



Parliament of Australia

**Report of the Parliamentary Delegation
to
the 42nd ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly
hosted by Brunei Darussalam**

23 to 25 August 2021

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Members of the Delegation

Senator the Hon David Fawcett
Leader of the Delegation

Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP

Ms Natalie Cooke
Delegation Secretary

Introduction

The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was formed in 1974. Over the years it has grown to 10 member nations: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Australia has a long-standing relationship with ASEAN, becoming its first Dialogue Partner in 1974. A strategic partnership was established in 2014.

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

Australia attends AIPA each year as an observer. This year the assembly was held virtually, because of the continuing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The two Australian delegates attended from their home states of South Australia and Victoria.

This was the second year that Australian delegates were unable to travel to AIPA because of COVID-19. The pandemic also meant that parliamentarians were not able to continue their regular program of visits to other ASEAN countries.

The 42nd General Assembly was hosted by Brunei Darussalam. The theme of the assembly was 'Forging parliamentary cooperation in digital inclusion towards ASEAN Community 2025'. The delegation wishes to record

its appreciation for the work of Brunei Darussalam in holding a successful online event.

ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly

Opening ceremony

His Excellency Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Lela Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdul Rahman bin Dato Setia Haji Mohamed Taib, the President of 42nd AIPA and Speaker of the Legislative Council of Brunei Darussalam, gave the welcoming address on 23 August. His Excellency spoke of the importance of inclusive digital transformation and its role in supporting the resilience of ASEAN. The rapid transition stemming from the pandemic only serves to underscore how important digital adoption and transformation is. Embracing, promoting and strengthening digital inclusion is vital to support ASEAN's vision of a politically coherent region so that it can power through the current climate united. He also spoke of the role that digital transformation and inclusion in helping to address challenges such as women's empowerment, climate change and economic empowerment.

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, gave the royal speech welcoming delegates and opening the assembly. Noting the theme of Brunei's chairmanship—'We Care, We Prepare and We Prosper'—His Majesty spoke of the contributions AIPA member parliaments could make to the digital economy as a bloc, through standardising and harmonising policies, standards and, where appropriate, legislation. He stressed the importance of equity on all fronts, and reminded the assembly that this was about the

prosperity, security and economic growth of not only current but also future generations. His Majesty urged parliamentarians to work together on issues of common concern, to find new ways to work together and to respond to regional challenges. He stressed the need to use the opportunity to foster better understanding and widen networks between fellow parliamentarians.

First plenary session

The first plenary session was also held on 23 August. It began with statements by nine of the 10 member countries. Contributions focused on the General Assembly's theme of forging parliamentary cooperation in digital inclusion, as well as on the response to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. Some contributions also highlighted the need for member countries to progress legislation to ratify and implement the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a regional trading arrangement between the 10 ASEAN states, Australia, China, Japan, Korea and New Zealand. Several contributions also referred to the situation in Myanmar, following the 1 February coup.

The head of the Cambodian delegation, Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly, noted that the world is growing increasingly more complex, with noticeable shifts in economic power along with other drastic changes, bringing with it the need to be more internationally united. The fourth industrial revolution is creating new economic models and changed production, consumption and distribution. It is important that ASEAN has a concrete plan to achieve its vision.

The digital economy is what will spur economic recovery after the COVID-19 crisis. Digital transformation must be inclusive. Challenges include digital literacy and cybersecurity. Parliamentary cooperation can help by sharing cybersecurity information, promoting public-private cooperation and supporting digital capacity building. His Excellency spoke of the world facing instability that has not been seen in decades. Foundations of peace and sustainable development are important so people can live in prosperity and progress.

The head of the Indonesian delegation, H.E Dr Puan Maharani, Speaker of the House of Representatives, highlighted how the assembly proves that AIPA continues to play an important role even during a pandemic—a challenge no one country can face alone. COVID-19 has accelerated the use of digital technologies and highlighted that, while some groups can adapt fast, others need help. Affordable internet access, literacy and skills development (including to counter hoaxes), cybersecurity policies and fostering innovation, training and research on digital technology so young people can play a role were all highlighted as essential, as was the use of technology to facilitate access to education and health. Her Excellency stressed that AIPA parliaments must cooperate to achieve a stable and conducive environment, supported by the role of law. She noted the situation in Myanmar, observing that these specific challenges need inclusive dialogue, and called for the release of political prisoners. She foreshadowed Indonesia's draft resolution on parliamentary support on the situation in Myanmar (this was considered

subsequently by the Committee on Political Matters, but consensus was not reached).

H.E. Xaysomphone Phomvihane, President of the National Assembly and head of the Lao People's Democratic Republic delegation, observed that information and communications were one of the fastest growing fields, and effective governance was therefore very important. Laws on cybercrime, access to markets and enhanced cooperation were all important, as was equitable access for all in society. Public and private participation was also highlighted.

H.E. Datuk Azhar Azizan Harun, Speaker of the House of Representatives, observed on behalf of the Malaysian delegation that it was undeniable that the arrival of COVID-19 and the closure of physical parliaments has meant that parliaments have had to resort to digital means. These novel ways of working have created a new window of opportunity to make progress in digital transformation but have also exposed new fonts of inequality. While the pandemic has exacerbated inequalities, digital equality can help to mitigate other forms of inequality. Malaysia noted some of its own practices in this regard.

H.E. Mr. Lord Allan Jay Q. Velasco, Speaker of the House of Representatives and head of delegation for the Philippines, spoke of how the region is still reeling from the pandemic's effects but digital uptake has been accelerated, laying the groundwork for a resilient economy. Digital platforms have allowed people to stay engaged, including while working from home, providing offsite

services or undertaking remote learning. However, gaps between countries remain, and greater efforts are needed to help narrow the digital divide. His Excellency also spoke of the work the Philippines has done to remove economic and regulatory barriers.

H.E. Mr. Tan Chuan-Jin, Speaker of Parliament and head of the Singaporean delegation, made a wide-ranging statement. He reflected that COVID-19 has turned back progress and claimed lives, but ASEAN member states have risen to the occasion and cooperated. The pandemic has rapidly accelerated digital transformation, but this must be accessible for everyone. He urged colleagues to ratify RCEP domestically so it can come into force next year. Singapore also has an interest in seeing a resolution to the situation in the South China Sea. His Excellency noted that Singapore had recently reiterated the need for swift implementation of the five-point plan relating to Myanmar and urged a sustainable and peaceful resolution, noting that there is no quick fix.

The head of the Thai delegation, H.E. Mr. Chuan Leekpai, President of the National Assembly, noted that people have adapted to new daily routines and the 'new normal' under COVID-19, including working from home and contact tracing. Some of the citizens who have needed the most help have, however, not had access. There is a unique opportunity now to enable farm-to-table commerce, innovation and green innovation. Great strides have been made in harmonising legal frameworks in the region, and it is important that this continues. ASEAN is ready for a digital leap-frog. Legislation

must address both short-term needs and long-term objectives. Before passing any legislation that could harm individual rights, careful consideration must be given to the questions of whether any compromises are worth the benefits and whether they will last beyond intention. Parliamentary diplomacy plays a vital role in coordinating plans, roadmaps and policies.

