



Parliament of Australia

**Report of the Parliamentary Delegation
to the 40th General Assembly of the ASEAN
Inter-Parliamentary Assembly in Bangkok, Thailand,
and to the Philippines and Malaysia**

24 August 2019 to 4 September 2019

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Members of the Delegation

Mr Kevin Hogan MP
Leader of the Delegation

Senator Alex Gallacher

Dr John McVeigh MP

Ms Natalie Cooke
Delegation Secretary

Introduction

This visit to Thailand, the Philippines and Malaysia had combined objectives of continuing the annual Australian parliamentary delegation visit to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and also observing proceedings of the 40th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA).

The annual Australian parliamentary delegation visit to ASEAN countries aims to gain a better understanding of developments in these countries and to examine opportunities to broaden links with them.

This was the first time that the delegation to AIPA was combined with the regular country visits to ASEAN nations. This followed a suggestion from the 2018 Parliamentary Delegation to Vietnam, Thailand and Brunei that ASEAN country visits 'should be timed to coincide with meetings of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly ... in order to maximise the delegation's interaction with regional parliamentarians'¹. The delegation bore this in mind during its trip and makes some reflections on this first combined trip in its conclusions on page 18 of this report.

The delegation wishes to record its appreciation for the work of the AIPA Secretariat and Australia's diplomatic missions in Bangkok, Manila and Kuala Lumpur for their efforts in developing the programs and the support provided during our visits.

This report details the themes discussed in the delegation's

appointments and describes the site visits in each country. The delegation's full program is included at Appendix A to this report.

Thailand

The delegation visited Thailand from 25 to 29 August 2019 to attend the 40th General Assembly of AIPA in Bangkok.

AIPA was established as the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation (AIPO) in 1977, with the aim of contributing to the attainment of ASEAN goals and aspirations through inter-parliamentary cooperation, and became an assembly (AIPA) in 2007.

There are 10 AIPA member countries: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The General Assembly is held annually. Australia participates as an observer. Canada, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation also participated as observers to the 40th General Assembly, while delegations from Morocco, Norway, ERIA, Freeland Foundation, GIZ and PIC attended as guests of the host. Delegations from Belarus, the AIPA Secretariat and the ASEAN Secretariat were also present.

The delegation attended both plenary sessions of the assembly as well as a dialogue session, met bilaterally with a number of other delegations and also met with the Secretary-General of AIPA.

Courtesy call

Before the first plenary session, along with the other heads of observer delegations, Mr Hogan paid a courtesy call on HE Chuan Leekpai, the President of AIPA. His Excellency spoke of the 40 years of cooperation through AIPA

and his hopes that all countries would use the forum to share insights and ideas. In particular, he raised road safety and marine debris (including plastics) as key themes that he hoped the assembly would progress.

First plenary session

The Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand gave an opening address, speaking about the complementary relationship between the executive branch of ASEAN and AIPA. He also spoke of the challenges that ASEAN faces today, including transnational crime, sustainability, trafficking and drugs. The environment is another important matter for ASEAN. Key challenges include climate change, CO2 emissions and marine debris. It is also vital to ensure that no-one is left behind. The Prime Minister concluded his remarks by reiterating the importance of AIPA in mobilising change through legislative and public involvement.

His Excellency Mr Chuan Leekpai then gave his welcome address, noting AIPA's growth from humble beginnings to a forum encompassing 10 members standing under one banner, a testament to members being stronger together. However, he cautioned that history is always being written. He also cautioned against quick fixes to the challenges members face, noting these could have a disproportionate impact on the poorest, weakest and most vulnerable in society. He noted that ASEAN's richness in both culture and diversity meant that there is no one 'silver bullet' solution.

His Excellency set out four key lessons to help AIPA, as the governing body

closest to constituents, address the root of problems:

- prioritisation (as there is more to do than capacity allows);
- working together, not only with ASEAN states but with others;
- putting people first, noting that together ASEAN countries had a combined population of approximately 647 million people; and
- respecting the rule of law and ensuring that all people were treated equally, no matter their economic or other status.

A core component of the first plenary session was statements by member delegations, followed by statements by observer delegations and guests of the host.

In their opening statements, member countries reaffirmed their commitment to AIPA and expressed their gratitude to the host. A brief summary of other key points is below.

Brunei Darussalam

His Excellency Pehin Dato Abdul Rahman Taib spoke of the importance of a people-centred ASEAN community that leaves no-one behind. AIPA, as the legislative branch of ASEAN, is constantly facing new and emerging challenges in representing the voice of the people. Narrowing the gaps among ASEAN countries in relation to health and wellbeing are key. AIPA is an important platform for promoting discussion and sharing experiences, not only with other ASEAN countries but also with observers. Brunei acknowledges the importance of good regulatory practice in protecting the interests and rights of the people. The empowerment of women, inclusive

economic development, the fourth industrial revolution and caring for older persons were also identified as particular areas of interest.

Cambodia

Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin noted the important role that AIPA plays in promoting peace, stability and prosperity. Cambodia sees a multilateral approach as essential in the face of rising protectionism and unilateralism. Differences can be managed and peacefully if everyone plays by the rules. Strengthening cooperation through parliamentary diplomacy is essential.

Cambodia views national interests as inseparable from regional interests, with the ultimate goal being to build a peaceful and prosperous ASEAN community. Governments are urged to speed up negotiations for a Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. A final theme of the opening statement was the need for member states to put more focus on the rights of migrant workers, to ensure that they and their families are legally protected and have access to services.

Indonesia

The Hon Dr Fadli Zon noted that increasing protectionist tendencies mean that better cooperation is needed, including between parliaments. The adoption of global compacts highlights the need to address the humanitarian challenges of migration and refugees. In particular, Indonesia views the adoption of a resolution on the humanitarian situation in Rakhine state as essential. It is Indonesia's position that AIPA needs to address the situation in Rakhine in

order to achieve a sustainable community.

Indonesia also considers that it would be strategic for AIPA to review and improve its decision making system. It sees that, at times, the principle of consensus by which AIPA operates can limit effectiveness in addressing regional challenges.

Lao PDR

The Hon Mr Bounpone Bouttanavong began by noting the positive momentum of AIPA but noted that, against a backdrop of heightened tensions and unpredictable situations, it is imperative for ASEAN to strengthen cooperation. Consultative responses and consensus are essential. Member parliaments must take the initiative in developing legislative responses in their own countries, while AIPA itself should further strengthen its role in responding through its existing structural mechanisms.

The ASEAN Community Vision and the blueprints which support the ASEAN pillars are seen by the Lao National Assembly as extremely important. A strong focus within Laos on infrastructure development is helping the country become a land-link hub, promoting trade, investment, tourism and people-to-people links within the region. In the context of the fourth industrial revolution, ASEAN should strengthen cooperation and build capacity to ensure it can respond to emerging challenges.

Malaysia

His Excellency Dato' Mohamad Ariff Md Yusof noted that, since the announcement of the theme of 'Advancing parliamentary partnership

for sustainable community', there have been many developments within Malaysia. Malaysia has been placing an emphasis on the United Nations sustainable development goals (SDGs), but this has not been translated regionally. An example of the way Malaysia has been considering sustainability is through a recent decision to lower the voting age. Cross-parliamentary and inter-parliamentary friendship groups have also been established in relation to the SDGs. Malaysia has been undertaking reforms and working with its friends to ensure that its parliament is seen as a beacon of trust. Malaysia sees ASEAN as an important regional grouping. The Speaker noted the need to strengthen friendships and partnerships for the good of the society of each country.

Myanmar

Her Excellency Mdm Su Su Lwin noted how important and apt the theme of sustainability was at this juncture. ASEAN has evolved and expanded to become a leading voice, suited to the pluralistic nature of the region. Her Excellency spoke of how Myanmar is collaborating through tripartite arrangements, such as the UN Development Program, and is striving for universality and diversity. She noted that Myanmar has also assumed responsibility for a past legacy and is in the middle of transition but also noted her disappointment about focus on a single issue.

Her Excellency concluded by expressing her confidence that deliberations at the General Assembly would result in progress and that compromise, meaningful consultation and consensus would lead to strength.

Philippines

The Hon Mr Raneo Abu spoke of the importance of and challenges to AIPA. Noting that ASEAN's major bottleneck in the implementation of regional integration measures is slow ratification by members, he spoke of how AIPA can be of benefit by fully harmonising domestic legal frameworks and building common standards.

To take advantage of the opportunities offered by the fourth industrial revolution, member states need to invest in their people by continuing to promote access to education, including technical and vocational education and training, and improving mobility for students and skilled workers. Mr Abu also spoke of the need to support the development of micro, small and medium enterprises and assist them to harness digital technology and called on states to continue efforts to implement the ASEAN Single Window to facilitate fast and efficient trade between member states and enhance regional connectivity. He also identified efforts to promote women's rights, gender equality and women's empowerment and the rights of people with disability were also key.

Mr Abu noted the Philippines' increasing concern about climate change, climate-related disasters and the loss of biodiversity but was pleased to note the adoption of the Bangkok Declaration on Combating Marine Debris by the ASEAN Heads of Government.

Singapore

His Excellency Mr Tan Chuan-Jin noted that, given that half of ASEAN's people already live in cities and another 70 million people are expected to move

to cities by 2025, creating sustainable and liveable cities will be crucial to narrowing development gaps, strengthening resilience, improving wellbeing and enhancing connectivity and innovation. The regional nature of the challenges of sustainability and urbanisation mean that a coordinated and well-calibrated approach is needed. He noted that collectively ASEAN is the sixth largest market in the world and poised to become the fourth largest economy (after the United States, China and the European Union) by 2030. It has high rates of technology uptake. Mr Tan gave the example that, if ASEAN were a single country, it would rank second in the world in terms of the number of Facebook users. He concluded by noting the unique role parliamentarians play in linking the ASEAN organisation with the people they represent.

Vietnam

Her Excellency Mrs Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan opened her statement by noting that, despite the challenges that it is facing, including non-traditional security risks, ASEAN is still achieving progress.

Vietnam is committed to pursuing international integration and upholding international law. Her Excellency noted that in recent meetings countries had spoken frankly about unilateral actions in the South China Sea that have eroded trust, and remarked that AIPA needs to reiterate common principles, including compliance with the rule of international law, and strengthen multilateral efforts.

Her Excellency asked AIPA to consider six key themes: upholding international

law and maintaining regional peace, stability and security; consolidating and renewing the organisation and operation of AIPA; implementing the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, and realising the UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and promoting comprehensive regional connectivity and sustainable development; reviewing domestic legal frameworks to promote the alignment of laws or mutual legal recognition; increasing cooperation on information technology and enhancing national capability to adapt to developments in the fourth industrial revolution; and disseminating information on AIPA and ASEAN to the people and strengthening the participation of young members of parliament.

Thailand

Professor Pornpetch Wichitcholchai spoke of the importance of AIPA General Assemblies in maintaining ASEAN's resilience in the face of increasing emerging challenges. AIPA promotes a rule based, people oriented and people centred approach which empowers people to participate. AIPA parliamentarians play an important role in raising awareness of ASEAN policies, which in turn empowers people to participate in the ASEAN community development process.

