Remarks by Hon. Jose de Venecia, Jr., Founding Chairman and Co-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the ICAPP at the Opening Session of the 19th Plenary Meeting of the COPPPPAL at Sheraton President Hotel in San Salvador, El Salvador on October 11, 2010

PROPOSAL FOR INCREASED ASIA-LATIN AMERICA PARTNERSHIP

Two Continents vs. Global Poverty and Inequality

FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES—

ON BEHALF OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP), let *me* express *our* appreciation to the Government of the Republic of El Salvador—its *historic* political parties—and the Coordinating Body of COPPPAL, representing the Latin America and Caribbean Political Parties headed by the senior statesmen Antonio Cafiero and Gustavo Caravajal for this *gracious welcome* to this *capital-city* of *San* Salvador.

El Salvador's *long* and *heroic* struggle for political liberty, social justice, and human rights is well known—*even* to us *across* the Pacific. And we are pleased that the political and economic reforms the Salvadorean people won—at such great cost—have greatly improved their social conditions, eased mass poverty, and made them full and equal participants in the global economy.

GLOBAL CENTER OF GRAVITY IS SHIFTING TO THE NEW COUNTRIES

Not only here in El Salvador but also in the world, the distribution of power is changing in a basic way. The center of *global gravity* is moving away from the Atlantic, where it has been located for the last 150 years. And it is doing so *not so much* because the West is *weakening*, either economically or militarily *but because* other power centers are *rising* in *relative* strength—in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. For the first time in modern history, we have a multi-*polar*—even a multi-*civilizational*—global balance of power. And this is an *epochal* change—because power balances since the Napoleonic Wars of 1800-1815 have always been made up entirely of European powers sharing a common culture.

NEW INSTITUTIONS FOR GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

New stakeholders in the global economy are rising. And they're being empowered by '*globalization*'—which is shorthand for the way that trade, investment, and industry are spreading around the world in a more or less uniform pattern—*transcending* political frontiers and national cultures. The *revolution* in computing, information and transportation technology is integrating economies—and cultures—through the increased flow of goods and services, capital and *even* labor across national boundaries.

In response to the rise of these new stakeholders, we are seeing the birth of new institutions of global economic governance. Already the *G-20* grouping is in various respects beginning to *supersede* the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which are known to be heavily influenced by the United States. At the G-20, Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico sit *alongside* the Asian powers, China, India, Indonesia, and South Korea.

UNIFY TO BENEFIT FROM GLOBALIZATION

Despite the protests of those who oppose it, globalization in our time is *not* likely to be reversed. Not only does it promise the best results as a modern development model. The alternative—*autarky* under the command economy—has become thoroughly discredited with the *implosion* of the Soviet Union. Today the challenge before our countries in Latin America and Asia is for them to grasp—together—the opportunities globalization presents—while working together to minimize their shared vulnerabilities to its risks.

ASIA AND LATIN AMERICA MUST CONSULT AND ACT TOGETHER

If they are to benefit from globalization, Latin America and Asia must *consult* together—and then act together. Otherwise they will separately suffer the penalties globalization imposes. Consider, for instance, how inequality *persists* in today's world—because the weak and poor countries haven't the unity enough to fight for equality in global councils. Despite all the fine *sentiments* that launched the World Trade Organization in 2005, the rich countries continue to *disdain* the poor countries' *pleas* for *fair* trade, *equal* market access, and the *dismantling* of production subsidies and protectionist tariffs.

Indeed, the American Nobel Prize economist Joseph Stiglitz—who was chief economist at the World Bank—suggests that the demise of the Soviet Union *freed* the western powers from their need to contest the allegiance—the 'hearts and minds'—of the Third World. Freed of this need, the Western Powers seized on the end of the Cold War as an opportunity to create a global trade regime that *promotes* their *special* corporate and financial interests—but *prejudices* the poorest countries—instead of creating one based on shared global values and principles.

PROPOSAL FOR INCREASED ASIA-LATIN AMERICAN MEETINGS

If Asia and Latin America are to cope with the challenges of globalization, they must deepen their political, economic, and cultural relationships. Not only must the smaller national economies find their niches and focus on their core competencies. They must create scale for themselves by forming regional blocs. In Asia, as here in Latin America, regionalism is well underway. El Salvador, for instance, is apparently part of several regional economic groupings—the key of them being CAFTA, the Central American Free Trade Association.