H.E. Vuong Dinh Hue, President of the National Assembly and head of the delegation from Vietnam, spoke of how the disruption of supply chains by COVID-19 has exacerbated inequalities. ASEAN has continued to maintain unity in the face of challenges. The fourth industrial revolution will create an innovative ASEAN community. His Excellency called on member parliaments to complete the legal frameworks and complete barriers to create fair and equitable digital services. He underscored the importance of strengthening connectivity and narrowing gaps, mobilising social resources through public-private partnerships, expediting digitisation and improving policies and frameworks. Solidarity in collaborating and sharing experiences to get COVID-19 under control and equitable distribution of vaccines were also essential. His Excellency reconfirmed Vietnam's commitment to ASEAN following recent elections.

For Brunei Darussalam, Pehin Orang Kaya Pendikar Alam Dato Paduka Seri Awang Haji Hasrin Bin Dato Paduka Awang Haji Sabtu, Member of Legislative Council, noted the unprecedented crisis but that ASEAN's spirit of solidarity had made the virtual gathering possible. AIPA can be a

sounding board for plans, roadmaps and policies. Harmonisation and standardisation remain vital, while cybersecurity and data protection present challenges. A focus on digital inclusion can lead to a safer and more resilient world. It can also contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment.

The AIPA Secretary-General spoke of both the cohesiveness and responsiveness of ASEAN and the multiple challenges it is now facing, including COVID-19 and its variants, the rise of major powers and the situation in Myanmar. Developments in science and technology present both opportunities and challenges. This year's AIPA theme showcases the consensus to support ASEAN. She reminded members that the AIPA secretariat is a hub of information, which serves and supports member parliaments.

The Secretary-General of ASEAN remarked that, despite being physically separated, ASEAN members shared a strong bond and are becoming a more resilient community despite the challenges. Since March 2020, ASEAN has taken strong and decision action against COVID-19, and a regional recovery plan will enable ASEAN countries to build back better. The Secretary-General highlighted a number of key initiatives, including operationalisation of an ASEAN centre for emerging diseases, an ASEAN travel corridor and the COVID-19 ASEAN response fund. He noted that the RCEP agreement last year is the largest regional trade agreement in the world and urged member parliaments to ratify it swiftly. On the digital front, ASEAN must apply its efforts to narrow the

digital divide, focusing on accessibility, quality, affordability and strengthening capacity. Cross-border payment interoperability is also key.

Senator Fawcett made an opening statement on behalf of the Australian delegation. A copy of his statement is at Appendix A.

Observers from Belarus, Canada, the European Parliament, India, the Republic of Korea, Morocco, Norway, the Russian Federation and China also made opening statements.

Dr Thida Oo, the Burmese Attorney-General appointed by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, made an opening statement as a guest of the host, outlining the position that Myanmar remains firmly committed to working with ASEAN.

Hon. Mr Martin Chungong, representing the Inter-Parliamentary Union, also made a statement as a guest of the host, focusing on how international organisations manage to meet when they cannot meet in person and noting a wider truth that the digital environment is now fully entwined in every sphere, including the political and cultural spheres.

The Speaker of the Australian House of Representatives, the Hon Tony Smith, also made an opening statement by video, in his capacity as President of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum. He recognised that parliamentary forums such as AIPA provide a vital means to recognise how parliaments can face these challenges together and continue to build regional cohesion, understanding and cooperation.

Women Parliamentarians of AIPA

Ms Vamvakinou attended the meeting of Women Parliamentarians of AIPA on 23 August. This meeting had as its theme 'Promoting women's economic empowerment in the future of work through digital and financial inclusion'.

The meeting heard that gender disparity remains a challenge, and closing the digital gender gap is of vital importance. The meeting adopted a resolution calling on ASEAN states to improve digital inclusion and responsiveness, map out a post-pandemic plan, support the development of women's sustainability, and enact, strengthen and amend relevant laws.

The Australian delegation notes challenges in progressing work between annual meetings, and observes that additional meetings of the Women Parliamentarians of AIPA may help support them to progress their important mission.

Second plenary session

In its second plenary session, held on 25 August, the General Assembly adopted the reports of the meeting of Women Parliamentarians of AIPA, the Committee on Political Matters, the Committee on Economic Matters, the Committee on Social Matters and the Committee on Organisational Matters. These meetings had all been held the previous day but were not attended by the Australian delegates.

The plenary also adopted the joint communiqué (see Appendix B). Before the session closed, the Ukraine and Pakistan were welcomed as observers.

The 43rd AIPA General Assembly will be held in Cambodia, and the presidency was duly transferred.

Conclusion

Delegations are an important way for Australian parliamentarians to learn from and engage with other parliamentarians. Informal networking and the bilateral meetings held on the sidelines of events such as AIPA are a particularly valuable part of this but can be challenging to facilitate virtually. If circumstances determine that future AIPA assemblies need to be held online, the delegation would welcome additional opportunities for this less formal engagement to be built in.

While observers have not often attended AIPA committee meetings, the delegation sees attendance at these discussions as a useful avenue

for deepening understanding of AIPA and the challenges it must rise to. We recommend that future delegations seek to attend committee meetings as well as plenary sessions as an observer.

We conclude by once again congratulating Brunei Darussalam for successfully hosting this important event in challenging circumstances.

Senator the Hon David Fawcett
Delegation Leader

Opening statement made by Senator Fawcett, delegation leader

I am honoured to address the 42nd ASEAN Inter Parliamentary Assembly, joining you via digital means from Australia. On behalf of the Australian delegation, may I express our sincere thanks to His Excellency the President of the 42nd AIPA and distinguished colleagues for organising this event and ensuring that AIPA's important work continues despite the impacts of pandemic.

Australia values our role as annual observers to the assembly. We deeply value strong relationships with the people and parliamentarians of ASEAN, and welcome this opportunity to deepen our friendship with you.

I would like to make a few comments regarding the theme of this year's assembly, the importance of our relationship with ASEAN and some key initiatives.

Last year, the assembly understandably concentrated its deliberations on COVID-19 and ASEAN responses to it. The pandemic is still with us, but gradually we are developing new mechanisms of cooperative response to this shared crisis. The digital technology being used to conduct the Assembly brings to the fore this year's important theme: digital inclusion.

Digital engagements, interactions and commerce have been boosted in response to COVID-19. The digital economy has great power to transform the ASEAN region and super-charge regional growth. It creates opportunities for SMEs and encourages innovation. Digital trade is booming, and ASEAN nations will be brought even closer together through this new trade avenue.

