularly in relation to young people.

## Vietnam

- 1.62 Vietnam welcomed its long-standing and close relations with Australia, which had been forged through people-to-people ties in particular.

Figure 1.1 Delegates during the Dialogue Session



Source Delegation secretariat

## Delegation comments

- 1.63 Australia noted its strong relationship with 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.
- 1.64 Australia outlined some of its approaches to assisting regional counterparts in the areas of disaster management, cybercrimes, terrorism and violent extremism, and trafficking in persons and modern slavery. This included specific work being undertaken by parliamentary committees in relation to establishing modern slavery legislation in Australia.
- 1.65 Australia welcomed feedback from Dialogue Session counterparts, particularly in relation to how Australia's engagement might be improved. The warmth and interest with which colleagues engaged with the Delegation reinforced the special role for Australia within the region. Discussions also highlighted the scope for Australia to identify opportunities to strengthen and broaden its contribution to the ASEAN and AIPA, particularly in light of shifting political dynamics in the region.
- 1.66 Australia thanked all participants for their enthusiastic contributions to the Dialogue Session, and undertook to relay participants' comments to the Australian Parliament (as detailed in the sections above).

Figure 1.2 Delegates with Dialogue Session participants



Source Delegation secretariat

## Second plenary session

1.67 The second plenary session was held on Tuesday, 19 September 2017.

### Presentation of committee reports

1.68 As noted earlier in this chapter, there was no agreement to establish and set an agenda for a Committee on Political Matters. Although the AIPA Statutes do not expressly require such a committee to meet, it has been a common occurrence during most General Assemblies. Under Article 9 of the AIPA Statutes:

Decisions by the General Assembly on any subjects shall be made by consensus. Matters on which consensus cannot be attained shall be dropped.<sup>3</sup>

1.69 The Delegation notes that a range of political matters – some of which had been raised by AIPA Members during the First Plenary session – may have presented challenges in reaching consensus decisions. This appears to have resulted in a committee on political matters not being established on this occasion. Nevertheless, the Delegation was pleased to note that the circumstances of this Assembly provided an opportunity for AIPA to demonstrate the effectiveness of mechanisms for the resolution of disagreements.

1.70 The Chairs of the following committees presented their respective reports: Women Parliamentarians of AIPA (WAIPA); Economic Matters; Social Matters; Organisational Matters; and Dialogues with Observer Parliaments. The reports were approved and resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. The following is a summary of resolutions of some of the committees.

### Committee on Women Parliamentarians of AIPA (WAIPA)

1.71 The General Assembly adopted a WAIPA Committee resolution relating to the following issue:

- health and rights of women migrant workers.

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3 ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 'The Statutes of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)', Article 9, paragraph 7, <<http://www.aipasecretariat.org/about-us/statutes/>>, viewed 23 October 2017.

## Committee on Economic Matters

1.72 The General Assembly adopted resolutions of the Committee on Economic Matters relating to the following issues:

- policies and strategies to address regional food security issues;
- implementation of financial inclusion programs in ASEAN;
- inclusive and innovation-led growth for the ASEAN Economic Community; and
- economic cooperation for equitable development and inclusive growth in the ASEAN Economic Community.

## Committee on Social Matters

1.73 The General Assembly adopted resolutions of the Committee on Social Matters relating to the following issues:

- adopting the report of the 13th AIFOCOM;
- terms of reference by the AIPA Advisory Council on Dangerous Drugs (AIPACODD); and
- marine plastic debris and microplastics.

## Committee on Organizational Matters

1.74 The General Assembly adopted resolutions of the Committee on Organisational Matters relating to the following issues:

- adopting corporate rebranding for AIPA;
- amendments to the Statutes of AIPA;
- communication master plan for AIPA;
- publication of the '40 Years of AIPA' commemorative book, and expressing appreciation to the House of Representatives of the Philippines for publishing and launching the book;
- expressing appreciation to Germany for capacity development assistance to AIPA;
- financial reports of the AIPA secretariat;
- estimated budget for the AIPA secretariat;
- work plan for 2017 for the AIPA secretariat;

- a project-based initiative on strengthening the legal framework to protect children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism;
- human capacity development as a framework for improving the capacities of secretariat personnel of AIPA Member Parliaments;
- developing AIPA Capacity;
- amendment of criteria and guidelines on the 'AIPO Distinguished Service Award';
- appreciation for the services of the President of AIPA; and
- date and venue of the 39th AIPA General Assembly.

### Committee on Dialogue with Observer Countries

- 1.75 The reports of the dialogue sessions were considered and adopted by the General Assembly.

### New AIPA logo and flag

- 1.76 Notably, the 38th General Assembly marked 40 years of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly. This occasion was used as an opportunity to launch a new AIPA logo and flag.

### Signing of the Joint Communiqué

- 1.77 The Chair of the Committee on the Joint Communiqué presented the committee's report. It was noted that, as no consensus had been reached on the agenda for consideration by the Committee on Political Matters, no agenda was set.
- 1.78 The leaders of AIPA member country delegations signed the Joint Communiqué. The text of the document is at **Appendix D**.

### 40th anniversary commemorative book

- 1.79 To commemorate the 40th anniversary of AIPA, .

### Date and venue of the 39th AIPA General Assembly

- 1.80 It was agreed that the 39th AIPA General Assembly would be held in Singapore from 3 to 7 September 2018.