He expressed his hope that this General Assembly would inspire all AIPA parliamentarians.

Australia

The Deputy Speaker, Mr Hogan, delivered Australia's statement. Mr Hogan noted that Australia greatly values its participation as observers of this Assembly and is proud to be one of ASEAN longest-standing partners.

Australia and ASEAN enjoy not only a significant economic relationship but also strong government to government relationships and people to people connections. Since Australia's cooperation programs with ASEAN commenced in 1974, cooperation has expanded and adapted to match the remarkable progress ASEAN countries have made over this time.

He also noted that the theme of 'Advancing Parliamentary Partnership for Sustainable Community' could not be more relevant to the challenges faced in 2019. Questions of sustainability are vital to everything we do: what technologies to invest in, how to protect the natural environment and resources, how to build infrastructure, how to make economies more resilient to shocks and, on a social level, how to ensure the more vulnerable members of society share the benefits of economic growth.

Mr Hogan concluded his remarks by reflecting that the regional architecture that ASEAN provides plays a role in addressing these challenges. ASEAN and its forums have for several decades brought countries together, opened dialogue, built trust and confidence, and allowed for collective problem solving. It is in everyone's interests for ASEAN and the ASEAN centred regional architecture to maintain its central role and help set the rules and norms for behaviour in the region.

A full copy of Mr Hogan's statement is at Appendix B.

Other delegations

The heads of the observer delegations from Canada, the People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea and the

Russian Federation also made short opening statements. The delegation heads from Norway and Morocco, who were guests of the host, also made statements.

The Head of Delegation from the ASEAN secretariat, Mr Kung Phoak, made a short statement about the role of AIPA in bringing ASEAN, with its diverse communities bound not just by friendship but also by social and economic ties, closer to the people.

Bilateral meetings

On the morning of 27 August, the Australian delegation held three bilateral meetings with members of other delegations.

Malaysia

The delegation met with the Speaker of the Malaysian lower house (and head of the Malaysian delegation) Dato' Ariff, the Deputy Speaker Hon. Dato Rashid Hasnon, and Tuan P Prabakaran, in advance of the more formal meeting scheduled to take place in Kuala Lumpur.

The delegation was interested to hear from Dato' Ariff, who built on his opening remarks to the first plenary session, about how the Malaysian lower house (Dewan Rakyat) has operationalised changes observed in other countries, including Australia, Norway and New Zealand.

The Speaker also noted the increasing youth presence in the Malaysian parliament. Tuan P Prabakaran spoke about being the youngest Malaysian MP.

The delegates from both countries shared their experiences as

parliamentarians, including working on committees.

Canada

The delegation held a brief bilateral meeting with the Canadian observer delegation. The arrangements for the upcoming Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum, to be held in Canberra in January 2020, were discussed. The Canadian delegation offered to assist with any learnings from their experience hosting the forum in 2016, particularly in the area of streamlining resolution drafting.

Republic of Korea

At a bilateral meeting with the delegation from the Republic of Korea, Mr Lee Seok Hyun gave the Australian delegation insights into the importance of relations between the two countries. Members heard that a significant number of Koreans live in Australia, while many young Koreans travel to Australia for work or study each year. Mr Hogan noted some of the ways in which Australia is working to promote safety information for foreign visitors, including from Korea, such as multilingual signage for beach safety.

Dialogue

As an observer country, Australia was invited to participate in a dialogue session with AIPA member countries.

The dialogue was chaired by the Hon Mr Virachai Virameteekul of the National Assembly of Thailand. A full list of participants is in the dialogue report, prepared by the rapporteur, the Hon Miss Pada Vorakanon of the National Assembly of Thailand, at Appendix C.

Mr Hogan made an opening statement, in which he reiterated the importance

of the relationship between Australia and ASEAN, noting the strong two-way investment (estimated at \$225 billion) as well as the strong economic, government and people-to-people connections. He also noted the importance of dialogue, confidence and trust.

On the theme of good regulatory practice, he noted that regulations are essential for transparency and for a well-functioning economy but that regulations which are poorly designed, inconsistent or not administered and enforced well can impose unnecessary burdens on businesses and consumers. Mr Hogan explained that there are three levels of government in Australia, which means that balancing effective regulation while not imposing unnecessary regulatory burden is extremely important.

He also noted how pleased Australia is to work with ASEAN nations on a number of initiatives which support the delivery of the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025, and engage in practical cooperation with ASEAN on economic reform, more generally, in a number of ways.

Members of AIPA delegations then made introductory statements and posed questions.

Brunei Darussalam noted the good bilateral relationship over 35 years, including a good trade relationship, with particular reference to agriculture, where Brunei is looking to Australia for good practice. People to people links are also strong, including through educational exchanges such as those under the New Colombo Plan.

Cambodia noted Australia's support for transition and peace in Cambodia, including as electoral observers. The two countries have strong economic, cultural and community ties. Cambodia and Australia are also cooperating to combat transnational crimes.

Indonesia expressed its appreciation to the Australian parliament and noted the benefits to trade and investment enjoyed by Australia and ASEAN as a result of stronger cooperation and partnership. Indonesia noted that there are still some hindrances to business, which the Indonesian parliament is committed to resolving, including technical barriers to trade. Good regulatory practices will enhance trade and increase productivity, with a key focus being the fifth principle of good regulatory practices—namely, stakeholder engagement. Indonesia also invited Australia to participate in the Third World Parliamentary Forum on Sustainable Development in September.

Lao PDR noted that since 1952 the relationship between Laos and Australia has continued to strengthen and conveyed its appreciation to the Australian people and government for its support, including in the area of improving education. Laos also noted Australia's long history of parliamentary work in the area of good regulatory practice.

Malaysia noted the increasingly more substantive relationships between Malaysia and Australia, including through working visits on both sides, increases in trade and defence cooperation. There has also been sharing of information about good parliamentary practice. Malaysian

delegates drew to Australia's attention that the memorandum of understanding on education is due to expire in 2021. Malaysia also asked the Australian delegation how Australia has dealt with issues of diversity and Indigenous rights.

Myanmar spoke of the long history of good relations between Australia and Myanmar since 1948 and noted training and development conducted by former parliamentarians and parliamentary staff.

The Philippines noted that Australia and the Philippines have been moving to higher levels of dialogue. The Philippines is implementing 'Project Repeal', to remove red tape and outdated laws.

Singapore outlined how Australia and Singapore do not just have strong defence, economic, tourism and people to people links but are partners in fostering good regulatory practices. Singapore noted that the ASEAN Blueprint for 2025 is not just at the administrative but also the parliamentary level.

Thailand noted the long-lasting friendship it has with Australia. Thailand has been working on good regulatory practices since 2003 in order to make them consistent, practical and transparent. Thailand proposed regular exchanges of information on good regulatory practices, based on a resolution from the 39th AIPA General Assembly, and will ask the AIPA secretariat to facilitate this at future meetings. Thailand hopes that together AIPA members can build a digital and green ASEAN.

Vietnam spoke of the value it places on the good relationship between itself and Australia. Vietnam noted that it opposed recent serious violations of international laws. As chair of the 41st AIPA next year, Vietnam will seek Australia's support. Australia and ASEAN have been active participants in OECD regulatory reform.

Following the statements and questions from member countries, the Australian delegation made some closing remarks. Mr Hogan noted the common experiences shared by member countries and Australia, while Dr McVeigh spoke about the importance of balance in regulation, to make sure appropriate safeguards are in place while allowing for innovation. Senator Gallacher spoke of the value of parliamentary scrutiny of bills, particularly by the Senate in the Australian context, to ensure proposed legislation did not have unintended consequences for the business community.

Meeting with the Secretary-General of AIPA

The delegation was also pleased to meet with AIPA's Secretary-General, Mr Isra Sunthornvut. The Secretary-General, who completes his term this year, noted that AIPA represents some 3,000 parliamentarians and expressed his hope that AIPA become a hub for parliamentarians. He expressed a further hope that AIPA could build deeper relationships with observer parliaments. For example, the delegation understands that AIPA and the European Parliament are establishing an ongoing dialogue series.

The delegation considers that there is an opportunity for the Australian

Parliament to deepen its relationship with AIPA. It could begin by exploring a mechanism for jointly considering an area of common interest with AIPA—for example, a dialogue series on a specific issue such as marine debris or road safety.

Second Plenary Session

The second plenary session was the forum for the presentation and adoption of reports from AIPA committees and also Women Parliamentarians of AIPA, although the delegation noted that a report was not presented by the Committee on Political Matters.

The joint communiqué was also agreed and signed during this session. A copy of the communiqué is at Appendix D. Full details of the reports adopted are available on the AIPA website².

Vietnam was announced as the host of the 41st General Assembly of AIPA, and a ceremony to transfer office to the Incoming President was held.

Other meetings

During their stay in Bangkok, the delegation was also pleased to receive a briefing from the Australian Ambassador to Thailand, Mr Allan McKinnon PSM, and to attend a dinner at the Ambassador's residence on the evening of 28 August to learn more about the bilateral relationship.

Australia shares close links with Thailand, including in trade, tourism, security and education, and Thailand is an effective cooperation partner in defence, transnational crime, counter-terrorism and agriculture.

Australia's trade and economic relationship with Thailand has grown strongly since the entry into force of the Thailand-Australia Free Trade Agreement (TAFTA) on 1 January 2005. Two-way trade in goods has tripled since 2004, from \$6.8 billion in 2004 to \$21.5 billion in 2017-18. In 2018, Thailand was Australia's 5th highest goods import source and 12th highest export source. Thailand is now Australia's 9th largest goods and services trading partner and its second-largest in ASEAN.



The delegation with HE Chuan Leekpai, President of AIPA.



Mr Hogan delivering Australia's opening statement.

The Philippines

The delegation visited the Philippines from 29 August to 1 September 2019. The delegation met with parliamentarians, business people and Australian Embassy staff in Metro Manila and also visited a project supported by Australian aid in the Pandacan district of Manila.

The bilateral relationship

The delegation was advised by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) that the Philippines is Australia's 27th-largest trading partner, meaning that there is room for growth through the expansion of economic ties. Australia and the Philippines have shared a strong bilateral relationship for over 70 years. The relationship is underpinned by a Comprehensive Partnership signed in November 2015. This includes engagement on regional and international cooperation, trade and investment and development assistance. Australia and the Philippines also cooperate closely in defence, counter-terrorism and law enforcement.

There are strong people-to-people links between the two countries, with over 300,000 Australians of Filipino heritage and over 13,000 Filipino students studying at Australian institutions.

The geopolitical landscape

The delegation was interested in a briefing it received on foreign policy from the President of the Stratbase ADR Institute for Strategic and International Studies (ADRI), an independent strategic research organisation.

Over recent years, the Philippines has been particularly concerned about overlapping territorial claims in the South China Sea. In accordance with the dispute settlement provisions of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Philippines initiated an arbitration case against China in 2013, with the Arbitral Tribunal releasing its final decision in July 2016. The tribunal ruled in favour of the Philippines. Since then, President Duterte has stated his intention to set aside the Arbitral Tribunal's award and pursue bilateral discussions with China.