It is important, though, not to chase the possibility of rapid economic growth at the expense of inclusivity, safety and sustainability. This Assembly's theme, and the work your respective parliaments do, is both timely and important.

I note Australia is working with ASEAN on cooperation to ensure cyber security and on digital trade, through the ASEAN-Australia Digital Trade Standards Initiative.

ASEAN is a critical partner for Australia, a partner we have supported since ASEAN's creation. We share the same vision of prosperous, secure, vibrant societies, working to advance sustainable and inclusive development, within a peaceful region built on respect for the rule of law. We share the same concerns for our region, and work together to ensure it remains inclusive, resilient and open.

The ASEAN-led architecture has helped to create and embed the international rules-based order. Australia and many other states continue to benefit from this.

ASEAN—Australian cooperation continues to go from strength to strength. Last year we agreed to hold annual summits between our leaders, marking a new chapter in our Strategic Partnership. Our long running programs such as the Australia Development Cooperation Program Phase II and ASEAN—Australia Counter Trafficking continue to benefit the people of our region. Our work together on free trade – moving towards the ratification of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and upgrading the ASEAN ANZ FTA – will bring further prosperity to our countries.

In closing, I again express our appreciation at this opportunity to join you at this assembly. As parliamentarians, we have unique opportunities to encourage and influence public debate on issues of importance to all of our nations.

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

JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF THE FORTY-SECOND (42ND) GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (AIPA)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The 42nd General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) with the theme “Forging Parliamentary Cooperation in Digital Inclusion Towards ASEAN Community 2025” was held virtually from 23 to 25 August 2021, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.
2. His Excellency Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Lela Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdul Rahman bin Dato Setia Haji Mohamed Taib, President of 42nd AIPA and Speaker of the Legislative Council of Brunei Darussalam presided over the 42nd General Assembly of AIPA.

II. DELEGATIONS

3. Delegates from the AIPA Member Parliaments, Observer Parliaments, the AIPA and ASEAN Secretariats, Guests of the Host, and AIPA Partners participated virtually in the 42nd General Assembly.
4. For the AIPA Member delegations, Brunei Darussalam was led by Hon. Pehin Orang Kaya Pendikar Alam Dato Paduka Seri Awang Haji Hasrin Bin Dato Paduka Awang Haji Sabtu, Member of Legislative Council; Cambodia was led by Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly; Indonesia was led by H.E. Dr. (H.C.) Puan Maharani, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Lao People’s Democratic Republic was led by H.E. Xaysomphone Phommvihane, President of the National Assembly; Malaysia was led by H.E. Datuk Azhar Azizan Harun, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Philippines was led by H.E. Mr. Lord Allan Jay Q. Velasco, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Singapore was led by H.E. Mr. Tan Chuan-Jin, Speaker of Parliament; Thailand was led by H.E. Mr. Chuan Leekpai, President of the National Assembly and Vietnam was led by H.E. Vuong Dinh Hue, President of the National Assembly.
5. For the Observer delegations, Australia was led by Senator Hon. David Fawcett; Belarus was led by H.E. Mr. Vladimir Andreichenko; Canada was led by Senator Hon. Paul Massicotte; People’s Republic of China was led by Hon. Ms. Duo Liu; European Parliaments was led by Hon. Mr. Daniel Caspary; India was led by Hon. Dr. Satya Pal Singh; Republic of Korea was led by Hon. Mr. Kim Gi-hyeon; Morocco was led by H.E. Habib El Malki; Norway was led by Hon. Mrs. Elin Rooum Agoestein; and the Russian Federation was led by H.E. Konstantin Kosachev.
6. The delegation from AIPA Secretariat was led by Hon. Nguyen Tuong Van, Secretary-General of AIPA.
7. The delegation from ASEAN Secretariat was led by H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of ASEAN.
8. For the delegation of Guests of the Host, The Representative of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar was led by Hon. Attorney General Dr. Thida Oo;

Inter-Parliamentary Union was led by Hon. Mr. Martin Chungong; Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum was led by H.E. Tony Smith;

9. For the delegation of AIPA Partners, the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) was led by Prof. Hidetoshi Nishimura; Freeland was led by Mr. Steven Galster; Parliamentary Centre Asia (PCAsia) was led by Mr. Dararith Kim-Yeat.

III. OPENING CEREMONY

10. The Opening Ceremony of the 42nd General Assembly of AIPA was held on Monday, 23 August 2021, at 10.00 am GMT +8. His Excellency Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Lela Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdul Rahman bin Dato Setia Haji Mohamed Taib, President of 42nd AIPA and Speaker of the Legislative Council of Brunei Darussalam, delivered his welcoming address followed by the Royal Speech of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam.

Welcoming Address

11. In his welcoming address, His Excellency Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Lela Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdul Rahman bin Dato Setia Haji Mohamed Taib, President of 42nd AIPA and Speaker of the Legislative Council of Brunei Darussalam, warmly welcomed all delegates of AIPA Member Parliaments, Observers, Guests, and Partners. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, by taking advantage of technology, he was pleased to see the prevailing spirit of friendship and cooperation allowed the 42nd AIPA General Assembly to convene virtually.

12. Referring to the theme of the 42nd AIPA General Assembly: "Forging Parliamentary Cooperation in Digital Inclusion towards ASEAN Community 2025", he stated that ensuring inclusive digital transformation shall be put a priority in order to build resilience and better prepare the current and future generations for a post-pandemic era. He explained that the theme was chosen not only to embrace, promote and enable digital inclusion as a means to further strengthen parliamentary cooperation amidst the pandemic, but also to highlight the important role of parliamentarians in supporting ASEAN Vision 2025 for a community that is "politically cohesive, economically integrated and socially responsible".

13. He also highlighted noteworthy issues such as women empowerment, climate change, cyber security and strengthening economic integration were included in the agenda of this year's AIPA General Assembly. Thus, it is important for AIPA Parliamentarians to power through this current climate united in resolve and purpose to ensure alignment in the collective intention.

Royal Speech

14. His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, delivered Royal Speech at the opening ceremony of the 42nd

AIPA General Assembly. His Majesty warmly welcomed all Delegates to the virtual 42nd AIPA General Assembly. Referring to the theme of Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN Chairmanship 2021: "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper", His Majesty noted the continuing efforts of ASEAN to respond rapidly in providing care for its peoples amidst the uncertainty.

15. His Majesty acknowledged the theme of 42nd AIPA General Assembly which reassert the commitment of AIPA Member Parliaments in building ASEAN as a leading digital community and economy bloc through harmonizing regulations, standardizing policies and legislations across ASEAN. His Majesty highlighted the persistence of parliamentarians in making AIPA the key organization and platform that enhances multilateral cooperation in order to realize the collective desire of ASEAN which is to see its present and future generations continue to enjoy sustainable peace, security, prosperity, and economic growth.