## Closing Ceremony

- 1.81 The closing ceremony was held on Tuesday, 19 September 2017. A closing address was given by the current President of AIPA, a keynote address was given by the President of the Philippines, and the AIPA Presidency was transferred to Singapore.
- 1.82 The President of AIPA and Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Philippines, His Excellency Pantaleon D. Alvarez, gave the closing speech for the 38th General Assembly. He thanked all attendees for their contribution and enthusiasm, and noted that the presence of so many legislators was a testament to AIPA's enduring strength and vitality after 40 years.
- 1.83 Speaker Alvarez noted that the General Assembly had been an opportunity to review what member parliaments had achieved together, and to gain a broader understanding of the challenges faced by ASEAN nations in the years ahead. Speaker Alvarez remarked that, despite their differences, ASEAN parliamentarians had been able to reach consensus on a range of issues. He noted that the resolutions and discussions at the 38th General Assembly highlighted AIPA's strength in bringing about consensus and unity in diversity.
- 1.84 Speaker Alvarez noted that AIPA has experience in dealing with sensitive and complex issues, as occurred during this 38th General Assembly. He highlighted the firm adherence to AIPA's central principles, as occurred during the present General Assembly, and signalled that it may be time for AIPA to consider the introduction of new mechanisms to supplement the consensus principle. Speaker Alvarez suggested this may be important in maintaining AIPA's contribution and standing within the ASEAN Community building process.
- 1.85 Speaker Alvarez concluded by noting the significant number of resolutions made by the General Assembly, and called on AIPA parliamentarians to put pressure on their respective governments to incorporate these resolutions into domestic agendas.
- 1.86 The closing ceremony concluded with a keynote address given by His Excellency Rodrigo R. Duterte, President of the Philippines. In his address, the President highlighted the importance of regional cooperation, and the valuable role played by organisations such as AIPA, by bringing together legislators and representatives from across the region. President Duterte congratulated AIPA on a successful General Assembly.

## Additional meetings

- 1.87 In conjunction with the Assembly, the Delegation took the opportunity to undertake various informal meetings with parliamentary colleagues from several ASEAN nations.
- 1.88 The Delegation met with several current and former ASEAN parliamentarians who wished to discuss Australia's contribution to a range of regional and domestic matters within Southeast Asia.
- 1.89 The Delegation also pursued several meetings with parliamentary colleagues in the Philippine Parliament.
- 1.90 The Delegation was grateful for the opportunity to meet with Congressman Rufino Biazon, Vice Chair of the Philippine House of Representatives Committee on National Defense and Security. The Delegation discussed a range of issues including Australia's assistance with the situation in Marawi, shared concerns such as challenges associated with customs and border protection, and Defence relationships between the two countries. The strong and enduring bonds between the two countries were emphasised.

Figure 1.4 Delegates with Congressman Rufino Biazon



Source *Delegation secretariat*

- 1.91 During its visit to the Philippine Parliament, the Delegation also met with members of various committees, including the House of Representatives Transportation Committee. The Chair of the Transportation Committee, Congressman Cesar Sarmiento, kindly hosted a working luncheon which was attended by several of his colleagues. The Delegation enjoyed the opportunity to discuss issues relating to transportation, economic development, national security, and the enduring relationship between Australia and the Philippines.

Figure 1.5 Delegates with Congressman Cesar Sarmiento and parliamentary colleagues



Source *Delegation secretariat*

- 1.92 The Delegation expresses its thanks to all parliamentary colleagues for their time and willingness to engage in open and enthusiastic dialogue.

## Conclusion

- 1.93 The 38th AIPA General Assembly provided a worthwhile forum for strengthening bonds between the parliaments of ASEAN countries. The Assembly also presented Australia with an important opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to Southeast Asia and to renew friendships with parliamentarians in the region.
- 1.94 Public support for the integration of ASEAN was a key priority discussed during the 38th General Assembly. This was reinforced throughout the formal meetings of the Assembly, as well as during the Delegation's informal discussions with parliamentary colleagues outside the Assembly.
- 1.95 The Delegation appreciated the opportunity to discuss Australia's important relationships with neighbouring countries. Australia's longstanding engagement with the region was noted by several delegations.

- 1.96 Overall, the Delegation is cognisant of the opportunities AIPA presents for Australia to continue to engage with friends and neighbours in the region. To this end, the Delegation affirms the importance of the Australian Parliament's continued attendance and participation in the AIPA General Assembly. The Delegation considers that engagement with AIPA is one important aspect of Australia's overall engagement with ASEAN, and therefore encourages renewed commitment from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to provide support to Australian Delegations to AIPA, particularly by way of providing thorough pre-departure briefings to delegates.
- 1.97 In conclusion, the Delegation expresses its sincere appreciation to the hosting nation, the Philippines, for its warm hospitality and a very well organised and professionally conducted 38th AIPA General Assembly.

Figure 1.6 The Delegation

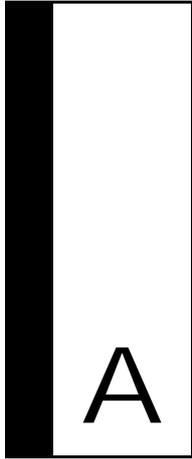


Source Delegation secretariat

*George Christensen*

Mr George Christensen MP  
Delegation Leader  
February 2018



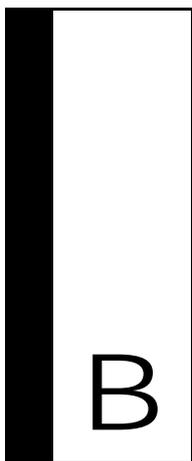


## Appendix A: Date and venue of AIPA General Assemblies

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 Phen, 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
- 36th General Assembly of AIPA in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 6–12 September 2015
- 37th General Assembly of AIPA in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, 29 September to 3 October 2016
- 38th General Assembly of AIPA in Manila, Philippines, 14–20 September 2017



## Appendix B: Statement by Leader of the Australian Delegation

It is a great pleasure and honour to address the 38th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, here in Manila. On behalf of the Australian delegation, allow me to express our sincere appreciation to Your Excellency, AIPA President and Speaker of the Philippine House of Representatives, and to the people of the Philippines, for the warm hospitality extended to us.

The Assembly is taking place at an important time for ASEAN and for Australia's relations with ASEAN. As it celebrates its 50th birthday in 2017, ASEAN is continuing to make important progress towards regional cooperation – as demonstrated by its historic adoption of a new Charter a decade ago and its continued implementation of the 'ASEAN Community' in the areas of economic, political and 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, including through parliamentary dialogue and cooperation.

Australia appreciates greatly the contribution which ASEAN has made to peace, regional cooperation and prosperity in Southeast Asia. Australia was the first country to establish a multilateral relationship with ASEAN, over 40 years ago in 1974.

Throughout this period, Australia's commitment to ASEAN and its contribution to peace and prosperity have been repeatedly re-affirmed. It was re-affirmed with: our accession to the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in December 2005; the 'Joint Declaration on the ASEAN-Australia Comprehensive Partnership', signed here in Manila ten years ago, in August 2007; and the appointment of Australia's first resident Ambassador to ASEAN in 2013.