Meeting with members of the Philippine Congress

The delegation was pleased to meet members of both the House and the Senate at a lunch hosted by the Australian Ambassador. This provided the delegation with the opportunity to hear from and share experiences with members of the Philippine Congress and learn more about the system of government in the Philippines.

The bilateral trade and commerce relationship

The delegation met with members of the Australia-New Zealand Chamber of Commerce Philippines to hear about the business and commerce relationships between the two countries. The Chamber representatives spoke about their successful experiences, including in business process outsourcing.

The delegation noted with interest that, while the longstanding relationship between Australia and the Philippines is both broad and deep, the trade relationship is less strong.

The delegation heard that the Filipino population, which is the second largest in ASEAN, is young and highly educated. The fact that English is one of the country's two official languages is also an advantage for Australian companies looking to conduct business in the Philippines.

Given these factors, and given also DFAT's advice that there is room for growth in economic ties, the delegation believes that there are opportunities for the Australian government to give increased weight to the relationship with the Philippines.

Visit to Caritas Margins

The delegation concluded its program in the Philippines with a visit to the Caritas Margins Program. The delegation visited the Caritas Margins store, which is a venue for packaging, promotion, development and marketing of products of women entrepreneurs across the country. The Australian Embassy provided financial support in 2017, which was used to purchase equipment to improve the store.

The delegation enjoyed meeting staff and volunteers, hearing about the work of the store and seeing the facilities.



The delegation with members of the Philippine Congress and the Australian Ambassador.



The delegation with volunteers from Margins café.

Malaysia

The delegation visited Malaysia from 1 to 3 August. The delegation received briefings from High Commission staff, met with civil society, met Malaysian ministers at a reception hosted by the Australian High Commissioner and finished the visit with a visit to the Malaysian parliament to meet with the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The bilateral relationship

The delegation received a visit briefing from the High Commission and also attended a roundtable with section heads, to hear more about the relationship between Australia and Malaysia.

The delegation heard that the bilateral relationship is broad, deep and long-standing. In 2015, the two countries elevated their relationship to a Strategic Partnership, providing a framework for working together in areas of strategic interest, including on developments in the South China Sea, countering terrorism, people smuggling and transnational crime.

Malaysia is Australia's 11th-largest trading partner. It is also Australia's second-largest source of foreign investment from within ASEAN. Two-way investment in 2017 was \$31 billion, while two-way trade was about \$20.7 billion.

In briefings from the Australian High Commission, the delegation heard that Australia and Malaysia cooperate closely on security threats facing the region. There are close links between Australian and Malaysian police, security, counter-terrorism and immigration agencies. Malaysia has

Australia's only semi-permanent defence presence in the Asia-Pacific. There are also long-standing links between the two countries in relation to education, tourism and migration.

Parliamentary reform in Malaysia

Following elections in May 2018, the new government has been focused heavily on reform. This includes parliamentary reform.

For example, in December 2018, Malaysia established six parliamentary select committees – the first-ever policy committees in the Malaysian parliament.

Australia has been sharing information about its parliamentary system with Malaysia. In December 2018 the Hon Kevin Andrews MP visited Malaysia at the request of the Malaysian Speaker to speak about the Australian parliamentary committee system. There has also been close collaboration between senior parliamentary staff. Additionally, in June this year, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) hosted a group of up-and-coming Malaysian leaders in Australia.

Lunch with civil society

On Monday, 2 September, a lunch with members of Malaysian civil society and political researchers provided the delegation with the opportunity to learn more about some of the reforms, and campaigns for reform, currently underway, including changes to voting age, improved civics education and local voter registration.

There was also discussion about the structural elements of Australia's parliamentary system, including how

electoral funding works, the establishment of the Parliamentary Budget Office, the support provided by the Parliamentary Library and the role of estimates committees.

Delegation members also discussed their experiences on committees.

Dinner with Malaysian parliamentarians

At a dinner hosted by High Commissioner Goledzinowski, the delegation met with four Malaysian ministers and heard of the transition to government. The ministers spoke of their reform manifesto and how it is being delivered.

Other topics of discussion included the structure of the public service and its governance, procurement, freedom of information and the Australian *Public Service Act 1999*.

Visit to the Dewan Rakyat

On Tuesday, 3 September the delegation met with the Speaker of the Malaysian House of Representatives, Dato' Ariff, the Deputy Speaker, the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, the Secretary-General and other parliamentary staff.

The delegation heard with great interest from the Speaker about the significant reforms under way in the Dewan Rakyat. Dato' Ariff spoke of the learning curve faced in implementing institutional reform. At the same time, Malaysia is being careful about the cost of delivering the initial stages of reform.

Malaysia is looking at other countries to identify good practice and other resources that it can adopt or adapt.

For example, the parliament is using *Australia's House of Representatives Practice* and *Odgers' Australian Senate Practice* as references.

The formation of standing committees is a main pillar of reforms currently under way. The meeting provided an opportunity for members of both parliaments to discuss their experiences as committee members.

Better engagement with non-government organisations and broader civil society are also being pursued. A parliamentary 'debathon' was introduced to promote youth participation.

A caucus on parliamentary reform and governance has also been established.

Following the meeting, the delegation observed a hearing of the Public Accounts Committee.

The delegation concluded its program in Malaysia with a tour of the Malaysian parliament.



The delegation with Malaysian ministers, hosted by the Australian High Commissioner and Ms Lyn Allan.



The Speaker, Deputy Speaker and Secretary of the House of Representatives, along with the delegation and Australian officials, look on as Mr Hogan signs the visitors' book at the Dewan Rakyat.

Conclusion

The delegation appreciated the opportunity to observe the 40th General Assembly of AIPA, identify areas of common interest and share experiences with participants. It also held fruitful discussions in the Philippines and Malaysia, and concluded the trip with a better appreciation of the challenges being faced by these countries and their perspectives on the bilateral relationship with Australia.

The delegation considers that continuing to focus on and, where appropriate, deepen our relationships with ASEAN countries and their parliaments should remain a priority for Australia. Australia could also consider developing a more formal engagement with AIPA, such as through a strategic dialogue on a matter of common interest.

As noted in the introduction, this is the first time that the delegation to AIPA has been combined with the country visits to ASEAN nations. The

delegation considers that there is a natural synergy between observing the AIPA General Assembly and then visiting two of the member countries to see their parliamentary environment in practice. However, it noted that the stay in Thailand was heavily focused on AIPA and there was therefore not the same opportunity for in-depth engagement with Thai counterparts as there was with the other two countries.

The delegation was honoured by the generous hospitality extended to it, particularly by the National Assembly of Thailand, the hosts of the 40th General Assembly of AIPA.

Kevin Hogan MP
Delegation Leader

June 2020

Delegation Programme

THAILAND

Note: All events at Shangri-La Hotel, Bangkok, unless otherwise indicated

Sunday, 25 August 2019 – Bangkok

Arrival in Bangkok

Coffee briefing with Ambassador Allan McKinnon PSM

Dinner hosted by H.E. Mr Suchart Tonjaroen, First Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives

Monday, 26 August 2019 – Bangkok

Courtesy call for heads of observer delegations with H.E. Mr Chuan Leekpai, President of the National Assembly of Thailand and President of AIPA

- Mr Hogan and other heads of observer delegations

Opening Ceremony of the 40th AIPA General Assembly

- Welcome address by Prime Minister Prayut and opening address by H.E. Mr Chuan Leekpai

First plenary session

- Nomination of AIPA Vice-Presidents; adoption of agenda and program of activities; statements by heads of ASEAN AIPA delegations
- Statements by heads of observer delegations, including Australia

Meeting of Thai National Secretariat and Secretaries to Observer Delegations

- Ms Cooke attended as secretary to the delegation

Dinner hosted by H.E. Mr Chuan Leekpai, President of the National Assembly of Thailand and President of AIPA

Venue: Royal Orchid Hotel Sheraton

Tuesday, 27 August 2019 – Bangkok

Bilateral discussion with members of Malaysian delegation

- H.E. Dato' Mohamad Ariff Md Yusof, Speaker of the House of Representatives (Dewan Rakyat)
- Dato' Haji Mohd Rashid bin Hasnon, Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives, and Member of Parliament for Batu Pahat
- Tuan P Prabakaran, Member of Parliament for Batu

Bilateral discussion with delegation from the Republic of Korea

- Hon. Mr. Lee Seokhyun, Member of the National Assembly
- Hon. Mr. Yun Jae Ok

Bilateral discussion with Canadian delegation

- Senator Joseph A Day
- Hon. Mrs. Irene Mathysen
- Senator Jim Munson
- Senator Victor Oh

Dialogue with Observer Countries – 'Partnership for Good Regulatory Practices'

- Australian delegation and delegates from the 10 member countries

Meeting with AIPA Secretary-General

Dinner hosted by H.E. Prof. Pornpetch Wichitcholchai, President of the Senate

Wednesday, 28 August 2019 – Bangkok

AIPA excursion program

- Mr Hogan and Dr McVeigh, accompanied by Ms Cooke, attended AIPA's cultural program, comprising a visit to Ban Don Kai Dee Benjarong, including a welcome by province governor Mr Somkid Chanthamaruk and local representatives and a visit to artisanal workshops, followed by lunch hosted by Gen. Singsuk Singpai, First Vice President of the Senate, at Krua Jaowpraya Seafood Restaurant
- Senator Gallacher attended the AIPA golf fellowship at Riverdale Golf and Country Club, followed by lunch hosted by Hon. Mr. Supachai Somcharoen, Second Vice President of the Senate

Tour of embassy followed by dinner with Ambassador McKinnon and embassy officials at Ambassador's Residence

Thursday, 29 August 2019 – Bangkok

Second plenary session

- Presentation and adoption of reports; announcement of 41st AIPA General Assembly date and venue; signing of Joint Communiqué

Closing ceremony

- Closing speech by AIPA President and transfer of office to incoming AIPA President

Travel to Manila

THE PHILIPPINES

Friday, 30 August 2019 – Makati

Political briefing from embassy staff, led by Ambassador Steven J Robinson AO
Venue: Australian Embassy Manila

Foreign Policy Briefing with Stratbase-Albert del Rosario Institute
– Briefing presented by Stratbase ADR President Victor Andres ‘Dindo’ Manhit
Venue: Australian Embassy Manila

Lunch with Members of the Philippine Congress, hosted by Ambassador Robinson
– Hon Sherwin ‘Win’ Gatchalian, Senator
– Hon Ranie Abu, Deputy House Speaker, AIPA Delegation Head
– Hon Martin Romualdez, Majority Leader
– Hon Sharon Garin, Party List Representative (AAMBIS-OWA) and Economic Affairs Committee Chair
– Hon Stella Luz Quimbo, Marikina City, 2nd District Representative.
Venue: Ambassador’s residence