16. His Majesty was confident that the discussions during the 42nd AIPA General Assembly will generate new ways on how AIPA and ASEAN can work together to effectively respond to regional and global challenges. His Majesty also called upon ASEAN parliamentarians to continue cooperation with fellow parliamentarians of AIPA Observers. His Majesty concluded His Royal Speech by wishing the 42nd AIPA General Assembly and its delegates much success in their deliberations.

IV. VICE-PRESIDENTS OF 42ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

17. Pursuant to Article 10 of the Statutes of AIPA, the General Assembly elected the Leaders of Delegations of the AIPA Member Parliaments as Vice-Presidents of the 42nd General Assembly of AIPA.

V. STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DELEGATIONS OF AIPA MEMBER PARLIAMENTS

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

Cambodia

18. Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly of Cambodia opened his remarks by congratulating the Legislative Council of Brunei for the wonderful arrangement of the virtual 42nd AIPA General Assembly. In his statement, he expressed his strong support to the chosen theme of Promoting Parliamentary Cooperation in Digital Inclusion towards ASEAN Community 2025, as it reflects the need to achieve a more inclusive ASEAN Community with leading digital connectivity ensuring high security and sustainability. He highlighted the concrete plans introduced by ASEAN to achieve the ASEAN Vision 2025, including the ASEAN Digital Master Plan 2025, which is an important driving force in promoting resilient economic growth, pushing economic diversification and enhancing productivity and competitiveness. He stated that it is important to ensure that digitalization is inclusive and that multilateral cooperation on digital governance and rules is strengthened.

19. He emphasized that our world is now growing more complex, highly competitive, and facing drastic changes in balances of economic power and competition in trade. These require all of us to be more internationally united and to embrace multilateralism, an important policy choice for resolving problems based on the principles of international law.

20. Samdech Heng Samrin shared that the Royal Government of Cambodia recently launched the “Digital Economic and Social Policy Framework 2021-2035” to build a vibrant digital economy and society aimed at promoting digital adoption and transformation. This policy will play a critical role in economic recovery plans after the Covid-19 crisis through the development of digital infrastructure and the promotion of trust and confidence in digital systems, digital citizens, digital government and digital business. He emphasized, however, that numerous issues overshadow the process of digital transformation such as digital development gaps, digital illiteracy and cybersecurity which are critical challenges for developing countries whose resources and capabilities are constrained. Therefore, ASEAN countries need to invest and allocate more resources to promote digital literacy and people's capacity.

21. In this regard, he called for parliamentary cooperation to build inclusive and safe digital infrastructure by sharing cybersecurity information and regulations, and by promoting public-private cooperation, digital capacity building and cybersecurity awareness as well as strengthening cybersecurity management. At the same time, he underscored peace as an important foundation for development as the world is facing instability and growing multiple threats to peace that have not been seen in decades. Hence, peace and development must go hand in hand. He closed his statement by stressing the importance of maintaining peace and striving to promote sustainable development so people can live in prosperity and progress.

Indonesia

22. The Head of the Indonesian Delegation, Speaker of the Indonesian House of Representatives, YM. Puan Maharani, expressed her appreciation to AIPA for its resilience in maintaining its role amidst the pandemic. There are various cooperation that ASEAN member countries can do to curb the pandemic, among others, cooperation in exchanging information to overcome the spread of the virus, and cooperation in providing vaccines, medical equipment and medicines, including research.

23. In regard to this year's theme, she conveyed that it reflects the Parliament's desire to cooperate in helping to improve digital connectivity among ASEAN member countries. In the present day, the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to the acceleration of the use of digital technology which has brought disruption in many areas.

24. In this regard, she stressed that the ASEAN member countries should continue to increase cooperation and exchange information in order to take greater benefits from digital technology. First, cooperation in increasing the availability of affordable internet access for the community. This is also related to the efforts to increase

internet access, especially in remote and rural areas. Second, cooperation to improve human resources related to literacy and skills, not only to take advantage of the digital technology itself, but also to prevent hoaxes and disinformation. Third, cooperation in formulating policies that support digital connectivity and also to ensure the security of digital activities, such as cybersecurity, personal data protection, and consumer protection. Fourth, cooperation to improve innovation, education, and research in digital technology. In line with efforts to utilize digital technology for economic growth, it is necessary to always pay attention to digital inclusion through the expansion of internet access for all.

25. Furthermore, in an effort to effectively deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, ASEAN must continue to maintain its political stability and security, as well as support the development of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. The political crisis in Myanmar has caused its own challenges for ASEAN. Therefore, a peaceful resolution to the political crisis in Myanmar must be started immediately through an inclusive dialogue process. For this reason, the Five-Point Consensus jointly developed by the ASEAN Leaders Summit must be immediately followed up, and the ASEAN Special Envoy must be given access to meet various parties in Myanmar.

Lao's People Democratic Republic

26. H.E. Dr. Xaysomphone Phomvihane, President of the National Assembly of Lao PDR congratulated the President of AIPA for the excellent arrangement of the 42nd AIPA General Assembly. He also expressed his appreciation and support for the theme of the 42nd AIPA General Assembly: "Forging Parliamentary Cooperation in Digital Inclusion towards ASEAN Community 2025".

27. As the world is facing a number of challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters which have posed serious impact to public health, socio-economic development, regional and global stability and security, Lao PDR in this regard highly appreciated the timely measures that have been undertaken by ASEAN member countries.

28. He emphasized that Lao PDR acknowledges the importance of digital inclusion to economic growth and social development. In this regard, He shared that Lao PDR has developed a National Strategy on Science and Technology Development (2013-2020) and Vision 2030, and integrated them into the 9th Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2021-2025). Lao PDR is also currently drafting a Digital Economic Development Strategy for 2021-2025 that aims to improve the national economy, which hopefully will facilitate the transition of Lao PDR from Least Developed Country to become a Developed Country while promoting industrial modernization.

29. To make sure the digital inclusion is achieved, H.E. Dr. Xaysomphone Phomvihane shared that Lao PDR integrated ICT into tertiary education curricula, and ensured that access to technology is also available to people living in remote areas, including the most disadvantaged groups, so as to improve people's livelihoods and narrow the development gap between urban and rural areas. Such

measures were taken also to support the MSMEs and Start-Ups, so they can engage in online platforms and create an enabling environment for businesses to get access to domestic, regional and global markets in an equitable manner.

30. As an effort to realize a resilient and innovative ASEAN Community, H.E. Dr. Xaysomphone Phomvihane called on AIPA Member Parliaments to strengthen cooperation in Science and Technology, as well as research and development, and enhance the coordination, to ensure an equitable access to digital technologies and promote public-and-private participation with their respective national policies and legislation.

Malaysia

31. His Excellency Datuk Azhar Azizan Harun, Speaker of the House of Representatives in the Parliament of Malaysia started his address to the 42nd ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) General Assembly by expressing his support for this year's AIPA General Assembly's theme. His address illustrated the impact of second waves of the pandemic COVID-19 to the legislative branch. Following that, many parliaments have had to resort to electronic means of business as a temporary stop-gap solution, including the consideration of a hybrid or virtual parliamentary sitting. In addition, Parliaments have started reforming previously rigid and embedded attitudes towards novel ways of working.