And our commitment was re-affirmed in November 2014 when, at the 40th Anniversary Commemorative ASEAN-Australia Summit in Myanmar, Australia and ASEAN entered into a new Strategic Partnership. The Strategic Partnership recognises both the depth and breadth of existing Australia-ASEAN cooperation and acknowledges the potential for still greater engagement.

Looking ahead, in March next year, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull will host the first ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in Sydney. The centrepiece will be a Leaders' Summit and Retreat. There will also be two major side-events: the first is a Business Summit which will bring together leaders of industry and small and medium sized enterprises to unlock new opportunities for job-creation, investment and enterprise; and the second is a Counter-Terrorism Conference that will underscore the region's collective resolve to combat terrorism.

I will now address some of the foundations of our strong and enduring relationship with ASEAN.

Our economic relations continue to expand. As a group, ASEAN is Australia's third largest trading partner. In 2016, two way merchandise trade between Australia and ASEAN was worth almost A\$70 billion and our services trade was worth an additional A\$24 billion. The two-way investment relationship is now valued at well over A\$200 billion.

A highlight of our 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. 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' mutual prosperity into the future. Today, Australia is heavily engaged with ASEAN and other Indo-Pacific economies in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership negotiations.

Trade and investment are just elements of the broader partnership between our governments and peoples. Australia has welcomed the regular foreign and security policy dialogues with our ASEAN neighbours that take place through the annual ASEAN Post Ministerial Conferences, the most recent of which was held here in Manila in August. We value our role as founding members of both the ASEAN Regional Forum and the East Asia Summit.

We also participate actively in the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus, an important forum which brings together defence ministers from the 18 East Asia Summit countries.

These ASEAN-led institutions are crucial to ensuring a rules-based regional security order that is consistent with the peaceful settlement of disputes, the non-use of force, and respect for international law. These principles are particularly important when it comes to the management of ongoing regional maritime disputes, including those in the South China Sea. The Australian Government has recently urged that a “code of conduct” for the management of these disputes ‘be finalised in a timely manner and that it be legally binding, meaningful, effective, and consistent with international law’.

These networks of bilateral and multilateral relations enable Australia to work with its ASEAN partners to advance peace, prosperity and security, including in the areas of disaster management and combatting transnational crime.

The Asia Pacific region is the most disaster prone region in the world. A person living in the region is almost twice as likely to be affected by a disaster as a person living in Africa, almost six times as likely compared with Latin America and the Caribbean, and 30 times more likely than a person living in North America or Europe.

Aid continues to play a valuable role in disaster management and humanitarian assistance. Over the longer-term, it also helps build the infrastructure, institutions and skills which support further growth and poverty reduction. Australia’s assistance to developing ASEAN member states, including bilateral and regional programs, is expected to reach almost A\$800 million in 2017-18. Our assistance includes a strong focus on reducing disaster risk, building community resilience and strengthening regional humanitarian responses.

In the past decade-and-a-half we have substantially expanded our cooperation to combat terrorism, counter violent extremism, and fight transnational crime. Australia has provided technical assistance and capacity-building support to ASEAN member countries through regional training centres such as the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation, as well as through bilateral security, law enforcement and intelligence cooperation with individual ASEAN members. Together with Singapore, from 2014 to 2017 we co-chaired the ADMM-Plus Experts’ Working Group on Counter-Terrorism.

In 2016, together we agreed a new Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism, which commits Australia and ASEAN to work together to strengthen cooperation to counter the threat from terrorism and violent extremism.

We are currently working with the Philippines' authorities to assist the response to the security and humanitarian situation in Marawi. We join with the Philippines in our concern about the rise of Islamic State or ISIS, and we are committed to assisting the Philippines in eradicating this emerging threat to Asia-Pacific security.

And we are providing \$50 million over five years for the Australia-Asia Program to Combat Trafficking in Persons, a program that is fighting people trafficking by enhancing the policy, legal and outreach skills of our partners in the region.

While cooperation between our governments continues, relations between our peoples are also being expanded and deepened. People-to-people ties are exceptionally robust, through education links, two-way tourism and migration. There were over one million ASEAN visitors to Australia in 2014 and over 100,000 students from ASEAN countries enrolled to study in Australia.

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

Through the New Colombo Plan, a signature initiative of the Australian Government, we are lifting young Australians' knowledge of ASEAN countries by supporting undergraduates to study and undertake internships throughout the region. The New Colombo Plan encourages a two-way flow of students between Australia and the rest of the Indo-Pacific, complementing the thousands of students from the region coming to Australia each year to study.

The Australia-ASEAN Emerging Leaders Program brings together young professionals to highlight Australian and Southeast Asian creativity and innovation in social impact and to demonstrate the role of business in driving social change.

In addition, the new Australia-ASEAN Council, launched by the Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop in September 2015, is generating opportunities for Australian business, education, science and innovation and arts institutions to work with their partners across Southeast Asia.

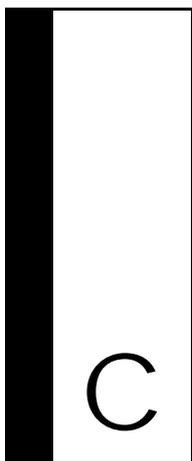
The rapidly growing interaction between our peoples underscores the importance of continuing dialogue and cooperation.

In conclusion, as ASEAN enters its sixth decade, we welcome the opportunity to renew cooperation between our parliaments. We are confident that the relationship between Australia and ASEAN will continue to benefit our countries and peoples.

Once again it is a great honour to attend this important forum to reinforce the links between our respective parliaments, and to take the opportunity to applaud you, as legislators, on your role in ASEAN's continued success in ensuring peace, stability and cooperation in the region. We warmly congratulate you as you celebrate your years of AIPA's contribution.

On behalf of the Australian delegation, we wish you a fruitful and successful General Assembly.