Meeting with Australian-New Zealand Chamber of Commerce Philippines (ANZCHAM)
– Mr Daniel Alexander, President ANZCHAM and Country Manager, Canon Business Service Centre
– Mr Tom Grealy, Board Member, ANZCHAM and President, Grealy Consulting
– Ms Honeybee Hubahib, Country Manager, Qantas
– Mr Mark Woolfrey, Treasurer, ANZCHAM and Executive General Manager, Group Shared Services Centre, QBE
– Mr Chris Ward, Board Member, ANZCHAM, and former Austrade Senior Trade Commissioner to the Philippines
– Ms Elodie Journet, Minister Counsellor and Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner, Austrade
Venue: Shangri-La Hotel

Saturday, 31 August 2019 – Makati - Manila

Morning tea to discuss counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism in the Philippines
– Morning tea hosted by Ambassador Robinson and attended by staff from the Australian Federal Police, Department of Home Affairs and Department of Defence
Venue: Ambassador’s residence

Caritas Margins Program Visit
– Leaders, staff and volunteers from the program, which received Direct Aid funding from the Australian embassy
Venue: Caritas Margins store, Pandacan, Manila

Sunday, 1 September 2019 – Manila to Kuala Lumpur

Travel to Kuala Lumpur

MALAYSIA

Monday, 2 September 2019 – Kuala Lumpur

Visit briefing from staff from the Australian High Commission

Venue: Four Seasons hotel

Roundtable with section heads from the Australian High Commission: discussion on the bilateral relationship, led by Mr Andrew Goledzinowski AM, Australian High Commissioner to Malaysia

Venue: Australian High Commission, Kuala Lumpur

Lunch with civil society organisations

- Dr Idran Zakaria, CEO, The Centre
- Encik Faisal Aziz, Deputy President, Coalition for Free and Fair Elections (BERSIH)
- Cik Nur Qyira Yusri, Co-founder, Undi18 (Vote18)
- Mr Tharma Pillai, Co-founder, Undi18 (Vote18)
- Encik Ariff Abdullah, Policy Analyst, United Malays National Organisation (UMNO)
- Encik Fakhurrazi Rashid, Policy Analyst, Research for Social Advancement (REFSA)

Venue: Sassorosso, Lorong Yap Kwan Seng.

Dinner hosted by the High Commissioner

- YB Puan Hajjah Zuraida binti Kamaruddin, Minister for Housing and Local Government
- Muhammad Harris Idaham bin Abdul Rashid, Special Functions Officer to the Minister
- YB Tuan Sivarasa Rasiah
- YB Tuan Ahmad Fahmi Bin Mohamed Fadzil

Venue: High Commissioner's residence

Tuesday, 3 September 2019 – Kuala Lumpur

Meeting with the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives and members of select committees, including Dr Noraini Ahmad, Chairman Public Accounts Committee, accompanied by Datuk Roosme BT Hamzah, Secretary to the House of Representatives, and High Commission staff

Venue: Parliamentary complex

Visit to observe proceedings of the Public Accounts Committee

Tour of Malaysian parliament

Depart for Australia (arriving on 4 September)

Statement delivered by the head of the delegation, Mr Kevin Hogan, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives

Mr Chuan Leekpai, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Thailand and President of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly

Honourable Heads of Delegations

Distinguished Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased and honoured to address the 40th ASEAN Inter Parliamentary Assembly here in Bangkok. On behalf of the Australian delegation, allow me to express our sincere appreciation to Mr Chuan Leekpai, and to the people of Thailand, for the warm hospitality extended to us.

Australia greatly values our participation as observers of this Assembly, and the opportunity it brings to renew the very valuable relationships Australia enjoys with ASEAN people and their parliamentarians. We are keenly aware of our privileged position, as representatives of our people, to raise awareness of what ASEAN does in our parliaments and in our communities, and work towards strengthening dialogue and cooperation in our region.

Australia is proud to be one of ASEAN longest-standing partners.

Australia became ASEAN's first dialogue partner 45 years ago in 1974, and since that time we have forged close ties with the countries of Southeast Asia. Our economic relationship is underpinned by the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement signed in 2009. Together, ASEAN countries have become one of Australia's most important economic partnerships, surpassing our trade with the United States.

While our trade with ASEAN is smaller than with China, the number of Australian businesses exporting to ASEAN is almost double those exporting to China. In 2018, two-way investment between Australia and ASEAN countries was valued at \$225 billion.

On the government to government level, Australia and ASEAN have a number of partnerships that reflect the comprehensive nature of our relationships. In 2013 Australia's resident Ambassador to ASEAN was accredited, and in 2014 we entered into a new Strategic Partnership with ASEAN to deepen our collaboration, including at the Leaders' level.

In 2018 Australia was honoured to host the first Special ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in Sydney. At the Summit we committed to working with ASEAN for a more secure and prosperous future, and announced a number of new initiatives to strengthen regional economic integration, and drive sustainable and inclusive economic growth. These announcements provide a sense of the depth and breadth of our relationship with ASEAN, and include:

- a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation to Counter International Terrorism.

- a joint initiative to promote Digital Trade and support inclusive economic growth in the region, which will help Australia and ASEAN countries reap the benefits of joining the digital economy.
- the ASEAN-Australia Infrastructure Cooperation initiative, which will develop a pipeline of high-quality infrastructure projects to attract private and public investment and improve regional connectivity.
- working with ASEAN to help develop cities across Southeast Asia in smart and sustainable ways, including through the development of an ASEAN Smart Cities Network.
- cooperation on a new A\$80 million counter people-trafficking program
- deeper collaboration on water resource management in the Mekong, and regional maritime initiatives.

Australia also enjoys strong people-to-people connections with Southeast Asia. People from Southeast Asian countries make up a significant part of Australian society [1,023,000 in June 2018, or around 4.1 per cent of the total population], helping to make it one of the most – we like to think the most – successful multicultural countries in the world.

Education scholarships and student exchanges, including the New Colombo Plan, tourism and cultural links all help to make our relationship a vibrant one.

These relationships are also evolving. When Australia's cooperation programs with ASEAN commenced in 1974, their early focus was on the development of food processing and agricultural industries, reflecting the nature of Southeast Asian economies at that time. Since then our cooperation has expanded and adapted to match the remarkable progress ASEAN countries have made over this time. Cyber security and digital economies have replaced food and fisheries as the key topics. Australia is pleased to have played a part in that development.

The theme of this year's Parliamentary Assembly, Advancing Parliamentary Partnership for Sustainable Community, could not be more relevant to the challenges we face in 2019.

Today, we understand more clearly than ever that questions of sustainability are vital to everything we do: what technologies we invest in, how we protect our natural environment and resources, how we build infrastructure, how we make our economies more resilient to shocks, and on a social level, how we ensure the more vulnerable members of our societies share the benefits of economic growth.

We share many of the same concerns. All of Australia's collaboration with ASEAN has, at its core, a vision of prosperous, stable, vibrant and open societies throughout the region, advancing the goals of sustainable, inclusive development, and the principles of free trade, democratic accountability, and adherence to a rules-based order.

At Australia's Dialogue with ASEAN at last year's Parliamentary Assembly, we agreed that climate change is a major threat to the region and beyond, and that combatting it must begin at the highest levels. This issue has become all the more important as the globe experiences more extreme weather events, underlining the risks to

vulnerable populations. We also noted that an ageing population is also a significant issue throughout the region. Very sensibly, we noted that living longer should not be viewed as a problem but rather as a blessing. As the Australian delegation reported back to our Parliament last year, we will surely be judged by future generations on how we treat the environment and our elderly.

Southeast Asia's proximity to Australia and location at the junction of the Indian and Pacific Oceans means its stability, security and prosperity directly affect our own. Through successive decades, Australia has reaped the benefits of a relatively peaceful and stable region.

We recognise that in such a diverse region, peace and stability owes much to the good sense and ability of Southeast Asian leaders. We are also indebted to the role of ASEAN and its founding principles, which continue to play a critical role in resolving common problems, shaping norms of behaviour and promoting a rules-based order in the region.

I'd like to underscore the importance of partnership to our shared future. If I may once more quote from last year's Assembly, in his welcoming address His Excellency Mr Tan Chuan-Jin, Speaker of the Singapore Parliament, noted the importance of the unity of ASEAN. He commented that this unity is not guaranteed, but is a testament to human will and a collective recognition that the region and its people are better off when ASEAN is united. In particular, he went on to note that this unity gives ASEAN weight and relevance beyond the region.

We wholeheartedly agree with these sentiments. ASEAN is at the centre of what is arguably the world's the most economically dynamic and strategically contested region, the Indo-Pacific. However, we are now in the midst of increasing major power rivalry, and must contend with the disruptions that brings.

The challenges we now face have no easy solutions, but I am confident that they would be much harder to address without the regional architecture ASEAN provides. ASEAN and its forums have for several decades brought countries together, opened dialogue, built trust and confidence, and allowed for collective problem solving.

An approach based on unity and consensus may at times require patience, but it may also be most likely approach to achieve durable solutions. ASEAN's work on disaster relief, maritime security and non proliferation and disarmament are just some examples of the vital work ASEAN is doing to strengthen regional stability and prosperity.

It is in all our interests for ASEAN and the ASEAN-centred regional architecture, to maintain its central role and helps set the rules and norms for behaviour in our region.

In closing, I would again like to express our appreciation of this opportunity to join you and discuss these issues and more. As parliamentarians, we have unique opportunities to encourage and influence public debate on issues of national importance, issues such as inclusive and sustainable development in our region. And as participants of the AIPA, we are also committed to helping our parliaments understand and value the role ASEAN can play and the benefits it can bring.

We have achieved much in this respect already. I am very much looking forward to continuing our discussions over the coming days and learning more from our ASEAN Parliamentary counterparts.

On behalf of the Australian delegation, I wish you a fruitful and successful Parliamentary Assembly.

REPORT OF THE DIALOGUE WITH AUSTRALIA

The Dialogue session with Australia took place on 27 August 2019 at 14.00 hrs. The session was chaired by Hon. Mr. Virachai Virameteekul of the National Assembly of Thailand as the Chairperson, and Hon. Miss Pada Vorakanon of the National Assembly of Thailand was the Rapporteur. The following delegates attended the session:

OBSERVER PARLIAMENT

Australia

- 1 Hon. Mr. Kevin Hogan
- 2 Hon. Dr. John McVeigh
- 3 Hon. Mr. Alexander Gallacher

AIPA MEMBER PARLIAMENT

Brunei Darussalam

- 1 Hon. Nik Hafimi Abdul Haadii

Cambodia

- 1 Hon. Mrs. Nin Saphon
- 2 Hon. Mr. Ai Khan

Indonesia

- 1 Hon. Mr. KRMT. Roy Suryo N.
- 2 Hon. Mr. Timbul Manurung

Lao PDR

- 1 Hon. Mr. Thanta Kongphaly
- 2 Hon. Ms. Thavisay Phasathan

Malaysia

- 1 Hon. Ms. Kasthuriraani Patto
- 2 Hon. Mr. Mohd Shahar Abdullah
- 3 Hon. Mr. Prabakan M Parameswaran

Myanmar

- 1 Hon. Prof. Dr. Than Win (Mr.)
- 2 Hon. Dr. Win Myint (Mr.)