Now we must go beyond. We suggest that COPPPAL and ICAPP join forces and explore an action program for our mainstream political parties and our private sectors to help intensify the effort of our governments to increase their inter-actions under FEALAC - the Forum for East Asia-Latin America Cooperation – to institute a regular Latin America / Asian Process of interaction in the political, economic, and cultural fields with

emphasis on party-to-party and people-to-people exchanges. The COPPAL Chairman Dr. Cafiero has suggested to us a couple of times that there is now need for our political parties and regional party organizations to move beyond political exchanges and political cooperation but actually contribute in the development of economic cooperation, investments, joint ventures and trade between our two continents.

HOW THE ASIA-EUROPE MEETING WORKS

In our part of the world, the Asia-Europe Meeting—ASEM for short—is a *Summit* of heads of state convened *every other year* since 1996—*alternately* in an Asian and a European capital—as a way of deepening relations between the two continents and achieving a *more balanced* political and economic world order. The ASEM Summits cover the whole range of group interests: political dialogue—security and economy—education and culture. Apart from the biennial Summit, political, economic, and cultural consultations and events are held at other protocol levels at all times. ASEM brings together 27 leaders of the European Union and the 13 members of the ASEAN Plus 3 grouping of the Southeast Asian states with China, Japan, and South Korea. Since 2008, the heads of state of India, Mongolia and Pakistan have also been invited. ASEM 8 was held in Brussels (Belgium) early this month—with Australia, New Zealand, and Russia joining for the first time.

FEALAC, between Asia and Latin America is developing in-like manner. But the inter-action, as we all recognize, is still too slow and the meetings are too few and far between. We need a more activist program to get our two continents, **accounting for** 50% of the worlds total land area, 68% of its population, and 53% of its GDP, to develop active mutual projects for economic cooperation, investments and trade.

THINGS ASIA-LATIN AMERICA CAN DO TOGETHER

We submit that there are so many things Asia and Latin America can do together—to protect our peoples against the ill effects of globalization and to *equalize* in some degree the *economic balance* in the world. The battle we're waging against mass poverty is far from won. There is our *imperative* to safeguard the environment against pollution and climate change. And there is the need to harness private capital and initiative in our countries' drive for economic development.

Asia and Latin America—*acting* together—can also become a *powerful force* for debt relief as we in ICAPP have proposed: for emergency arrangements between debtor- and creditor-countries that would allow the most heavily-indebted states to *divert* debt-service instalments to finance the U.N.'s MDG goals of halving poverty by 50% in 2015, barely five years away; to attend to health-care, basic-education and anti-poverty programs—at least for as long as the global recession endures. Then, too, our two continents—*Catholic and Pentecostal* Latin America and *Muslim*, *Buddhist*, *Hindu*, *Jewish*, and *Confucian* Asia—can issue a powerful call for *Interfaith Dialogue* that would bring to bear the *moral force* of the great religions on the work of *reconciliation* and *negotiated* settlement of cultural conflicts.

CONCLUSION AND CLOSING MESSAGE

This, then, is the proposal we have for COPPPAL and ICAPP to think together—the idea of somehow getting to our political leaders in high office the possible benefits our continents can derive from *regular* Asia-Latin America consultations on the model of the Asia-Europe Meeting. In all fairness, FEALAC is beginning to fill this need. COPPAL and ICAPP and the private sector must do their share.

We in ICAPP and COPPAL believe we must *broaden*—and *deepen*—our process of *inter-continental* consultations, to strengthen the social cohesion our two groupings have started to promote in our first historic meeting in Buenos Aires in 2009. It is in this spirit, our fraternal partners in Latin America, that we the political parties of Asia—ruling and those in opposition—invite you to the 6th General Assembly and 10th Anniversary of ICAPP, sponsored by the Cambodian People's Party under Premier Hun Sen and Deputy Premier Sok An and the Funcinpec Party, represented here by its Vice President Prince Sisowath Sirirath, both representing the Royal Government of Cambodia.

We look forward to discussing this proposal in greater depth and detail: meanwhile, on behalf of ICAPP, and my Co-Chairman Chung Eui-young and the delegates from Asia, I thank you all again for your fraternal welcome to El Salvador.