## Appendix C: AIPA Report on the Dialogue with Australia

### **ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly 38th General Assembly 14–20 September 2017, Manila, Philippines**

#### **REPORT ON DIALOGUE WITH AUSTRALIA**

Mr. President:

1. I have the honor to submit, on behalf of the Chairpersons of the Meetings with AIPA Observer Parliaments, the report about these meetings.
2. The meeting was held on Sunday, 17 September 2017 in an atmosphere of friendship, cooperation, constructive and mutual understanding, with Hon. Linabelle Ruth R. Villarica as moderator and attended by the following delegates:

#### **DELEGATES FROM AUSTRALIA**

Mr George Christensen (MP), Head of delegation  
Senator Alex Gallacher

**DELEGATES OF AIPA MEMBER PARLIAMENTS****Brunei Darussalam**

Hon. Pehin Dato Haji Hasrin Dato Paduka Awg Haji Sabtu

**Cambodia**

Hon. Mrs. Mu Sochua

**Indonesia**

Hon. Mr. Juliari P. Batubara

**Lao PDR**

Hon. Mr. Thanta Kongphaly

**Malaysia**

Hon. Dato Dr. Haji Noor Azmi Bin Ghazali

Hon. Senator Tuan Haji Abdul Shukor Bin P A Mohd Sultan

**Myanmar**

Hon. Dr. Than Win

Hon. Mr. Shwe Kob

**The Philippines**

Hon. Len B. Alonte

Hon. Ann K. Hofer

Hon. Angelina "Helen" D. Tan M.D.

**Singapore**

Hon. Mr. Zainudin Nordin (MP)

**Thailand**

Hon. ACM. Chanat Ratana-Ubol

Hon. Mr. Anusart Suwanmongkol

**Vietnam**

Hon. Ms. Le Thu Ha

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3. In the dialogues, AIPA and Australian Members of Parliament shared ideas and initiatives as well as enhanced commitments on "Strengthening cooperation in disaster management and combatting transnational crimes, particularly on cyber security, combatting terrorism, and violent extremism and trafficking in persons".

4. The **Australian** observers thanked the AIPA country delegates for the excellent partnership between the region and their country. They cited the engagement Australia had with individual ASEAN Member State. They noted the Australia's response to the region's forest fire crisis and the 2004 tsunami, and underscored the importance of sharing expertise in disaster management that will benefit the entire region. They informed the body that the Australian defense force has a dual purpose, including responding to natural disasters.

On human trafficking, Australia is fast tracking a legislation that would require companies to look at their supply chain to determine if abuse of workers is being committed. The legislation would require companies to fix such situation and ensure that work conditions are improved and workers are given a living wage.

Australia also wants to engage the region in addressing the emerging threats in the region such as terrorism and use of illicit drugs. They sought the cooperation of AIPA member parliaments in addressing illicit drugs due to their effects on public health.

5. The **Indonesian** delegate said that Australia is the closest non-ASEAN neighbor of his country and the two countries enjoy a productive relationship in addressing natural disasters. Their engagement included the transfer of knowledge on disaster management and assistance in times of calamity. Indonesia asked Australia for additional support in addressing terrorism and drug-related problems in their country.
6. The **Cambodian** delegate thanked Australia for their role in her country's peace process. According to her, Australia played a critical role in helping her country during the transition period. The government of Australia has been instrumental in dealing with trafficking in persons and abuse of women in her country. The delegate also requested Australia to help their country establish rehabilitation services for criminals.
7. The **Philippines** and Australia share a collective interest in addressing common security issues such as natural disasters and transnational crimes. They have a four-year proposal for a Plan of Action (2016-2020) focusing on various sectors with specific activities to be undertaken. The Philippines also thanked Australia for the financial aid to Marawi and hope for

continued partnership with Australia in the areas of security and national defense, including problems with illegal drugs.

8. The **Singaporean** delegates expressed their gratitude to Australia for their excellent relationship characterize by people to people and on-going collaboration in the areas of education and counterterrorism. They emphasized the need to strengthen cooperation in addressing cyber-crimes. The delegates asked Australia to extend their cooperation in addressing terrorism, particularly in protecting sea lanes and regional economic space.
9. The **Thailand** delegates asked Australia to assist them in addressing extremism in their country, particularly the radicalization of youth by extremist.
10. The **Malaysian** delegates thanked the Australian observers for their government's help in the search for the missing Malaysian Airlines flight. They also support the fight against illicit drugs and asked Australia for assistance on reducing the supply and demand for illicit substances.
11. The **Myanmar** delegation requested for assistance in addressing the rebellion in their county and help correct the wrong impression of the international community about the issue.
12. I hereby present the report on the meetings with AIPA Observers to the Plenary Session of the 38th General Assembly.



## Appendix D: 38th AIPA Joint Communiqué

### **ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly 38th General Assembly 14–20 September 2017, Manila, Philippines**

#### JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

##### INTRODUCTION

1. The 38th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) with the theme, “*AIPA and ASEAN: Partnering for Inclusive Change*” was held in Manila, Philippines on 14-20 September 2017 pursuant to the Statutes of AIPA and the decision of the 37th General Assembly of AIPA held in Nay Pyi Taw, Republic of the Union of Myanmar on 29 September to 3 October 2016.
2. His Excellency Pantaleon D. Alvarez, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of the Philippines and President of AIPA presided over the 38th AIPA General Assembly.

##### DELEGATIONS

3. The 38th AIPA General Assembly was attended by delegations from the following AIPA Member Countries: **Brunei Darussalam**, led by H.E Pehin Dato Haji Abdul Rahman Taib, Speaker of the Legislative Council of Brunei Darussalam; the **Kingdom of Cambodia**, led by H.E. Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly of

Cambodia; the **Republic of Indonesia**, led by H.E. Dr. Fadli Zon, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of Indonesia; **Lao People's Democratic Republic** led by H.E. Madame Pany Yathotou, the President of the National Assembly of Lao PDR; **Malaysia** led by Hon. Dato' Sri Haji Ismail Bin Mohamed Said, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malaysia; the **Republic of the Union of Myanmar** led by Hon. Mr. T. Khun Myatt, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of Myanmar; the **Republic of the Philippines** led by Hon. Rodolfo C. Farinas, Majority Leader of the House of Representatives; the **Republic of Singapore** led by Hon. Lim Biow Chuan, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Singapore; the **Kingdom of Thailand** led by H.E. Prof. Pornpetch Wichitcholchai, President of the National Legislative Assembly of Thailand; and the **Socialist Republic of Viet Nam** led by Hon. Mdm. Tong Thi Phong, Vice President of the National Assembly of Viet Nam.