Philippines

- 1 Hon. Josephine Ramirez-Sato

Singapore

- 1 Hon. Mr. Darryl David
- 2 Hon. Prof. Sun Sun Lim

Thailand

- 1 Hon. Gen. Thawip Netniyom
- 2 Hon. Miss Watanya Wongopasi

Viet Nam

- 1 Hon. Mr. Nguyen Van Tuyet
- 2 Hon. Mrs. Mai Thi Phuong Hoa

- 2 The session discussed the following issues:

ASEAN - Australia relations:

Australia is one of ASEAN's longest-standing partners and have maintained close ties with Southeast Asian nations in bilateral and regional cooperation. Australia and ASEAN have strengthened their relationships at both government-to-government level and people-to-people level to achieve common goals in three main aspects: trade and investment, cultures and education, and regional peace and security.

Australia commended the ASEAN regional architecture which play roles in addressing global challenges and stressed the need for ASEAN to maintain its central role in the regional architecture which help set the rules and norms for the region.

Australian fully supports advancing parliamentary partnership for sustainable community because of the vitality of sustainable development to everything we do.

Good Regulatory Practices (GRP):

The meeting endorsed the essentiality of Good Regulatory Practices (GRP) as it promotes economic competitiveness, transparency and good governance in the region.

The Australian government are committed to improving the quality of regulation, including minimizing the burden of regulation on businesses, community organizations, and individuals. Parliament regularly called the Australia Office of Best Practice Regulation to share its experiences, including with ASEAN Member States.

Australia has gained tangible advantages from GRP for economic growths which includes balancing of innovations for small businesses. The legislative process also compliments GRP as Parliament has to go through public hearings before passing laws. The legislative community in Australia also takes careful considerations about legislations being introduced and drafted in parliament.

Australia has been supporting ASEAN countries in sharing knowledge on parliamentary works on GRP though parliamentary exchanges and visits. Australia looks forward to sharing its experiences and learning about GRP from ASEAN member states.

AIPA acknowledged the ASEAN Work Plan for Good Regulatory Practices in 2016-2025 which will sustain and maintain ASEAN competitiveness and the ASEAN Centrality. Furthermore, the meeting heard about the GRP-oriented Project Repeal in the Philippines which helps to cut legal red tapes in legislation through regulatory impact assessment (RIA) to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of government agencies on legislative draftings and law enforcements.

3 The meeting also made the following points:

- 1) **Diversity:** Australia is a successful multicultural nation resulting from two main factors: effective migration policy and public education to close people's gap.
- 2) **Indigenous rights:** The situation remains complex and Australia is aware of the situation and continue to work on the issue.
- 3) **Cybersecurity:** The digital world has brought the region to a challenging and vulnerable context, necessitating nations to adopt cyber security to address them.

4 As there were no further comments from delegates, the Chairperson concluded the session at 3.30 pm.

5 The Report of the Dialogue with Australia will be included in the main Report of the 40th AIPA General Assembly.

**JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ OF
THE FORTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (AIPA)**

I INTRODUCTION

1 The 40th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) with the theme, “Advancing Parliamentary Partnership for Sustainable Community” was held in Bangkok, Kingdom of Thailand on 25 – 30 August 2019 pursuant to the Statutes of AIPA and the decision of the 39th General Assembly of AIPA, held in Republic of Singapore, on 3 – 7 September 2018.

2 H.E. Mr. Chuan Leekpai, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Thailand and President of AIPA presided over the 40th AIPA General Assembly.

II DELEGATIONS

3 The 40th General Assembly of AIPA was attended by delegations from all AIPA Member Parliaments, 5 Observer Parliaments, ASEAN Secretariat, and other Guests of the Host.

4 For the AIPA Member Parliaments, **Brunei Darussalam** was led by H.E. Pehin Dato Abdul Rahman Taib, Speaker of the Legislative Council; **Kingdom of Cambodia** was led by H.E. Samdech Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly; **Republic of Indonesia** was led by Hon. Dr. Fadli Zon, Vice Speaker of the House of Representatives; **Lao People’s Democratic Republic** was led by Hon. Mr. Bounpone Bouttanavong, Vice-President of the National Assembly, **Malaysia** was led by H.E. Dato’ Mohamad Ariff Md Yusof, Speaker of the House of Representatives; **Republic of the Union of Myanmar** was led by H.E. Ms. Su Su Lwin, Member of the House of Representatives; **Republic of the Philippines** was led by Hon. Raneo E. Abu, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives; **Republic of Singapore** was led by H.E. Tan Chuan-Jin, Speaker of the Parliament; **Kingdom of Thailand** was led by H.E. Prof. Pornpetch Wichitcholchai, President of the Senate; and **Socialist Republic of Viet Nam** was led by H.E. Mrs. Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, President of the National Assembly.

5 For the Observer Parliaments, **Australia** was led by Hon. Mr. Kevin Hogan, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives; **Canada** was led by Hon. Mr. Joseph Day, Senator; the **People’s Republic of China** was led by Hon. Mr. Si Yuan, Member of the National People’s Congress; **Republic of Korea** was led by Hon. Mr. Lee Seok Hyun, Member of the National Assembly; **Russian Federation** was led by Hon. Ms. Liudmila Talabaeva, Member of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly.

6 The delegation from **AIPA Secretariat** was led by Mr. Isra Sunthornvut, Secretary General.

7 The delegation from the **ASEAN Secretariat** was led by Mr. Kung Phoak, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN.

8 For the Guests of the Host, **Kingdom of Morocco** was led by H.E. Mr. Habib El Malki, President of the House of Representatives; **Norway** was led by Hon. Mrs. Elin Agdestein, Member of Parliament; **Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia** (ERIA) was led by Prof. Hidetoshi Nishimura, President; **Freeland Foundation** was led by Mr. Steven Galster, Executive Director; **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit** (GIZ) was led by Mr. Bernado Jr Agawin, GIZ Principal Adviser AIPA for ASEAN Integration Project; and **Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia** (PIC) was led by Mr. Dararith Kim-Yeat, Executive Director.

III OPENING CEREMONY

9 The Opening Ceremony of the 40th General Assembly of AIPA was held on 26 August 2019 at Shangri-La Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand. H.E. General Prayuth Chan-o-cha (Ret.), the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand welcomed the delegates to the 40th General Assembly of AIPA.

Welcoming Speech

10 H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha (Ret.), Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand welcomed delegates to the 40th General Assembly in Thailand and expressed thanks to AIPA Member Parliaments, Observers, as well as international organizations for their continued support to the ASEAN Community. He underlined the importance of AIPA's role as representatives of ASEAN citizens in enhancing the third ASEAN Community Pillar and its role in communicating with the public to foster partnership in pursuing the goals of an ASEAN Community.

11 He expressed his admiration for the work of AIPA in combating the drug menace in the region. He noted the successful outcomes of the 2nd Meeting of the AIPA Advisory Council on Dangerous Drugs (AIPACODD) in March 2019 which could serve as a guide and model for AIPA Member Parliaments to achieve a Drug-Free-ASEAN Community. However, ASEAN still faces various challenges, especially environmental issues. He suggested that AIPA could play a role in the process by taking the Bangkok Declaration on Combating Marine Debris as a framework of AIPA.

12 The Prime Minister said that Thailand's ASEAN theme in 2019 is focusing on cooperation for ASEAN sustainability under the concept "Advancing Partnership for Sustainability". Hence, in creating a sustainable region in all aspects, he said that it was necessary for AIPA to intensify its cooperation in harmonizing the legal frameworks among AIPA Member Parliaments that will lead to a strong and highly competitive community. In addition, he urged the AIPA Secretariat and ASEAN Secretariat to work closer together and restructure the cooperation with more consistency in order to reach concrete outcomes.

Opening Address

13 H.E. Mr. Chuan Leekpai, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Thailand and President of AIPA addressed the Meeting.

14 In his Opening Address, he said that it was a pleasure and honor to welcome all delegates from AIPA Member Parliaments to the 40th General Assembly of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly which was last held 10 years ago in Thailand. For about 4 decades, AIPA was first set up from humble beginnings to the expansion of all 10 Member Parliaments of ASEAN countries, as well as 12 Observer Parliaments from around the world. Now, AIPA becomes as a platform for collaboration of ASEAN Parliamentarians.

15 Historically speaking, AIPA had become truly stronger together but the world is facing threats which have posed challenges for the whole community. Reaching for quick-fixes had accomplished little except delaying the inevitable which would pile highest on the poorest, the weakest, and the most vulnerable in our society. Therefore, that was the reason for the main theme of this General Assembly focusing on the advancement of regional parliamentary partnership. Also, as legislatures of ASEAN, the closest organs to our constituents and which was well positioned to see the true causes of their woes.

16 He went on to speak about four key lessons that AIPA parliamentarians should bear in mind. These are (1) to prioritize what should be done, with limited resources, to benefit all of our peoples, (2) to take another step of collaboration by working together and creating a permanent forum between ASEAN and AIPA, (3) to look after the 647 million residents of ASEAN citizen and their wellbeing and (4) to respect the rule of law aiming to maintain order in our society as all people should be seen as equal under the law.

17 Before declaring the opening of this General Assembly, he concluded his address by admitting that AIPA still needs much recognition from the peoples of ASEAN and this occasion is an opportunity for AIPA to discuss related issues and earn a place in peoples' hearts and minds.

IV APPOINTMENT OF VICE-PRESIDENTS OF THE 40th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

18 Pursuant to Article 10 of the Statutes of AIPA, the General Assembly elected the Heads of Delegations of AIPA Member Parliaments as Vice-Presidents of the 40th General Assembly of AIPA.

V STATEMENTS OF HEADS OF DELEGATIONS

19 The Heads of Delegations of the AIPA Member Parliaments delivered their respective statements at the First Plenary Session of the 40th General Assembly.

Brunei Darussalam

20 H.E. Pehin Dato Abdul Rahman Taib, Speaker of the Legislative Council of Brunei Darussalam, stated that the theme of the 40th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly this year, "Advancing Parliamentary Partnership for Sustainable Community", instills our expectation to pursue a people-

centered ASEAN Community that leaves no one behind and promotes sustainability in all dimensions.

21 AIPA is constantly facing new and emerging challenges, in representing the voice of the people. However, it is crucially important to recognise and respect among AIPA member countries, the basis of non-interference and develop cooperation, consultation and consensus.

22 He is pleased to note of the growing strategic partnership between AIPA and ASEAN over the years, which demonstrates our commitment and engagement to realise ASEAN's vision and ultimately ensure that ASEAN's people, both present and future, can continue to enjoy sustainable peace, stability and prosperity.

23 The AIPA General Assembly is a great platform to support the theme of advancing parliamentary partnerships and achieving our goal for a sustainable community in ASEAN. This platform will promote discussion and the sharing of experiences, views and opinions not only among AIPA member parliaments, but also with our significant dialogue partners on legislative practices, regulations and policies which protect the interests and rights of the people.