32. Further to that, he also highlighted the importance of transparency and the accuracy of information. For instance, while accurate data and information related to pandemics are fundamental for an effective response to the crisis, social media, however, presents a challenge whereby the platforms have been misused by some to spread dangerous misinformation.

33. The address was concluded with a call to action for the region to strive for greater regional representation through better interstate cooperation and committed participation to realize the ASEAN vision.

Philippines

34. In the statement of Speaker Lord Allan Jay Velasco, he highlighted that the pressing call to leverage the digital economy has become more compelling as the region grapples with the nature of the "new normal". As a result, digitalization has led the region to adopt a nimble and adaptive response to disruptive conditions. Digital platforms have enabled the ASEAN people to stay connected and engaged, and for some businesses to operate amid the lockdown.

35. Further he mentioned in his statement the fact that digital transformation is now a major strategic focus for ASEAN to drive economic recovery and build back better. But what many may not realize is the extent to which COVID-19 has accelerated this shift that was already underway. Unfortunately, not all countries are able to leverage digital technologies to their full potential. There are gaps between countries in the region in basic access to the internet, along with speed and cost. In this regard, he emphasized that digital inclusion is crucial for digital platforms to reach all member

states and all levels of society. The key, he said, is to invest in digital infrastructure and connectivity to broaden physical access to mobile and internet networks. This will also enhance access to education, markets, and other economic opportunities.

36. Given the scale of the pandemic, ASEAN and AIPA also saw the need to change the way they conduct business from traditional interface platforms to online interactions. These institutions have utilized digital diplomacy, with all of its meetings across all sectors, including those with Dialogue Partners. Going forward, he stated that there are good reasons for ASEAN and AIPA to use digital platforms beyond COVID-19, especially for technical discussions and emergency response.

Singapore

37. H.E. Mr. Tan Chuan-Jin, Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Singapore opened his speech by noting that the COVID-19 pandemic has been the defining crisis of our generation. He was heartened that the strength and resilience of ASEAN has shone through, with ASEAN Member states rising to the occasion to support one another. In this vein, he highlighted the adoption of the Hanoi Plan of Action on Strengthening ASEAN Economic Cooperation and Supply Chain Connectivity in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in April 2020, as well as the creation of the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund and the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework and its Implementation Plan that were launched later that year.

38. Mr. Tan noted that the governments of AIPA members are working hard to mitigate the pandemic's effects on public health and livelihoods. In this regard, he was heartened that AIPA members have redoubled their joint efforts under Brunei's ASEAN Chairmanship theme of "We Care, We Prepare, and We Prosper", with an eye towards positioning ASEAN for a COVID-19 endemic world.

39. Mr. Tan pointed out that the pandemic has also accelerated the digitalization of society, which is rapidly transforming the way we all live, work and play. In this vein, he expressed that this year's ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly theme of "Forging Parliamentary Cooperation in Digital Inclusion Towards ASEAN Community 2025" was especially pertinent, and urged AIPA members to continue to support and advocate for inclusive policies that help ensure that technology remains accessible for everyone.

40. Concluding his statement, Mr. Tan reiterated the importance of ASEAN's cohesiveness and unity that has helped ASEAN Member States weather the many setbacks and challenges through the years. In this regard, he urged ASEAN Member States to continue using platforms such as AIPA to communicate the importance of supporting a more integrated, digital, and forward-looking ASEAN Community.

Thailand

41. H.E. Mr. Chuan Leekpai, President of the National Assembly of Thailand, expressed his view on the COVID-19 situation that in order to live in a new normal reality, people have to adjust their daily routines, for example, utilizing digital technology; teleconferencing, and working from home. Nonetheless, he pointed out

that not all citizens of ASEAN have opportunity to have digital access and showed his support to the theme of the 42nd AIPA General Assembly, "Forging Parliamentary Cooperation in Digital Inclusion towards ASEAN Community 2025", which will bring about legislative resolutions to bridge a digital gap through good regulations, harmonization of laws, and constructive dialogue between AIPA and ASEAN.

42. H.E. Mr. Chuan Leekpai also supported the implementation of ASEAN Digital Master Plan 2025 and showed his strong belief that AIPA has to enhance its role as a center of alignment through which strategies, policies, plans and roadmaps can be coordinated to support ASEAN. Consequently, he suggested that any legislation must address both short-term needs and long-term objectives as well as encouraged Members of Parliaments to consider at least three crucial issues before passing any regulation: "First, is what we're asking necessary and effective? Second, are the compromises worth the benefits? Third, whether our measures have limits, so they will neither last forever nor expand beyond our intentions?"

43. The President of the National Assembly of Thailand also touched upon a concept of parliamentary diplomacy which is a significant instrument to achieve any reconciliation.

44. In conclusion, H.E. Mr. Chuan Leekpai was confident that AIPA Member Countries shall overcome any challenging issues that occurred during Committee Meetings through exchange of perspectives and considerations.

Viet Nam

45. H.E. Vuong Dinh Hue, Head of Vietnamese Delegation, President of the National Assembly of Viet Nam, highlighted the significant impact to the economic growth and exacerbated social inequality, including digital inequality and social welfare tremendous challenges, posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has emphasized the urgency of state governance, adjustments of policies and development goals as well as digitalization and the development of the digital economy, to respond to the pandemic in a timely manner and sustain socio-economic development.

46. The complex and unpredictable shift in this pandemic time have also occurred in the regional and international geo-political landscape, for which H.E. Vuong Dinh Hue was pleased to note that the ASEAN Community continues to maintain solidarity, unity and self-reliance, and uphold its stern resolve and centrality. Further, the pandemic has also proven that in the face of tempestuous challenges, the close bonds and mutual sharing among ASEAN members and the peoples are further bolstered. He mentioned concrete evidence that ASEAN members have worked closely together to strengthen responsiveness of each country to gradually contain the pandemic such as the ASEAN COVID-19 Response Fund, the Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies, the Standard Operating Procedures for public health emergencies, and particularly the ASEAN Vaccine Security and Self-Reliance initiative.

47. H.E. Vuong Dinh Hue pointed out the need to further build on the vital role of AIPA Member Parliaments in accelerating digitalization and called on AIPA Member Parliaments to remove barriers through appropriate legal framework, improve the

quality of online public services for the development of e-Government, to facilitate equitable access to digital services for society and business, to increase digital literacy for vulnerable groups, to offer fair, equitable and affordable digital services, and to promote the development of the digital economy and society. He also called AIPA Member Parliaments to encourage the Governments of ASEAN members to carry out concrete programs, action plans and strategies pertaining to digital development, particularly strengthening digital connectivity, narrowing the digital gap among countries and regions, boosting digital literacy in less-developed areas including sub-regions to ensure equitable and sustainable development in ASEAN.