4. It was also attended by delegations from the following Observer Countries: Commonwealth of Australia led by Hon. George Christensen, Member of the **Parliament of Australia**; the **Republic of Belarus** led by Hon. Doctor Dmitry Shevtsov, Member of the National Assembly of Belarus; **Canada** led by Hon. Tobias C. Enverga, Jr., Senator of the Senate of Canada; the **People's Republic of China** led by Hon. Li Lianning, Member of the National People's Congress of China; **European Parliament** led by Hon. Neena Gill, Member of the European Parliament; the **Republic of India** led by Hon. Ganesh Singh, Member of the Lok Sabha of India; **Japan** led by Hon. Masahiro Ishii, Member of the House of Councillors of the National Diet of Japan; **Republic of Korea** led by Hon. Oh Jaesae, Member of the Korean National Assembly; **Russian Federation** led by Hon. Olga Epifanova, Vice-Speaker of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of Russia.
5. The following **Guests of the Host** also attended: the **ASEAN Secretariat** represented by Mr. Achmad Kurnia Prawira Mochtan, Deputy Secretary General; **ASEAN Supreme Audit Institution (ASEANSAI)** represented by Mr. Hendar Ristriawan, Head of Secretariat; **Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA)** represented by Mr. Hidetoshi Nishimura, President of ERIA; **USAID Wildlife Asia/Freeland** represented by Mr. Brian V. Gonzales; German Delegation/GIZ represented by Mr. Timo Goosman, German Representative; and the **Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia (PIC)** represented by Mr. Dararith Kim-Yeat, Executive Director.

### MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF AIPA

6. The Meeting of the Executive Committee of AIPA, chaired by H.E. AIPA President Pantaleon D. Alvarez, approved the Program of Activities for delegates from Member Parliaments and Observer Countries, Agenda for the 38th AIPA General Assembly, Topics for Dialogue with Observer Countries, Committee Memberships and the date and venue of the 39th AIPA General Assembly.
7. The Executive Committee, after exhaustive deliberations, failed to reach a consensus on the approval of the agenda of the Committee on Political Matters.

### MEETING OF THE WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF AIPA

8. Prior to the Opening Ceremony of the 38th General Assembly, the Women Parliamentarians of AIPA (WAIPA) met on Friday, 15 September 2017 with Hon. Linabelle Ruth R. Villarica, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, as Chairperson and Hon. Lucy T. Gomez, Member of the House of Representatives of the Philippines, as Rapporteur, the WAIPA approved the Resolution on Promoting the Health of Women Migrant Workers.

### OPENING CEREMONY

9. The Opening Ceremony of the 38th General Assembly of AIPA was held on Saturday, 16 September 2017 at the Makati Shangri-la Hotel, Manila, Philippines. H.E. AIPA President Pantaleon D. Alvarez welcomed the delegates to the 38th AIPA General Assembly.
10. In his Welcome Remarks, AIPA President Pantaleon Alvarez welcomed the delegates to the 38th AIPA General Assembly in the Philippines. He noted that his term as AIPA President coincided with the commemoration of two historic occasions - the 50th Anniversary of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the 40th Anniversary of AIPA.

He noted that given the developments in the region, the role of AIPA will be both crucial and necessary. The theme of this year's General Assembly – "AIPA and ASEAN: Partnering for Inclusive Change" – is reflective of the need of ASEAN parliamentarians to have more voice in the regional affairs which traditionally has been the exclusive domain of the Executive branch. He averred that the delay in the implementation of regional integration measures may be attributed to the slow ratification of agreements by

Member Countries, particularly commitments from the ASEAN Economic Community.

H.E. Pantaleon Alvarez emphasized that AIPA should resolve to fully harmonize the legal frameworks of the ASEAN Member Countries, and to build common standards by promulgating domestic laws in line with ASEAN agreements and commitments. Through parliamentary cooperation with ASEAN, AIPA has pushed for an active role in the evolving regional architecture by highlighting issues through the discussion platforms of the AIPA–ASEAN Interface and the ASEAN Fact Finding Committee to Combat Drug Menace (AIFOCOM).

Under the Philippine stewardship of the 38th General Assembly, the agenda for inclusive representation and participation shall be highlighted. He stated that the commitment to respond to the needs of marginalized sectors in ASEAN Member Countries is an important aspect of the legitimacy of a representative and inclusive assembly.

Over the years, AIPA has welcomed the diversity in the views of its members and of public and international organizations. However, there remains a need for the AIPA Member Countries to increase their engagements with civil society organizations and for taking up the needs of the marginalized.

As the region moves forward to post-2017, AIPA and ASEAN need to recognize that the path to greater prosperity in the region is through increased regional cooperation and interdependence.

AIPA President Alvarez noted that the values of mutual respect for each Member’s independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and noninterference in the internal affairs of ASEAN Member Countries have fostered a positive environment in the region.

In conclusion, he highlighted the importance of changing the way ASEAN operates and communicates. To be truly people-oriented and inclusive, the decision-making process of governments and parliaments must be open, inclusive and participatory right from the beginning.

11. H.E. Aquilino Pimentet Jr., Senate President of the Republic of the Philippines, also addressed the 38th AIPA General Assembly.
12. In his Remarks, Senate President Aquilino Pimentel III, after greeting the AIPA President delegates from AIPA Member Parliaments and guests, traced the roots of AIPA and considered ASEAN a “modern miracle” that can be attributed to “TEAMWORK” – to respecting each other’s sovereignty, talking to each other, meeting and working with each other,

cooperating with each other, consulting each other, and upholding a policy of non-interference in domestic issues.

Sen. Pimentel identified two challenges facing ASEAN: the large gap between the richest and poorest nations and inequality within the individual nations; and, the transfer of ownership of ASEAN from governments to the peoples, from Ministries to communities. Sen. Pimentel expressed confidence that teamwork between and among AIPA Member Parliaments, and between AIPA and its Dialogue Partners will be most beneficial to all concerned.

Sen. Pimentel then proposed five key issues for AIPA's study and consideration: the problem of illegal drugs, terrorism, the region's state of disaster preparedness, human trafficking, and the inequality in the level of economic development among ASEAN Member Parliaments.