24 He acknowledged that this year's AIPA General Assembly will discuss important issues relating to the development of the ASEAN Community. Issues such as empowerment of women, fostering inclusive economic development, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and caring for the life of Older Persons are just some of the concerns that Brunei Darussalam also wish to respond effectively. Brunei Darussalam will continue to support efforts to address global and regional challenges through partnerships and multilateralism.

Kingdom of Cambodia

25 Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia, said that parliamentary diplomacy and partnerships are of great importance today. No country should be alone or isolated from the others. AIPA should therefore build parliamentary diplomacy that helps strengthen cooperation within both bilateral and multilateral frameworks in the region and the world.

26 Promoting parliamentary partnership, civic engagement and multi-stakeholder dialogues are vital to realize a sustainable community. Furthermore, with a belief that actions speak louder than words, AIPA need to promote practical, concrete actions on the ground to ensure that no one is left behind. More efforts are needed to narrow the development gap within and between the ASEAN Member States, especially with regard to women empowerment, gender equality, and inclusive digital economy.

27 Building synergies between AIPA and the ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN-led mechanisms are critical for the future of ASEAN. The Members of Parliament from ASEAN should further integrate ASEAN agenda into their domestic agenda in order to harmonize national interests with those of ASEAN and yield tangible results.

28 Enhancing AIPA partnerships needs a common vision and position consistent with national and regional interests. Although Cambodia sometimes puts priority on national interests, he believes those interests are not separate from AIPA's ultimate goal of building the ASEAN Community, a community of peace and prosperity.

29 Peace and stability is indispensable for development, while equitable and inclusive development is a prerequisite for maintaining peace and social stability. Based on experiences, Cambodia highly values all efforts made in contributing to the preservation of peace and stability as well as speeding up inclusive development, which is today bearing fruit and benefiting all Cambodians from all walks of life.

30 Inclusive economic growth is vital for the ASEAN community to ensure long-term stability and sustainability. Boosting trade and investment is imperative. AIPA should pay more attention to maintaining common ground to support multilateralism with the aim of promoting trade liberalization and deepening regional integration. In the name of AIPA, they urge their governments to speed up negotiations for a Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and other free-trade agreements.

31 Nowadays, each country needs to effectively use labor for their national development. All Member States should therefore pay more attention to the implementation of social protection systems to ensure that all migrant workers and their families are legally protected and get equitable access to public services. Cambodia expressed satisfaction with all efforts and progress made by ASEAN in protecting and promoting the rights of migrant workers. The President took this opportunity to extend his thanks to all fraternal countries, particularly Thailand, Japan, Republic of Korea, and Malaysia, for receiving Cambodian migrant workers in those countries.

Republic of Indonesia

32 Hon. Dr. Fadli Zon, Vice Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia, stated that the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia commends the hope expressed by H.E. Mr. Chuan Leekpai, President of AIPA on the need for continuous cooperation between AIPA and ASEAN, to enhance cooperation between legislative and executive branches in addressing various challenges in the region. He also welcomed the ASEAN Leaders' Vision Statement on "Partnership for Sustainability", and ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, which is important in supporting and enhancing ASEAN's unity and centrality. ASEAN has successfully maintained peace and stability in the region as prerequisite in achieving economic growth and sustainable development. However, regional challenges would require a better and more enhanced partnership.

33 It is also important for AIPA to address the humanitarian situation of the Rohingya People in Rakhine state through a resolution. Bearing in mind that a sustainable community cannot be fully realized without addressing the situation in Rakhine through AIPA. Divergent views can be expected from Member States on how AIPA should position itself towards the challenges. The principle of consensus has been so far essential for AIPA decision making process. However, AIPA also need

to admit that there are times when the principle is limiting the organization's effectiveness in addressing regional challenges.

34 A new solution is required to answer the urgent regional and international issues. Without undermining the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of each Member State, it would be strategic for AIPA to improve and renew its decision-making system.

35 Parliamentarians should engage more with communities in order to build communication and grow awareness about ASEAN among constituents as they are an inseparable part of ASEAN, while at the same time also build their constituents' capacity as stakeholders in regional integration.

Lao People's Democratic Republic

36 Hon. Mr. Bounpone Bouttanavong, Vice-President of the National Assembly of Lao People's Democratic Republic expressed sincere appreciation to the President of AIPA and President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Thailand for the warm hospitality extended to the delegation of Lao PDR National Assembly during the 40th ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) General Assembly.

37 The National Assembly acknowledged remarkable progress that ASEAN has been made in the ASEAN community building process, through the implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 consisting of the blueprints of the three community pillars, as well as the ASEAN Master Plan on Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 and the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan III. In addition, ASEAN as the driving force of regional, political, economic and social architecture, will continue to maintain ASEAN Centrality and promote the ASEAN Way, particularly the principle of ASEAN consensus as well as respect for the fundamental principles as stipulated in the ASEAN Charter and other important ASEAN instruments.

38 In addition, the National Assembly of Lao PDR highly values this year's theme of the 40th AIPA General Assembly which aims at promoting the role of AIPA in realising the goals of ASEAN Community Vision 2025, the blueprints of the three community pillars and in line with the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Goals. The National Assembly stresses that AIPA, as the representative of the people and the legislative body of ASEAN Countries, must further strengthen its role in consultative responding to important regional issues based on the principle of consensus through its various existing mechanisms such as AIPA General Assembly, AIPA Caucus, AIPACODD, and ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface, among others, thereby ensuring substantive deliverables.

39 To realise ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the blueprints of the three community pillars, particular the ASEAN Master Plan on Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 and the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan III, Lao PDR has been cooperating closely with neighboring countries with an emphasis on socio-economic development, including infrastructure development such as railway and highway road construction, highway and electricity transmission lines, among others. These will significantly contribute to the overall efforts of the Lao PDR in transforming the country into a land-link hub with other countries in the region, thereby promoting

trade and investment facilitation, tourism and people-to-people linkages within the region. In order to realise such endeavour, the Lao National Assembly has actively contributed to making and amending economic and socio-cultural related legislations, including considering ratification of other legal instruments under the ASEAN cooperation frameworks.

40 Finally, in order to advance the parliamentary partnership for sustainable community, the National Assembly of Lao PDR will strengthen cooperation aiming at promoting effective coordination and stronger partnership with AIPA Member Parliaments through consultation and closer collaboration under various mechanisms towards realising the goals of a resilient and sustainable ASEAN community with one vision, one identity and one community that is truly people-oriented and people-centred.

Malaysia

41 H.E. Dato' Mohamad Ariff bin Md Yusof, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malaysia, remarked that several developments have taken place since the new government was formed a year ago, in particular on human rights, democratisation and governance. It is reflected in the fact that Malaysia has achieved a better ranking in terms of press freedom for the year 2019. In addition, the amended bill to lower the voting age and the age of eligibility to contest as a Member of Parliament to 18 years old; and the amended bill to reduce the prerequisite notice requirement to hold a peaceful protest were also passed in parliament. A series of reform initiatives were also made to improve the efficacy and efficiency of parliament proceedings. Already in place are six parliamentary special select committees covering a number of priority areas with another four select committees are expected to be formed before the end of 2019.

42 He expressed his appreciation to the Heads of Delegation and the several country representatives who had attended the 10th AIPA Caucus Meeting held recently in Kuala Lumpur. He further expressed his appreciation to the Indonesian and Singaporean speakers and representatives for sharing with the Malaysian Parliament the Indonesia's komisi system and the challenges faced by the Parliament of Singapore during the Speaker's Lecture Series respectively. The Speaker's Lecture Series was established with the aim to give an innovative perspective on parliamentary affairs and democratic practices. Other initiatives include establishing cross-party caucuses, modelled after the UK All-Party Parliamentary Groups and encourage more friendship groups. In particular, an all-party group was created to monitor and advance all SDGs for Malaysia.

43 In his closing remark, he called upon AIPA Member Parliaments to strengthen partnership by sharing experiences, knowledge and ideas to benefit the future generations.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

44 H.E. Ms. Su Su Lwin, Member of House of Representatives of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, remarked that "Advancing Parliamentary Partnership for Sustainable Community", is of significant import, apt especially at this juncture in AIPA. It is also a reflection of the ASEAN Leaders' vision for the effective implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations since the Declaration of the ASEAN Concord in 1976 in Bali, has evolved, expanded, progressed, and emerged as a leading voice in the Global Community.

45 While many institutions around the world have resorted to negative means to address the humanitarian issue in Northern Rakhine, the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) has provided Myanmar with one of the most effective external assistances Myanmar has received. Myanmar is a country still in the midst of a significant transition for achieving a genuine Democratic Federal Union. Since the emergence of the Democratic Movement in 1988, the present government has adhered firmly to its basic principles of Non-Violence and National Reconciliation. With the participation of representatives of all ethnic nationalities and stakeholders, the parliament is undertaking a Constitutional Reform which will bring about sustained peace, stability and development for all the peoples in Myanmar.

46 Myanmar would like AIPA to adhere to its valued cultural norms - unique and specific to the region and the practice of compromise, meaningful consultation and consensus. Only then, the strength of ASEAN and AIPA will be more than the sum of its total.

Republic of the Philippines

47 Hon. Mr. Raneo E. Abu, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of the Philippines, said that the theme of this year's General Assembly "Advancing Parliamentary Partnership for Sustainable Community" generally suggested that as the ASEAN pursues its vision for 2025, it is essential that sustainability in all dimensions must be ensured. The region is facing manifold challenges with major shifts in the geo-political and economic landscape that impacts on peace, security and stability of the region. These challenges require all of us to build on from our gains, refrain from complacency and strive to be deserving of the trust and confidence reposed in us as the people's representatives.

48 With these in mind, AIPA Member Parliaments need to work together to strengthen their united front that will show a caring and sharing ASEAN that is prepared to overcome the challenges, ready to capture present and future opportunities, and firm in our faith in the region's sanguine prospects. Towards this end, there are a number of key points that need to be underscored in line with the future direction of the ASEAN community.

49 Most notable is the increasing concern in the multi-faceted impact and risks of climate change and climate-related disasters on the people of ASEAN. As such, varied initiatives in the ASEAN has already recognized the need for sustainability of biodiversity conservation plans and programs. In line with these developments, the

Philippines proposes the establishment of a Committee on Biodiversity and Environment within this Assembly. This is to synergize efforts so that these opportunities are translated into a common legislative agenda in the region.

Republic of Singapore

50 H.E. Mr. Tan Chuan-Jin, Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Singapore, opened his speech with an observation – almost all ASEAN capital cities are now hubs for finance, transport, connectivity and tourism, each with its unique and rich traditions of arts and culture. In ASEAN’s forecasted progress, he anticipated rapid urbanisation of each Member State’s terrain individually, as well as that of ASEAN collectively. He observed that ASEAN is at a crossroads, and how the region copes with the issues of sustainability and urbanisation will define the region’s landscape in the decades to follow. In this march forward, a crucial principle to bear in mind, is ‘sustainability’, as is the theme of Thailand’s ASEAN Chairmanship “Advancing Partnership for Sustainability”. This is especially since ASEAN has become a force to be reckoned with, being the sixth largest market in the world, and en route to becoming the fourth largest economy after the US, China and the European Union by 2030.

