Report of the ICAPP Mission to the U.N. General Assembly
(October 2-7, 2011)

The ICAPP Mission, led by Hon. Chung Eui-yong, Co-Chairman of the Standing Committee and Secretary General, visited the United Nations during October 2-7, 2011. The purpose of the mission was to discuss with U.N. officials and representatives of U.N. Member States how to further coordinate activities between the U.N. and the ICAPP, in particular through ICAPP's obtaining observer status in the U.N. General Assembly (UNGA).

The mission also attended the meetings of the Sixth Committee of the sixty-sixth session of the UNGA which considered the items regarding the granting of observer status in the UNGA to the eight international organizations, including the ICAPP.

1. Meeting with U.N. Secretary General

Prior to attending the meeting of the Sixth Committee, the ICAPP Mission had a meeting on October 3 with H.E. Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General of the U.N., and reported briefly on the results of recent activities of the ICAPP and requested the support of the U.N. Secretariat for ICAPP's obtaining observer status in the UNGA.

Secretary General Ban highly appreciated ICAPP's efforts not only to promote cooperation among countries in the region, but to expand its close cooperative relations with political parties in other parts of the world. He particularly noted with admiration and gratitude the recent efforts of the ICAPP to be more focused on making real contributions to resolving global issues, such as poverty alleviation, natural disasters, and growth and distribution.

In this regard, Secretary General Ban welcomed the ICAPP's application for observer status in the UNGA, and hoped that it would be granted during the sixty-sixth session of the UNGA. He further mentioned that the ICAPP could eventually obtain observer status through continuous efforts to persuade Member States with patience the merits of granting the status to the ICAPP for the future work of the UNGA.

Secretary General Ban also welcomed the Peace and Reconciliation Initiative that the ICAPP had recently launched. He said that the ICAPP initiative would greatly contribute to regional peace and stability. And he requested to convey his best regards to all participants in the Peace Consultation on Nepal to be held in Phnom Penh in late October and the Political Dialogue between India and Pakistan in late November respectively and wished for the success of the two events.

2. Meetings with representatives of U.N. Member States

The ICAPP Mission had separate bilateral meetings during October 2-5 with representatives of 10 different Member States, including Argentina, Austria, Ghana, France, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Russia, South Africa and the United States, and requested their support and understanding for the ICAPP's bid for observer status in the UNGA.

All the representatives highly appreciated the contributions that the ICAPP had been making to achieve the U.N. objectives and the need for closer coordination and cooperation between the U.N. and the ICAPP in the future. Some of them, in particular the representative of Argentina, however, pointed out that the non-governmental nature of the ICAPP might pose some difficulty in the course of deliberations at the Sixth Committee, since the UNGA had decided in 1994 to limit the observer status to states and inter-governmental organizations.

The ICAPP Mission invited the representatives of the Member States which were currently represented in the ICAPP Standing Committee to a working lunch on October 3. The meeting was attended by the representatives of 10 Member States, including Australia, Cambodia, China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines and Vietnam.

At the meeting, the representatives were reminded that the draft resolution to invite the ICAPP as observer to the UNGA would be open for additional co-sponsorship until the final decision would be taken at the Plenary of the UNGA, and the representative of Pakistan informed that Pakistan would announce its decision to become the 7th co-sponsor at the Sixth Committee meeting on October 4, in addition to Cambodia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Nepal, Philippines and Vietnam.

It was agreed that Republic of Korea delegation would introduce the item on the ICAPP's bid for observer status on behalf of the co-sponsors at the Sixth Committee meeting, and all the representatives of co-sponsors would make supporting statements after the item was introduced. Representatives from other Member States also agreed to consider making supporting statements at the meeting.