#### **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-PRESIDENTS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

13. Pursuant to Article 10 of the Statutes of AIPA, the Heads of Delegations of other Member Parliaments were appointed as Vice Presidents of the 38th AIPA General Assembly.

#### **STATEMENTS OF HEADS OF DELEGATIONS**

14. 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.

The full text of their statements are attached to the report of the General Assembly.

#### **Brunei Darussalam**

15. In his statement, H.E Pehin Dato Haji Abdul Rahman Taib, Speaker of the Legislative Council of Brunei Darussalam, stated that AIPA has exerted a concerted effort ensuring that the voices of the people are heard and that the issues they raised are considered by the respective Governments. He noted that since joining AIPA, Brunei Darussalam has given and will continue to give support for the enhancement of its engagements with AIPA. He observed that AIPA has been focused and detailed through the formation of AIPA Caucus and AIFOCOM in discussing regional and international issues. It is clear that AIPA has become mature and more sensitive to its surroundings where significant political, economic and

social issues, including WAIPA, are addressed. I hope the proposed resolutions that we are going to discuss can be deliberated effectively and efficiently and brings ASEAN closer to AIPA which reinforces the goal of people-centered, people-oriented ASEAN. He expressed hope that we will be able to push forward our desire and collective will to live in a region of lasting peace, security and stability, sustained economic growth, shared prosperity and social progress to forge forwards toward ASEAN 2025.

Additionally, he also recognized the dialogue partner countries of AIPA who have provided AIPA with some support and cooperation in the effort to share opinions and assistance in the perspective of regional and international cooperation. This is a perfect platform and opportunity for AIPA to learn and study their experiences, as well as to exchange ideas that focuses on political, economic and social integration proliferation. These have resulted in unprecedented growth that benefits AIPA greatly.

He observed that the atmosphere of our uncertain world forces us to face the skewing of our climate, uncertainty of economic production, and political unrest, all of which fortifies the importance of inclusive development in achieving our 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development.

## **Cambodia**

16. In his statement, H.E. Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly of Cambodia, expressed that the theme “AIPA and ASEAN: Partnering for Inclusive Change” is very crucial and relevant to the current regional and global context, and also a reflection of the fundamental role of AIPA in partnering with ASEAN towards the harmonization of the whole ASEAN Community. He stressed that face-to-face discussion between leader of AIPA and ASEAN provides a valuable opportunity to exchange recommendation and to tackle challenges for the progress and prosperity of all ASEAN nations.

He proposed that: (1) AIPA should continue its adherence to the principle of consensus in adopting all resolutions towards the realization of one ASEAN Community; (2) AIPA shall unveil its vision, together with organizing a master plan, which aimed at realizing the common objectives in cooperation with ASEAN and concerned institutions; and (3) AIPA and ASEAN shall make the dissemination of their objectives to peoples more effective so peoples are able to get better knowledge about the future mission of the two regional bodies. He suggested referring to ASEAN consensus principle and mutual respect for independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and noninterference in internal affairs in ASEAN, UN Charter and the Vienna Convention.

## Indonesia

17. In his statement, H.E. Dr. Fadli Zon, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of Indonesia, expressed his appreciation to the House of Representatives of the Philippines to host the 38th AIPA General Assembly. In accordance with the theme of the 38th AIPA General Assembly, he addressed that the partnership between legislative and executive is critical. AIPA and ASEAN as the two prominent institutions in Southeast Asia should respond to the numerous internal and external challenges by continuously building and evolving the partnership approach. Further, a collective action plan involving legislative and executive should be pursued in an unprecedented scale. He was convinced that AIPA and ASEAN could improve their partnership by involving more actors. He stated that the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia pledges to continue fostering its involvement in AIPA and reaffirms its support for the achievement of the ASEAN Community 2025, while on the ASEAN Political Security Community pillar, they remain committed to maintain regional peace and stability as the key for sustainable development.

Indonesia expressed concern over the humanitarian crisis in the region and urged all parties to respect the rule of law, exercise maximum selfrestraint and stop the on-going violence against the Rohingya in Rakhine State. Based upon the ASEAN spirit of solidarity and unity, Indonesia supports the effort of the Government and Parliament of Myanmar to restore peace and stability, and provide security and assistance to all those in need irrespective of ethnicity, race, religion and belief. Further, Indonesia encouraged Myanmar to implement the recommendations of the UN Advisory Commission on Rakhine State as well as to open their country to humanitarian assistance and to be observant of international humanitarian law in addressing the refugee crisis.

In the creation of ASEAN Economic Community, he recommended AIPA and ASEAN to seek promoting the involvement of SMEs in the regional supply chain and advocating rural development by providing access to ensure that no one is left behind. In regard to the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, he recognized ASEAN's effort on building a people-oriented and people-centered ASEAN Community. H.E. Dr. Fadli Zon ended his speech by stating that the interest of the people should be at the heart of AEC Blueprint, since there will be no community without the people.

### **Lao People's Democratic Republic**

18. In her statement, H.E. Madame Pany Yathotou, the President of the National Assembly of Lao PDR, expressed her sincere thanks to the AIPA President and commended the Parliament, Government and people of the Philippines for the excellent preparations and arrangements for the 38th AIPA General Assembly.

H.E. Yathotou noted the historicity of the 38th AIPA General Assembly, as it coincides not only with the 50th founding anniversary of ASEAN and the 40th anniversary of AIPA, but also the 20th anniversary of Lao PDR's accession to both ASEAN and AIPA. She mentioned the achievements during the 50 years of ASEAN, as well as the complex changes in the regional and international landscapes that present both opportunities and challenges.

She observed that AIPA Member Parliaments play an important role as a constructive driving force of change, and encouraged them to strengthen and consolidate cooperation for the realization of the Vision and Objectives of the ASEAN Community, and to enhance the effectiveness of AIPA's work under the institutionalized mechanisms. She said both AIPA and ASEAN must work together, and more efforts should be exerted to enhance people's awareness and regular access to AIPA information.