51 He also pointed out that ASEAN has a combined population of more than 640 million, with a young and tech-savvy population; the number of middle-class households is expected to double by 2050. Thus, the potential for further development is colossal. Mr. Tan noted that AIPA is a vehicle through which parliamentarians build mutual understanding, trust and confidence across ASEAN, while representing their people back home. It is for this reason that AIPA must faithfully discharge its duties based on its creed to benefit and inspire people at an individual level.

Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

52 H.E. Mrs. Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, President of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, emphasized ASEAN’s need to consolidate its solidarity and unity, promote its central role, and deepen its relations with its partners in a world that is witnessing rapid and complex developments. Against such background, at the recently-concluded 52nd ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, countries have spoken up frankly on unilateral actions undertaken in the South China Sea that have violated sovereignty and legitimate interests of coastal nations in the region, eroded trust and negatively impacted peace, security, stability, freedom and safety of navigation and overflight in the region. Therefore, we need to reiterate common principles and perceptions widely recognized by ASEAN members and the international community regarding the South China Sea. This includes the emphasis on compliance with international law and the UNCLOS 1982, self-restraint, non-militarization, avoidance of actions that may further complicate the situation, full implementation of the DOC and efforts to conclude an effective and legally binding COC that aligns with international law. The President also emphasizes the role of AIPA and Members of Parliament who are willing to stand side by side with ASEAN

to build a sustainable community through synergizing laws and strengthening the monitoring of the implementation of commitments and master plans on ASEAN community building and policies on cooperation.

53 The President reaffirms Viet Nam’s continued and consistent pursuit of a foreign policy based on principles of independence, self-reliance, diversification and multilateralization of international relations and international integration. The National Assembly of Viet Nam will continue to engage actively and responsibly in the works of AIPA and make efforts to elevate ASEAN-AIPA partnership. The President put forth several proposals, putting particular emphasis on upholding international law and ASEAN’s principles and norms, consolidating solidarity and unity and maintaining ASEAN’s central role in the regional security architecture, further renewing the organization and operation of AIPA, calling for AIPA’s support for ASEAN’s initiatives, promoting the alignment of laws or mutual legal recognition, increasing cooperation in information technology within ASEAN, expanding partnerships with international organizations to implement the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the United Nations 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and lastly, disseminating information on AIPA and ASEAN to the people and strengthen the participation of young AIPA Members of Parliament.

Kingdom of Thailand

54 H.E. Prof. Pornpetch Wichitcholchai, President of the Senate of the Kingdom of Thailand, said that “Advancing Parliamentary Partnership for Sustainable Community”, the theme of the 40th AIPA General Assembly, is focused on *Sustainability*. To create a sustainable region for our peoples, AIPA Member Parliaments have played active roles to bring about regional sustainability. Based on this ground, this distinguished approach significantly encompassed the notion of keeping ASEAN’s resilience in the face of increasingly emerging challenges. In this event, it is our crucial responsibility to pursue the success of the AIPA General Assemblies.

55 Notably, he would like to reiterate the importance of strengthening ASEAN Community, which is based on rules-based, people-oriented and people-centered approaches. To achieve *rules-based* ASEAN Community, we have to deliberately contribute to the implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. To become a *people-oriented* and *people-centered* ASEAN Community, we have to create the sense of togetherness among our peoples. To this respect, strengthening the interaction between parliamentarians and the peoples is an approach to ensure that they would be at the heart of ASEAN Community. As parliamentarians are elected to represent people’s interests, it is appropriate for us to create and raise awareness of ASEAN policies among our electorates and communities. This in turn empowers the people to participate in the ASEAN Community development process.

56 In the light of these prominent efforts, the key contributors to successful implementation lie on institutional connectivity of ASEAN. To implement this, a number of crucial matters, such as ASEAN peoples’ needs for development of physical connectivity, would be concretely discussed between President of ASEAN

and President of AIPA. This significantly leads to policy formulation and policy implementation, which consequently entail balance in economic, social and environmental dimensions.

57 Finally, he mentioned that in order to fulfill sustainable achievement of AIPA, AIPA have to ensure that all AIPA members will move forward together. Thailand strongly hopes that this General Assembly will inspire all AIPA Parliamentarians to keep up this value and continue to perform all important tasks to help build the better region for the people of ASEAN.

VI STATEMENTS OF THE HEADS OF DELEGATION OF OBSERVER PARLIAMENTS

58 Heads of delegation of Observer Parliaments, namely Australia, Canada, People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, and Russian Federation presented their statements at the General Assembly.

VII STATEMENTS OF THE GUESTS OF THE HOST

59 The Guests of the Host, namely **ASEAN Secretariat** represented by Mr. Kung Phoak, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN, **Morocco** represented by H.E. Mr. Habib El Malki, President of the House of Representatives of the Kingdom of Morocco; and **Norway** represented by Hon. Mrs. Elin Agdestein, Member of Parliament, delivered their respective statements at the First Plenary Session of the General Assembly.

VIII MESSAGES OF THE HEADS OF STATES/GOVERNMENTS

60 The 40th General Assembly of AIPA received messages from the following Heads of States/Governments;

- His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam
- His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah Boromneath Norodom Sihamoni, the King of the Kingdom of Cambodia
- H.E. Mr. Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia
- H.E. Mr. Bounnhang Vorachith, President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic
- H.E. Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia
- H.E. U Win Myint, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
- H.E. Mr. Rodrigo Roa Duterte, President of the Republic of the Philippines
- H.E. Mdm. Halimah Yacob, President of the Republic of Singapore
- H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha (Ret.), Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand

- H.E. Mr. Nguyen Phu Trong, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

IX COMMITTEE MEETINGS

61 The Committees proceeded with their meetings to consider the agenda approved by the General Assembly.

Executive Committee

62 The Meeting of the Executive Committee of AIPA was chaired by H.E. Mr. Chuan Leekpai, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Thailand and President of AIPA, and Mr. Isra Sunthornvut, AIPA Secretary-General, was the secretary to the meeting. The Meeting's decisions were (1) taking note of the presentation of the reports of the 2nd AIPACODD Meeting, the Report of the 10th AIPA Caucus Meeting, and the Report of the ASEAN-AIPA Interface Meeting at the 34th ASEAN Summit (2) adopting of Programme of Activities, Draft Agenda Items for the 40th General Assembly and Topic for Dialogue with the Observer Countries (3) adopting of the Establishment and Composition of Committees and Panels and (4) taking note that Indonesian Delegation stated its reservation on "Establishment and Composition of Committee on Political Matters" at this General Assembly, therefore, the Committee on Political Matters was not convened.

Women Parliamentarians of AIPA (WAIPA)

63 The Meeting of Women Parliamentarians of AIPA (WAIPA) was chaired by Hon. Mrs. Pikulkaew Krairiksh and Hon. Miss Chitpas Kridakon was the Rapporteur. The Meeting considered and approved two resolutions for adoption by the General Assembly:

a) Resolution on Promoting Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in ASEAN

64 The WAIPA Meeting urged AIPA Member Parliaments and Member States to realize the importance of gender equality and women and girl's empowerment as one main pillar of ASEAN sustainability, especially as a precursor to peaceful society, in accordance with the provision proclaimed in the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, ASEAN Declaration on the Gender-Responsive Implementation of ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and Sustainable Development Goals as well as previous AIPA Resolutions concerning gender equality.

65 Moving forward on gender equality and women's empowerment, the Meeting encouraged AIPA Member States to develop their legislation and policies related to equal access to resources and participation in decision-making of women in order to ensure gender equality in all aspects. Moreover, AIPA Member Parliaments should do more to support their national research and update the gender statistic database to

monitor the realities of people's life as a resource with the view to formulating the policies.

b) Resolution on Bridging the Gender Gap in Technology-Based Disciplines

66 The Meeting focused on the importance of women participation in technology-based disciplines in the ASEAN Community, in accordance with Goal 5 of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In furtherance of this, the Meeting agreed on bridging the gender gap in the field of information and communication technology by supporting women in providing access to training and educational opportunities in technology, especially in remote areas, and formulating the proper legal frameworks. In addition, the delegates of WAIPA urged ASEAN Member States to share resources and research findings in science and technology, engineering, mathematics, and information and communication technology to achieve sustainable socio-economic growth and development.

Committee on Economic Matters

67 The Committee on Economic Matters was chaired by Hon. Miss Wiboonlasana Ruamraksa and Hon. Mr. Katerut Laothamatas was the Rapporteur. The Committee considered and approved all four resolutions for adoption by the General Assembly and requested the AIPA Secretariat to prepare progress reports on the implementation of the following resolutions for the 41st General Assembly.

a) Resolution on Fostering Inclusive Economic Development in ASEAN

68 The Committee underlined the important roles of AIPA to facilitate and implement related ASEAN cooperative frameworks to promote self-reliance, competitiveness, open trade and investment, and balance of economic development in all sectors while leaving no one behind. The Committee also reiterated a strong commitment to conclude the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations within 2019.

b) Resolution on ASEAN Cooperation to Prepare for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)

69 The Committee agreed to draw attention to the 4IR and to promote favorable conditions such as effective laws and knowledge of technology, in response to the challenges of 4IR. The committee also called for adequate digital and technological infrastructure for the benefits of the people of ASEAN.

c) Resolution on Improving on Digital Connectivity to Support the Growth of MSMEs

70 The Committee agreed to promote the development and distribution of technological infrastructure required by MSMEs to improve digital connectivity. The Committee encouraged ASEAN governments to consider working with digital platforms relevant to MSMEs and also to facilitate information and knowledge for MSMEs entrepreneurs.

d) Resolution on the Standardization and Liberalization of Air Services under the ASEAN Single Aviation Market

71 The Committee mutually agreed to enhance a safe and efficient environment for aviation market in the ASEAN region and to collaborate more closely for further standardization and liberalization of air services to pave the way towards the ASEAN Single Aviation Market.