48. Further, he emphasized the need to mobilize social resources to develop a digital ecosystem via public - private partnership and create incubators to develop digital corporations and start-ups; improve policies, legal frameworks and support initiatives in the cooperation within ASEAN and between ASEAN and its partners on cyber security, information privacy, data protection and confidence building in the digital sphere also shall be put as priority. Lastly, he called on further cooperation and experience sharing, especially the application of science and technology to control Covid-19 effectively. He suggested strengthening cooperation in research and development, equitable distribution of vaccines, medicine and equipment for preventing and fighting Covid-19. He encouraged parliamentary action to give more power to the Governments to actively, flexibly and effectively respond to the pandemic, minimize the socio-economic impacts and enable quick socio-economic recovery in the post pandemic context.

49. He also appreciated endeavors of ASEAN and active support of AIPA Member Parliaments in promoting dialogue, cooperation and confidence building, upholding respect for international law, preventing and reducing risks to stability, which contribute to enduring peace, security, stability and fostering recovery and development in the region, including the South China Sea, in compliance with international law and the 1982 UNCLOS, refraining from activities that further complicate the situation, observing the DOC and soon concluding the Code of Conduct for South China Sea (COC). He informed that Viet Nam has successfully held the elections for the 15th National Assembly, and the People's Councils at all levels for the 2021-2026 tenure in May 2021, amidst the pandemic. In July, Viet Nam has also successfully convened the first session of the 15th National Assembly to elect the key leaderships of the State, National Assembly and Government, and outlined the national development goals in the coming time.

Brunei Darussalam

50. On behalf of the Speaker of the Legislative Council of Brunei Darussalam, the Head of Delegation of Brunei Darussalam, Hon. Pehin Orang Kaya Pendikar Alam Dato Paduka Seri Awang Haji Hasrin Bin Dato Paduka Awang Haji Sabtu welcomed all Delegates to the virtual 42nd AIPA General Assembly.

51. The theme of the 42nd AIPA General Assembly: "Forging Parliamentary Cooperation in Digital Inclusion Towards ASEAN Community 2025", reflects the importance of digital inclusion to fill connectivity gaps in internet access and

affordability. Hon. Pehin highlighted the instrumental role of AIPA in not only realizing digital inclusion in ASEAN, but also ensuring the cybersecurity in the region, by aligning regulations and standardizing policies across ASEAN with appropriate laws that are coherent with the ASEAN Community Blueprint 2025.

52. Hon. Pehin also mentioned in his statement, the role of MSMEs in accelerating ASEAN economic growth. Hon. Pehin called on the AIPA Member Parliaments for collaboration, as well as to encourage ASEAN Member States to prioritize connectivity, regional integration and narrowing development gaps among ASEAN member countries in a coordinated approach to achieve the goals of the fourth industrial revolution, and closer sectoral integration.

53. Hon. Pehin also highlighted the gravity of enabling technology to promote women empowerment, which will be discussed at the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians of AIPA (WAIPA). This is in line with the theme of ASEAN Chairmanship Brunei Darussalam 2021 “We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper” which aims to ensure the welfare and livelihoods of the community, to adapt and overcome any future challenges in achieving a sustainable ASEAN Community.

54. Finally, Hon. Pehin hoped that the spirit of brotherhood of ASEAN will bring the 42nd AIPA General Assembly a success.

VI. STATEMENTS OF THE AIPA SECRETARY GENERAL AND ASEAN SECRETARY GENERAL

55. Hon. Nguyen Tuong Van, Secretary General of AIPA, and H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary General of ASEAN, presented their statements at the First Plenary Session of the 42nd AIPA General Assembly.

VII. STATEMENTS OF THE HEADS OF DELEGATIONS OF OBSERVER PARLIAMENTS

56. Head of Delegation of Observer Parliaments including Australia, Belarus, Canada, People’s Republic of China, European Parliament, India, Republic of Korea, Morocco, Norway, Russian Federation, and Timor Leste presented their statements live and via pre-recorded video at the First Plenary Session of the 42nd AIPA General Assembly.

VIII. STATEMENTS OF THE HEADS OF DELEGATIONS OF GUESTS OF THE HOST

57. Heads of Delegation of Guest of Host including Hon. Dr. Thida Oo of Myanmar, Hon. Mr. Martin Chungong of Inter-Parliamentary Union, and H.E. Tony Smith of Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Union presented their statements via pre-recorded video at the First Plenary Session of the 42nd AIPA General Assembly.

IX. MESSAGES OF THE HEADS OF STATES/GOVERNMENTS

58. The 42nd General Assembly of AIPA received messages from the following Heads

of States/Governments;

- His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, 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. Thongloun Sisoulith, President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic
- 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 Xuan Phuc, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

X. COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

Executive Committee

60. The Executive Committee Meeting was convened via email communication from 3 August 2021 – 13 August 2021 to prepare the programme, agenda and other relevant matters pertaining to the General Assembly. The meeting was presided by His Excellency Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Lela Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdul Rahman bin Dato Setia Haji Mohamed Taib, President of 42nd AIPA and Speaker of the Legislative Council of Brunei Darussalam. The Executive Committee endorsed Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin, the President of National Assembly of Cambodia as the vice-chair of the meeting.

61. The Executive Committee received a proposal of an emergency item from Indonesia in the form of Draft Resolution on "Parliamentary Support on the Situation in Myanmar". In this regard, the Agenda Items of the 42nd AIPA General Assembly were updated subsequently, and it was decided that further discussion on this matter shall take place in the Committee Meeting of Political Matters.

62. The Executive Committee agreed to adjust the meeting of the Political Committee on Tuesday, 24 August 2021, and the Second Plenary Session on Wednesday, 25 August 2021. The meeting of the Political Committee on 24 August 2021 shall now begin at 9:30 am (GMT+8), and the Second Plenary on 25 August 2021 shall commence at 2:30 pm (GMT+8).

63. Members of the Executive Committee approved the nomination of H.E. Post. Dr. Kittisethabindit Cheam Yeap from Cambodia, and Hon. Dr. Fadli Zon from Indonesia, for the AIPA Distinguished Service Award. Further discussion on this matter will take place in the Organizational Committee Meeting.

64. The Executive Committee took note of the views received from AIPA Members with regards to the observer applications. Discussion on the Accreditation of the applicants shall take place at the Meeting on Organizational Matters, and the accreditation shall then be granted upon the adoption of the relevant resolutions at the AIPA General Assembly.

65. It was noted by the Executive Committee that the National Assembly of Cambodia agreed to accept the AIPA Presidency and host the 43rd AIPA General Assembly. The date and venue will later be announced.