She declared the support of the Lao National Assembly and people for the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration issued on 8 August 2017, and emphasized the commitment to foster the ASEAN Economic Community. She recounted that the Lao National Assembly and Government have actively participated in the work of AIPA and ASEAN. The Lao National Assembly has also supported and worked – and will continue to support and work – with its Government in implementing the various initiatives and plans, as well as objectives, of ASEAN and the ASEAN Community. She stated that with the partnership between AIPA and ASEAN, and with contributions from all sectors of society and ASEAN's external partners, ASEAN Member States will achieve their common aspirations.

### **Malaysia**

19. In his statement, Honorable Dato' Sri Haji Ismail Bin Mohamed Said, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Parliament of Malaysia, spoke on the diversity of ASEAN, the need for inclusion and the harnessing of forces and resources, peace, respect and dialogue.

He emphasized the three pillars of ASEAN, political-security, sociocultural and economic, such as the promotion of lifelong learning and the development of small and medium enterprises.

Recent events like nuclear threat, ethnic and religious sensitivities should be solved by dialogues.

### **Myanmar**

20. In his statement, Hon. Mr. T Khun Myatt, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of Myanmar, highlighted that 2017 is a major milestone for the 40th Anniversary of AIPA and the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the ASEAN, and attached great importance of the partnership of AIPA and ASEAN for inclusive change in the community and the ASEAN unity, aiming for its thematic priorities.

He briefly apprised that Myanmar leaders are striving with concerted effort for Democratic Reforms together with Myanmar people despite the challenges such as national reconciliation, peace, rule of law, threats of extremist terrorism, economic growth and human resources development. He also shared that Myanmar Democratic Transition Forum was successfully organized in August 2017 in Nay Pyi Taw and open discussion on certain important topics were made during the forum.

He reaffirmed Myanmar's commitment to the full and effective implementation of ASEAN Community Vision 2025. He expressed that fruitful discussions from 38th AIPA General Assembly would bring constructive outcomes to promote regional and international peace, stability, prosperity and progress.

He informed the Plenary that there will be a State of the Nation Address by State Counsellor on 19 September 2017 in Myanmar and a meeting between ASEAN Foreign Ministers in New York on 23 September 2017 during the ongoing United Nations General Assembly to deal with the issue in the Rakhine State.

### **Philippines**

21. In his statement, Hon. Rodolfo C. Farinas, Majority Leader of the House of Representatives, welcomed the delegates to the 38th AIPA General Assembly. He noted that this gathering marked yet another significant occasion towards shaping a people-oriented and people-centered ASEAN community. Even as the region celebrate these historic events, ASEAN itself has taken significant steps to become a more integrated regional community with a common identity, vision, and sense of purpose through the adoption of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

He recognized the many challenges that both ASEAN and AIPA face to remain as relevant organizations that can contribute to the promotion of peace, progress, and stability in the region. The impact of global security, social and economic issues is keenly felt in the Southeast Asia region. Non-traditional security threats such as transnational crime, drug trafficking, and disaster relief and recovery, are issues that have taken on new salience.

These are stark reminders of the fact that in an increasingly globalized world, the challenges we face have repercussions across national borders, and each of us has a stake in the security and well-being of our people in the region.

Many resolutions of the AIPA General Assembly have found their way into the legislation of member countries. Over the years, AIPA Member Parliaments have intensified their work towards fully harmonizing the laws of the Member States, and building common standards of conduct consistent with ASEAN agreements and commitments.

He stressed that AIPA has been the most important partner of ASEAN and that AIPA, as an inter-regional, inter-governmental organization, he underlined that it should enjoy a higher status than other organizations accredited or associated with ASEAN. He argued that AIPA should not be viewed as merely an “associated entity” but rather as a “strategic partner” in the regional integration process.

As ASEAN consolidates and builds on its efforts at regional integration within the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, Hon. Farinas urged the executive and legislative institutions of the ASEAN Member States to collaborate at a more intensive level to strengthen and consolidate the foundations of a single political, economic and socio-cultural integrated community of the ten nations.

Lastly, he congratulated H.E. Pantaleon D. Alvarez for his exemplary leadership and performance as this year’s AIPA President. He acknowledged the Speaker’s many contributions to strengthen the organization and to enhance AIPA-ASEAN cooperation in the spirit of solidarity, friendship and mutual understanding.

## **Singapore**

22. In his statement, Hon. Mr Lim Biow Chuan, the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Singapore, emphasized that ASEAN is the collective effort, vision and identity of each and every citizen in our Member States. He emphasized that ASEAN must remain united and resilient to challenges amidst increasing geopolitical complexities. As AIPA is a unique organization that directly represents our people and provides the

fundamental links between the peoples and the governments of ASEAN, he encouraged parliamentarians to play a key role in raising awareness of ASEAN and translating the benefits of ASEAN's community building to the man in the street.

### **Thailand**

23. In his speech, H.E. Pornpetch Wichitcholchai, President of the National Legislative Assembly of Thailand, felt an honor to attend the 38th AIPA General Assembly and congratulates the Philippine Congress in hosting this august meeting of AIPA. He mentioned that this year marks an auspicious occasion of AIPA celebrated its 40th anniversary. In this occasion, the Thai National Assembly conducted a seminar under the topic on "Four Decades of AIPA and the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Thailand" and issued a commemorative postage stamp to celebrate the event.

He emphasized that AIPA must take action and play our effective roles in supporting ASEAN in three means. Firstly, carrying on the mission of implementing agreements and regulations regarding the aspirations of the ASEAN vision 2025. Secondly, maintaining its commitment to accomplish the goal of raising people awareness of ASEAN Community. Finally, continuing seek common understanding on comparative law and legal procedures to acknowledge and respect our differences and similarities.

### **Viet Nam**

24. In her speech, H.E. Mdm. Tong Thi Phong, First Vice President of the National Assembly of Viet Nam, mentioned that ASEAN now plays a key role in the region, and is working towards the vision of being a "peaceful, stable, and resilient community with enhance capacity to response effectively to challenges." She expressed that AIPA has asserted its role and voice as the facilitator for cooperation among organizations and to represent the will of the aspiration of the ASEAN people. She also stated that AIPA and ASEAN need to raise awareness of the people at the national and regional level about the activities and the abilities as a way to contribute to the ASEAN Community building process.