Committee on Social Matters

72 The Committee on Social Matters was chaired by Hon. Mr. Weerasak Kowsurat and Hon. Mr. Nattapong Supriyasilp was the Rapporteur. The Committee considered and approved all six resolutions for adoption by the General Assembly:

a) Resolution on the Adoption of the Report of the 2nd Meeting of the AIPA Council on Dangerous Drugs (AIPACODD) and the Resolution on Alternative Development towards a Drug-Free ASEAN Community

73 The Committee considered and adopted the Report of the 2nd AIPACODD meeting and the Resolution on Alternative Development towards a Drug-Free ASEAN Community which was held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, on 12 - 15 March 2019. The resolution identified mutual concern and action by AIPA Member Parliaments to achieve a drug free ASEAN region. The Committee focused on the alternative development as a basic principle for reducing narcotic drugs production and preventing the reproduction of the activities in affected areas by developing their own ways of living by their principles with governmental contribution and encouragement. The AIPA Member Parliaments also should share their alternative development, practices and innovation to reach Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

b) Resolution on Enhancing the Quality of Life of Older Persons

74 The Committee expressed concerns that the aging society has become a major problem in the world, including in ASEAN. Hence, active ageing must be supported to enhance the quality of life of older persons through measures, such as demographic bonus, social protection measures, culture of respect for the rights of older persons, laws and regulations relating to the protection of rights of older persons to live with dignity and security, as well as universal design in all infrastructures for older persons. Inter-generational dialogue should also be supported in order to encourage the exchange of experiences, knowledge and practices.

c) Resolution on Strengthening Road Safety in ASEAN

75 The Committee shared concerns about the losses from road accidents, including deaths, injuries, disabilities, as well as health care cost and grief. The meeting emphasized the need of enforcement and implementation of road safety laws and regulations in various ways, such as construction of modern, safe, and scientific transport infrastructure, campaigning against speeding, driving under the influence, irresponsible driving, utilization of big data and statistic on road safety. Networking and regional cooperation should be supported to share experience and knowledge on technology and innovations for road safety.

d) Resolution on Elimination of All Forms of Violence and Exploitation of Children

76 The Committee discussed the national action plans for children in compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and call for elimination of all forms of violence and exploitation of children as the countries' shared values. These include the building of better communication and coordination in combating transnational crimes related to children in travel and tourism. The Committee also agreed to explore the establishment of "AIPA Ad-Hoc Working Group on Children", to be further studied by AIPA Secretariat, to discuss and develop effective methods in combatting all forms of violence against children by using the legal checklist as a mechanism to protect children's rights.

e) Resolution on Regional Parliamentary Initiative for Enhancing Climate Action in ASEAN

77 The Committee expressed their concerns about the impacts of climate change on people, environment and economies. The Committee agreed to promote the reduction of the problems by monitoring the implementation of emission-reduction projects in ASEAN and encouraging inter-parliamentary cooperation for responding to climate change. These include knowledge sharing, implementation of clean energy policies, increasing of economic and financial efforts on this matter, including the encouragement of carbon pricing, more renewable energy development and better harmonization of climate action within ASEAN.

f) Resolution on Access to Justice for Migrant Workers

78 The Committee considered that many ASEAN migrant workers work under precarious conditions, wherein they are exposed to apparent violations of their human rights including labor exploitation, physical and sexual abuse, lack of access to health and other basic social services, and misrepresentation of the terms of employment. The Committee agreed to develop linkages with non-governmental organizations, to consider accession to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, as well as other relevant international legal instruments. The meeting also highlighted enhancement of the mechanism of coordination to resolve problems and to assist victims of human trafficking, to fully implement the principles under the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers.

Committee on Organizational Matters

79 The Committee on Organisational Matters was chaired by Hon. Mr. Anusart Suwanmongkol, and Hon. Mr. Samerkun Thiengtham was the Rapporteur. The Committee discussed 20 resolutions and approved 17 resolutions for adoption by the General Assembly and deferred 2 resolutions (the Draft Resolution on Rules and Procedures of the AIPA General Assembly and the Draft Resolution on the Transformation of the AIPA Secretariat) until the next General Assembly, upon further consultation and study. The Draft Resolution on the Amendment of AIPA Statutes was withdrawn by Indonesia.

a) Resolution on Financial Report of the AIPA Secretariat

80 The Resolution on the Financial Report of the AIPA Secretariat was adopted by the Committee. The Committee also discussed and exchanged their views pertinent to overseas trips taken by the AIPA Secretary General. The Committee agreed that all AIPA business trips beyond Southeast Asia should be approved by the President of AIPA and a report should be made for each trip. The Secretary General noted the Committee's view that the total travelling expenditures must be within the approved budget.

b) Resolution on Estimated Budget for the AIPA Secretariat

81 The Committee agreed to the resolution with recommendations that budgetary sources should be considered in the next General Assembly as follows: (1) the budget from Special Funds (2) the reserve funds (3) increasing the contributions from Member Parliaments. The Committee further discussed possible amendments of the financial rules and regulations in the AIPA Statutes.

c) Resolution on Secretariat's Annual Report FY 2018-2019

82 The Committee adopted the resolution with recommendations that every financial status and details of every foreign trip should be included in the report.

d) Resolution on Guidelines of AIPA Engagement with Guests and Observers

83 The Committee adopted the Resolution on Guidelines of AIPA Engagement with Guests and Observers.

e) Resolution on Standardizing the Format in Drafting AIPA Resolutions

84 The Committee adopted the Resolution on Standardizing the Format in Drafting AIPA Resolutions.

f) Resolution on Institutionalization of AIPA-ASEAN Dialogue

85 The Committee adopted the Resolution on Institutionalization of AIPA-ASEAN Dialogue.

g) Resolution on the Establishment of an Effective and Sustainable Organizational Mechanism on ASEAN and AIPA

86 The Committee adopted the Resolution on the Establishment of an Effective and Sustainable Organizational Mechanism on ASEAN and AIPA.

h) Resolution on Collection and Exchange of Information of Laws of AIPA

87 The Committee adopted the Resolution on Collection and Exchange of Information of Laws of AIPA

i) Resolution on Renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding between AIPA and Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia (PIC) on "Capacity Development Program for Staff of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly Member Parliaments"

88 The Committee adopted the Resolution on Renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding between AIPA and Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia (PIC) on

“Capacity Development Program for Staff of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly Member Parliaments” with appreciation for the partnership.

j) Resolution on Appreciating the Federal Republic of Germany for its Continued Support to AIPA

89 The AIPA Secretary General explained the background of AIPA-GIZ cooperation which has been developed during the nine-year term. With the proposal of cost-sharing issue, the Committee noted that the current format of the cooperation should be maintained, but the principle of cost-sharing should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

k) Resolution on Establishing AIPA-ERIA Joint Dialogue to Support the Waste Management for Sustainable Development

90 The Committee adopted the Resolution on Establishing AIPA-ERIA Joint Dialogue to Support the Waste Management for Sustainable Development.

l) Resolution on the Relocation of AIPA Secretariat Premise.

91 The Committee adopted the Resolution on the Relocation of AIPA Secretariat Premise which approved the AIPA Secretariat to remain in its current premises and continue consultations with the ASEAN Secretariat.

m) Resolution on

A. AIPA Distinguished Service Award to Hon. Mr. Charles Chong

B. AIPA Distinguished Service Award to Mr. Charoen Kanthawongs

92 There were three nominees for AIPA Distinguished Service Award this year, however the AIPA Statutes states that only two persons can be awarded per year. Therefore, the Committee, based on the existing criteria of five years service to AIPA, adopted the Resolution on AIPA Distinguished Service Award to Hon. Mr. Charles Chong from Singapore and Mr. Charoen Kanthawongs from Thailand.

n) Resolution on Appreciating the Service of H.E. Mr. Chuan Leekpai as President of AIPA

93 The Committee adopted the Resolution on Appreciating the Service of H.E. Mr. Chuan Leekpai as President of AIPA.

o) Resolution on Expressing Appreciation on the Completion of the Service of the Fourth AIPA Secretary General Hon. Mr. Isra Sunthornvut

94 The Committee adopted the Resolution on Expressing Appreciation on the Completion of the Service of the Fourth AIPA Secretary General Hon. Mr. Isra Sunthornvut.

p) Resolution on Appointment of the Fifth Secretary General of AIPA

95 The Committee adopted the Resolution on Appointment of the Fifth Secretary General of AIPA, Hon. Mrs. Nguyen Tuong Van.

q) Resolution on Date and Venue of the 41st AIPA General Assembly

96 The Committee adopted the Resolution on Date and Venue of the 41st AIPA General Assembly to be held in Ha Long City, Viet Nam on 25 -30 August 2020.

X DIALOGUES WITH OBSERVER COUNTRIES

97 The General Assembly conducted separate meetings with five (5) Observer Parliaments, namely; Australia, Canada, People’s Republic of China, Republic of Korea, and Russian Federation. The general topic for the dialogue meetings was “Partnership for Good Regulatory Practices”. AIPA Member Parliaments were urged to monitor and review the existing regulations on GRP, to justify government actions, to consider a range of policy options, to consult with interested parties and enhance engagement of stakeholders in the implementation of GRP.

XI AIPA – ASEAN

98 The Dialogue between AIPA Delegations and ASEAN Secretariat was the initiative of the AIPA Secretary General. This was the first time such Dialogue was held at the AIPA General Assembly. The AIPA Secretary General, Mr. Isra Sunthornvut started the Dialogue by explaining that the main idea of the initiative was to formalise a communication channel between AIPA and ASEAN which represent the legislative and executive branches in ASEAN. Then, the Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, Mr. Kung Phoak made his statement supporting further AIPA-ASEAN collaboration with the ratification of the ASEAN Charter. He also recommended that ASEAN parliamentarians internalize the ASEAN Leaders’ Vision in their legislative agenda. After both statements, the meeting discussed several topics including:

- Status of AIPA as a strategic partner of ASEAN;
- Ratification of regional commitments made by ASEAN Leaders through legislative means. In this regard, AIPA and ASEAN Secretariats can also help promote mutual legal assistance among Member Parliaments;
- Establishment of stand-alone committee on AIPA-ASEAN Matters for sharing of information and deliberating issues of interest to people of ASEAN;
- Voices of the people, represented by AIPA, ought to be conveyed to ASEAN through ASEAN Secretariat; and
- Further collaboration between AIPA and ASEAN to promote the ASEAN identity and to enhance complementarities among them as well as other ASEAN sectoral bodies.

XII 41st GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF AIPA

99 Pursuant to Article 9 of the AIPA Statutes which stated that the venue of the General Assembly shall be rotated among the Member Parliaments in alphabetical order, unless otherwise decided by the General Assembly, H.E. Mrs. Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, President of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam confirmed the hosting of the 41st General Assembly of AIPA, which will be held on 25 - 30 August 2020 in Ha Long City, Viet Nam.

XIII ASEAN SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

100 The 40th General Assembly focused on AIPA's mutual desire to pursue a sustainable ASEAN Community through close cooperation and partnerships with our friends and the international community. This is to realise a people-centred Community that leaves no one behind and looks to the future, in the face of challenges and opportunities in the rapidly changing regional and global environment. As the representatives of the people and an integral stakeholder of ASEAN, the convening of our AIPA General Assembly has significantly contributed to the ASEAN founders' dream of securing "for their peoples and for posterity the blessings of peace, freedom and prosperity".

XIV APPRECIATION TO THE HOST COUNTRY

101 The Delegations attending the General Assembly expressed their sincere gratitude and appreciation to H.E. Mr. Chuan Leekpai, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Thailand and President of AIPA, for his leadership of the organization and welcomed his continued participation and contribution in the development and growth of AIPA. In this regard, the 40th General Assembly and related meetings proceeded in an amicable and cooperative atmosphere. Their discussions on various matters reflected ASEAN Spirit and their intentions to advance "Parliamentary Partnership for Sustainable Community".

Endnotes

¹ Report of the Parliamentary Delegation to Vietnam, Thailand and Brunei 15-25 July 2018

² Documents from the 40th General Assembly, including a signed copy of the communiqué, are available on line at www.aipasecretariat.org