3. Results of the meetings of the Sixth Committee of the UNGA (October 4-6, 2011)

The Sixth Committee of the sixty-sixth session of the UNGA held its meetings on October 4 and 6, 2011 and considered the following eight items on granting observer status in the U.N. General Assembly:

- Item 167: Cooperation Council of Turkic-speaking States, an intergovernmental organization among four countries, introduced by Turkey
- Item 168; Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), an inter-governmental organization among 12 countries in South America, introduced by Guyana
- Item 169: International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), an inter-governmental organization among 80 countries world-wide, introduced by UAE
- Item 170: Central European Initiative, an inter-governmental forum for regional cooperation among 18 countries in Central Europe, introduced by Serbia
- Item 171: United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG): a world organization with members in 140 countries world-wide, introduced by Turkey
- Item 172: Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), an inter-governmental organization among 7 countries, introduced by Ethiopia
- Item 173: Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking Countries, an inter-parliamentary organization among 4 countries, introduced by Azerbaijan
- Item 174: International conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP), introduced by Republic of Korea

The first five items, Nos. 167-171, were introduced and considered at the meeting on October 4, and the remaining three items, Nos. 172-174, including the one on the ICAPP, on October 6 respectively.

At the meeting on October 4, several delegations, including Argentina, Canada and Guatemala, stressed the need to uphold the following principles and procedures as laid out in the UNGA's Decision 49/426 of December 9, 1994 and the UNGA"s Resolution 54/195 of December 17, 1999 in considering the applications for observer status in the UNGA:.
- Granting observer status will be confined to States and the Inter-governmental Organizations.
- In addition, the granting will be considered in the plenary session after consideration of the issue by the Sixth Committee.

The item on granting observer status to the ICAPP in the UNGA was introduced and considered at the meeting of the Sixth Committee on October 6. After the introduction of the item by the Republic of Korea delegation, delegations of Cambodia, Vietnam, Japan, Philippines and Nepal made the statements supporting the ICAPP's bid. The delegations of Pakistan, which joined as an additional co-sponsor of the draft resolution before the meeting started, also made the supporting statement. The delegation of China stressed that the ICAPP had contributed greatly to promoting mutual understanding and cooperation among countries in Asia and promoting common development in the region, and hoped that the ICAPP would continue to play its unique role.

Several delegations from other regions raised again their reservations on granting observer status to some of the organizations on the grounds of their non-intergovernmental nature. Some other delegations stated that they would need more time to consider all the applications and requested for more information on the organizations which had applied for observer status, including their constitutive instruments.

At the request of several delegations, the Committee then held an informal session on October 6 and discussed various procedural issues relating to the items of granting observer status.

During the informal session, delegations of Argentina and Venezuela again stated that the decisions on granting observer status should be made in line with the principles of the UNGA Decision 49/426.

The delegation of Russia pointed out that exceptions to the principles had been made in granting observer status to the non intergovernmental organizations which were deemed useful for the UNGA, and stated that the Committee should consider the possibility of making exceptions to the principles on a case-by-case basis and on the basis of the merits of granting such status for the work of the UNGA. It also stated that the Committee would need more time to consider each case and requested to advise the organizations to submit more information, including their constitutive instruments and reports on their activities.

The Guatemalan delegation stated that it could be flexible on the principle of granting observer status to non intergovernmental organization and each application needed to be considered separately. It further requested for more information, including constitutive instruments, to consider the merits of each applicant.

The Turkish delegation requested the Bureau of the Sixth Committee to circulate the advices, in writing, that it said it had received from the President of the UNGA to consider applications of observer status in clusters. It also stated that it was inappropriate to have general debate on the issues of granting observer status.

The Korean delegation, on behalf of the co-sponsors of the draft resolution on Item 174, stressed that the UNGA Decision 49/426 should be interpreted and implemented in the contexts of evolution of the UNGA's decisions of granting observer status, historical backgrounds of negotiations on the decision and subsequent practices of granting observer status since the decision was taken in 1994.

After the informal session, the Sixth Committee resumed its plenary meeting and concluded that, since there was no consensus on all the items on granting observer status, the Committee would continue its deliberations on the items at a later date to be decided by the Bureau of the Committee.