Meeting of Women Parliamentarians of AIPA (WAIPA)

66. The Meeting of the Committee of Women Parliamentarians of AIPA (WAIPA) was chaired by Hon. Ms. Siti Rozaimeriyanty Dato Seri Laila Jasa Haji Abdul Rahman. The Committee considered and approved one (1) Resolution for adoption by the General Assembly:

Resolution on Promoting Women’s Economic Empowerment in The Future of Work and Post Pandemic Recovery through Digital and Financial Inclusion.

67. The Committee was in consensus that the financial inclusion and digital access are essential for promoting women’s economic empowerment in the future work and post-pandemic recovery. Thus, the Committee called upon the ASEAN Member States to: 1) strengthen inclusive digital strategies to address gender digital divide whilst managing digital security and cybersecurity; 2) to build network and cooperation at all levels in developing the capacity of women, ensuring that jobs are provided for women, and conducting an impact research of COVID-19 on ASEAN women labours to map out a post-pandemic plan, and 3) to develop and enhance a responsive and effective upskilling capacity for women and girls.

Committee on Political Matters

68. The Committee on Political Matters was chaired by Hon. Ms. Nik Hafimi Abdul Haadii. The Committee considered and approved four (4) Resolutions for adoption by the General Assembly:

Resolution on the Adoption of the Report of the 12th AIPA Caucus.

69. The Committee unanimously approved the Report of the 12th AIPA Caucus for adoption by the General Assembly.

Resolution on Enhancing Cybersecurity and Data Protection Towards a Resilient Cyberspace in ASEAN.

70. The committee shared concerns on the increasing threats to cybersecurity and data protection following the development of e-commerce. Recognizing the importance of cyber security to maximize the benefits of digitalization for socio-economic and political development, the Committee noted the vital role played by AIPA Member Parliaments in ensuring cybersecurity and data protection in the region through the laws, policies, and regulations of ASEAN Member States.

Resolution on Fostering Human Security to Achieve Digital Inclusion in ASEAN.

71. The Committee shared the views that digital inclusion is one of the key pillars of COVID-19 recovery and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and human security is an important approach in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of the people in the region. The Committee agreed that AIPA Member Parliaments shall: 1) maximize the utilization of AIPA as a platform in promoting human security to achieve digital inclusion through meaningful dialogues and exchange of best practices, 2) reinforce parliamentary diplomacy to support and complement the diplomatic efforts by their States/Governments.

Resolution on Promoting Parliamentary Diplomacy to Move the ASEAN Community Forward.

72. The Committee agreed that as representatives of the ASEAN peoples, the AIPA Member Parliaments shall serve as a strong link for the rules-based, people-centered and people-oriented ASEAN Community through parliamentary diplomacy. The Committee agreed to strengthen parliamentary diplomacy through all levels of AIPA activities to move the ASEAN Community forward. The Committee also agreed to enhance parliamentary diplomacy between AIPA and the international community. Further, the Committee encouraged ASEAN Member States to actively join AIPA activities, to promote synergy between AIPA and ASEAN.

Draft Resolution on Parliamentary Support on the situation in Myanmar

73. Indonesia presented the proposal of Draft Resolution on Parliamentary Support to the Situation in Myanmar, calling to bring peace, stability and democracy back to the country. The AIPA Member Parliaments in the Committee exchanged views on the Draft Resolution consequently. They expressed their deep concerns over the situation in Myanmar and called for efforts of all parties to seek a peaceful solution in the interests of the people. They also expressed their full support for the complete and immediate implementation of the Five-Point Consensus of the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting and welcomed the appointment of the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair to facilitate constructive and inclusive dialogue among all parties' concerned towards a peaceful solution. In addition, the Committee also called for the delivery of humanitarian assistance through the AHA Centre. However, as consensus was not reached, the Committee decided to not further discuss the Draft Resolution. Indonesia, as the proponent of the Draft Resolution, respected the discussion, but affirmed its position for reservation to the Resolutions (item 1 to 4) of the Committee on Political Matters.

Committee on Economic Matters

74. The Committee on Economic Matters was chaired by Hon. Ms. Siti Rozaimerianty Dato Seri Laila Jasa Haji Abdul Rahman. The Committee considered

and approved two (2) Resolutions for adoption by the General Assembly:

Resolution on Promoting Inclusive Digital ASEAN to Empower MSMEs And Strengthen the ASEAN Economic Integration.

75. The Committee firmly supported the view on the important role of digital technology and MSMEs in strengthening ASEAN's economic activity and connectivity. Recognizing the impact and challenges posed by the COVID-19 to the economy, especially MSMEs, the Committee pointed out the need to develop the MSMEs' capabilities and networking. Thus, the Committee agreed to resolve this by promoting policies and legislation towards harmonization for ASEAN economic digital integration among ASEAN Member States and encouraging the digital economy and transformation for MSMEs.

Resolution on the Post COVID-19 Economic Recovery: Tourism Cooperation in ASEAN.

76. The Committee reaffirmed the commitment of the AIPA in supporting the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025 by re-prioritizing activities and projects aimed at revitalizing the tourism in the region after overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the Resolutions, the Committee also supported the vision for ASEAN Tourism to 2025 whereby ASEAN aims to be a safe and quality tourist destination offering a unique, diverse ASEAN experience, and commit to be a responsible, sustainable, inclusive and balanced tourism development.

Committee on Social Matters

77. The Committee on Social Matters was presided over by Hon. Ms. Khairunnisa Haji Ash'ari, Member of the Legislative Council of Brunei Darussalam. The Committee considered and approved four (4) Resolutions for adoption by the General Assembly:

Resolution on the Adoption of the 4th AIPACODD Report and Resolution on Prevailing the Contemporary and Responsive Challenges Towards Drug-Free ASEAN

78. The Committee considered and adopted the Report of the meeting of the 4th AIPA Advisory Council on Dangerous Drugs (AIPACODD) and the Resolution on Prevailing the Contemporary and Responsive Challenges Towards Drug-Free ASEAN which was held via videoconference on 24th May 2021, hosted by the Legislative Council of Brunei Darussalam at the International Convention Centre, Berakas, Brunei Darussalam.

79. The Resolution emphasised on commanding the AIPA Member Parliaments to reaffirm its stance of zero tolerance approach, introduce effective measures, reinforce existing policies, promote further cross-border cooperation and strengthen cooperation with drug law enforcements agencies, national authorities and other institutional bodies to ensure the commitment of AIPACODD in its strive towards a drug-free ASEAN.

Resolution on Strengthening Cooperation and Enhancing Digital Inclusion to Mitigate the Impacts of Climate Change.

80. The Committee shared the same concern on the vulnerability of the region to the climate change threats that could affect the vital yet vulnerable segments of the

economic sectors. In this subject, the Committee acknowledged the importance of regional cooperation and the role of digital technology in advancing climate action and reducing the risk of climate change in the region. Further, the Committee unanimously agreed to collaborate in enhancing the management, monitoring, warning, reporting information on climate change mitigation, resilience, and adaptation, by making use of technology. The Committee also urged the ASEAN Member States to strengthen climate financing and enhance opportunities for technical assistance.