She urged that AIPA needs to better play its role in strengthening parliamentary diplomacy among ASEAN Member States along with ASEAN partners by providing practical solutions. She emphasized that AIPA should uphold ASEAN principles and standards of conduct in strengthening and utilizing ASEAN's centrality. She recommended to improve the effectiveness and substance of the annual meeting between AIPA Representatives and ASEAN Leaders to strengthen interaction,

innovate the forms of exchange, thereby promoting the close cooperation between the legislative bodies and the government of ASEAN Member Countries. She encouraged that should innovate and enhance its effectiveness by improving the coordination between the AIPA Secretariat and other national secretariats, as well as the ASEAN Secretariat.

#### **STATEMENTS OF THE HEADS OF DELEGATIONS OF OBSERVER COUNTRIES**

25. The Heads of the Delegations of the Observer Countries, namely the Russian Federation, Australia, Belarus, Canada, People's Republic of China, the European Parliament, India, Japan, and Korea delivered their respective statements during the First Plenary Session of the General Assembly.

#### **STATEMENTS OF THE GUESTS OF THE HOST**

26. The Guests of the Host, namely **ASEAN Secretariat** represented by Mr. Achmad Kurnia Prawira Mochtan, Deputy Secretary General; **ASEAN Supreme Audit Institution** represented by Mr. Hendar Ristriawan, Head of Secretariat; and **Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA)** represented by Mr. Hidetoshi Nishimura, President of ERIA, likewise delivered their respective statements during the First Plenary Session of the General Assembly.

#### **MESSAGES OF THE HEADS OF STATES/GOVERNMENTS**

27. The 38th General Assembly of AIPA received messages from the following Heads of States/Governments, namely H.E. Rodrigo Roa Duterte, President of the Republic of the Philippines; H.E. Tran Dai Quang, State President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; H.E. J. Y. Pillay, Acting President of the Republic of Singapore; H.E. U Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar; H.E. Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Bin Tun Abdul Razak, Prime Minister of Malaysia; H.E. Bounnhang Vorachith, President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic; H.E. Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia; His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah Boromneath Norodom Sihamoni, the King of Cambodia; and His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzadin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam.

Full text of their messages are attached to the final report.

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

### Committee on Economic Matters

The Committee on Economic Matters approved the following resolutions:

1. Resolution on Developing Policies and Strategies to Address Problems on Regional Food Security (*Philippines*)
2. Resolution on Supporting the Implementation of Financial Inclusion Programs in ASEAN (*Philippines*)
3. Resolution Promoting an Inclusive and Innovation-led Growth for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) (*Indonesia*)
4. Resolution on Intra-Regional Economic Cooperation for Equitable Development and Inclusive Growth in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) (*Viet Nam*)

### Committee on Social Matters

The Committee on Social Matters approved the following resolutions:

1. Resolution on the Report of the 13th AIFOCOM
2. Resolution on the Terms of Reference by the AIPA Advisory Council on Dangerous Drugs (AIPACODD) (*Philippines*)
3. Resolution on Combating Marine Plastic Debris and Microplastics (*Indonesia*)

### Committee on Organizational Matters

The Committee on Organizational Matters approved the following resolutions:

1. Resolution on Corporate Rebranding of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)
2. Resolution on Amendments to the Statutes of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)
3. Resolution on Communication Master Plan of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)
4. Resolution on the Publishing of the “40 Years of AIPA” Commemorative Book and Appreciation to the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Publishing and Launching the Book

5. Resolution Appreciating the Federal Republic of Germany for the Cooperation and Implementation of the Project of Capacity Development for the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)
6. Resolution on Audited Financial Report of the AIPA Secretariat for the Period of 1 August 2016 to 31 July 2017
7. Resolution on Estimated Budget for the AIPA Secretariat for the Period 1 of August 2017 to 31 July 2018; Supplementary Estimate from 1 August 2018 to 30 September 2018 (FY 2018/2019); and (3) Special Fund
8. Resolution on the Adoption of the Work Plan 2017 of the AIPA Secretariat
9. Resolution on Formulating and Implementing Project Based Initiative on Strengthening Legal Framework to protect Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism
10. Resolution on Human Capacity Development as a Framework in Improving Capacities of Secretariat Personnel of AIPA Member Parliaments
11. Resolution on Developing AIPA Capacity (*Indonesia*)
12. Resolution on the Amendment on Criteria and Guidelines on "AIPO Distinguished Service Award"
13. Resolution Commending His Excellency Pantaleon D. Alvarez for his Outstanding Performance as President of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly

The Committee on Organizational Matters deferred to the next AIPA General Assembly the approval of the Resolution on AIPA Distinguished Service Award as consensus was not reached on the giving of the award.

14. Resolution on Date and Venue of the 39th General Assembly

## **DIALOGUES WITH OBSERVER COUNTRIES**

The General Assembly, through its dialogue panels conducted separate meetings with Observer Countries, namely: Australia, Republic of Belarus, Canada, People's Republic of China, European Parliament, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation.

The topics discussed with dialogue partners were:

1. Strengthening Cooperation in Disaster Management; and
2. Strengthening Cooperation in Combatting Transnational Crimes, Particularly on Cybersecurity, Combatting Terrorism and Violent Extremism, Trafficking in Persons, Illegal Drugs and Fuel Smuggling

### **39th AIPA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Pursuant to Article IX of the AIPA Statutes which provides that the venue of the General Assembly shall be rotated among the Member Parliamentarians in alphabetical order unless otherwise decided by the General Assembly, Hon. Lim Biow Chuan, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Singapore, confirmed the hosting of the 39th AIPA General Assembly which will be held in Singapore on 3-7 September 2018.

### **APPRECIATION TO THE HOST COUNTRY**

The Delegations attending the 38th AIPA General Assembly expressed their sincere appreciation to the Philippine Government and to the House of Representatives of the Philippines, as well as to the Filipino people for their warm welcome, generous hospitality and the excellent arrangements for the 38th AIPA General Assembly.

### **APPRECIATION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**

The Delegations attending the General Assembly extended their sincere gratitude and appreciation to H.E. Pantaleon D. Alvarez, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Congress of the Philippines, for his able leadership in further strengthening AIPA and AIPA-ASEAN cooperation in the spirit of solidarity, friendship, cooperation and mutual understanding.

**Done in Manila, Philippines, on the Nineteenth day of September,  
Year Two Thousand and Seventeen.**