Resolution on Localising the Sustainable Development Goals for Effective National Implementation.

81. The Committee emphasized that Localising the SDGs will accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda to be relevant and beneficial to the people of ASEAN. Hence, the Committee agreed that as the people's elected representatives, Parliamentarians should play an active role to ensure laws and policies contributed to achieving the 2030 Agenda. In connection with the theme of the 42nd AIPA General Assembly, the Committee acknowledged the potential of digitalization in providing timely data availability, data accessibility, and data quality, so the progress of the implementation of the National Action Plan for the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda can be effectively monitored.

Draft Resolution on Technology to Facilitate Greater Election Participation.

82. Following objections from some AIPA Member Parliaments, and a proposal to postpone the deliberation of the Draft Resolution to the next AIPA General Assembly, complying with the principle of consensus, the Committee decided to not proceed with the deliberation of the Draft Resolution.

Committee on Organizational Matters

83. The Committee on Organizational Matters was presided over by Hon. Mr. Haji Abdul Hamid Sabli Haji Arshad. The Committee discussed and approved fifteen (15) Resolutions for adoption by the General Assembly:

Resolution on Financial Report 2020-2021.

84. The resolution of the Financial Report of the AIPA Secretariat was adopted by the Organizational Committee. The Members of the Committee shared their views, comments and suggestions to the AIPA Secretariat in managing the Special Fund and in absorbing expenditures covered from Regular Fund as well as in ensuring that expenses comply with the procedures and rules of AIPA Secretariat including to secure savings. AIPA Secretariat is also requested to prepare the list of fixed assets.

Resolution on Granting Permission to Use Special Funds for the Payment of Cost-Sharing of the New Premises of AIPA Secretariat and for the Minor Adjustment in the Salary of the Locally Recruited Staff of the AIPA Secretariat.

85. The Members of the Committee expressed their appreciation to AIPA that during the current global pandemic, AIPA is able to convene AIPA meetings and activities

virtually. Hence, the Committee unanimously agreed to adopt the resolution. The Committee reiterated its suggestion to transfer the Special funds to regular funds for accounting purposes.

Resolution on Budget Estimation 2021-2022.

86. The Committee reached consensus to adopt the resolution on the budget estimation for 2020-2021 and requested AIPA to ensure to utilize the budget in a prudent and conservative manner.

Resolution on Secretariat's Annual Report 2020-2021.

87. The Committee unanimously adopted the Annual Report of the AIPA Secretariat.

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

88. The Committee welcomed the Parliament of Ukraine and agreed to grant them the Observer Status of AIPA. Hence, the Resolution was adopted.

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

89. The Committee also agreed to grant the Parliament of Pakistan the Observer Status of IPA. The Resolution was adopted accordingly.

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

90. As consensus was not reached, the Committee decided to hold in abeyance the application of the Parliament of Georgia as an observer in AIPA.

Resolution on the Amendments of AIPA Statutes.

91. The Amendments to the AIPA Statutes were developed upon the discussion from the Working Group Meeting on the Guiding Rules and Procedure for the Hosting of the AIPA General Assembly on 5 May 2021. Through the discussion, the Committee acknowledged that amending the AIPA Statutes is important to maintain administrative order and uniformity in the proceedings. Hence, the committee agreed to adopt the amendment to the AIPA Statutes as proposed in the resolution.

Resolution on Guiding Rules and Procedures for the Hosting of the AIPA General Assembly.

92. Taking into consideration the outcome of the Working Group Meeting on the Guiding Rules and Procedures for the Hosting of the AIPA General Assembly on 5 August 2021, and following the adoption of the amendment to the AIPA Statutes, the members of the Committee of the Organizational Matters unanimously approved the Guiding Rules and Procedures for the Hosting of the AIPA General Assembly.

Resolution on Guidelines and Procedures of the AIPA-ASEAN Hearing.

93. The Committee welcomed the initiative and has adopted the resolution on Guidelines and Procedures of the AIPA-ASEAN Hearing. The Committee further proposed a study to be conducted to explore and discuss the best way possible for exchanges of ideas between the two institutions.

Resolution on Rules and Procedures of the Meeting of the Young Parliamentarians of AIPA.

94. In conjunction with the Resolution adopted in 2020, AIPA Secretariat has prepared the draft Rules and Procedures of the Meeting of the AYP. The Committee reiterated its support to have more Young Parliamentarians to be involved in the AIPA Meetings and agreed to organize an Ad Hoc Working Group to further discuss some provisions of the rules of procedure.

Resolution on Establishment of the AIPA-EP Dialogue.

95. The Committee welcomed and appreciated the initiative from the European Parliament to maintain communication and conduct a series of activities with AIPA through the establishment of AIPA-EP Dialogue. The Committee supported and approved the adoption of the resolution.

Resolution on AIPA Distinguished Service Award to H.E. Post. Dr. Kittisethabindit Cheam Yeap (Cambodia).

96. The Committee valued the outstanding contribution and service of H.E. Post. Dr. Kittisethabindit Cheam Yeap towards the pursuit of the goals and objectives of AIPA. Taking that into consideration, The Committee unanimously agreed to confer the AIPA Distinguished Service Award to H.E. Post. Dr. Kittisethabindit Cheam Yeap as recognition of his meritorious services to AIPA.

Resolution on AIPA Distinguished Service Award to Hon. Dr. Fadli Zon (Indonesia).

97. The Committee also valued the outstanding contribution and service of Hon. Dr. Fadli Zon towards the pursuit of the goals and objectives of AIPA. Further, the Committee unanimously agreed to confer the second AIPA Distinguished Service Award in this year's General Assembly to Hon. Dr. Fadli Zon as recognition of his meritorious services to AIPA.

Resolution on Appreciation of the President of AIPA

98. The Committee on Organizational Matters expressed its high appreciation to His Excellency Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Lela Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdul Rahman bin Dato Setia Haji Mohamed Taib for his leadership during his term as the President of AIPA. Hence, the Committee unanimously adopted the Resolution.

Resolution on Date and Venue of the 43rd AIPA GA

99. The Committee adopted the Resolution on Date and Venue of the 43rd AIPA General Assembly to be held in the Kingdom of Cambodia in September 2022.

XI. 43RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF AIPA

100. The General Assembly accepted the kind offer of Cambodia to host the 43rd General Assembly of AIPA in 2022.

XII. APPRECIATION TO HOST COUNTRY

101. The Delegations attending the General Assembly expressed their sincere appreciation to the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and the Legislative Council of Brunei Darussalam for their excellent arrangements made for the 42nd General Assembly of AIPA.

102. The 42nd General Assembly of AIPA was held in the traditional ASEAN spirit of friendship, brotherhood and cooperation, to cohesive and responsive of ASEAN Community.