Statement by H.E. Ambassador Hahn Choong-hee, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations at the Sixth Committee Meeting of the 71st session of the U.N. General Assembly on Observer Status for the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (11 October 2016)

1. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Japan, Mongolia, Nepal, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and the Republic of Korea, my delegation has the honor to table the Committee a draft resolution A/C.6/71/L.4, entitled "Observer Status for the International Conference of Asian Political Parties in the General Assembly." My delegation wishes to inform the Committee that Australia, Indonesia, Lebanon, and Malaysia have signed as additional co-sponsors of the draft resolution.

2. Mr. Chairman, the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP) represents more than 350 political parties in 51 countries in Asia, and has become a positive political force for mutual understanding among Asian countries and peoples since its inception in 2000. In introducing the draft resolution for granting observer status to this important body, Republic of Korea would like to make several points worthy of consideration.

3. (**Necessary Engagement of Political Parties for the Success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**) First, ICAPP will serve as an important and effective tool in delivering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted last year, by strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the global partnership. Throughout the negotiation and adoption of the 2030 agenda, the role of parliaments has been specifically emphasized. At the Development Summit, world leaders acknowledged the essential role of national parliaments through legislation and budgets as well as ensuring accountability for the effective implementation of the 2030 agenda.

4. Enhanced awareness and increased participation of political parties is sure to translate the voices of multiple stakeholders, including that of the grassroots, into effective implementation of the 2030 agenda. At the 9th General Assembly of ICAPP in September 2016, the leaders of 87 political parties from 35 countries in the region urged their respective governments and parliaments, in their Kuala Lumpur Declaration, "to render full support for the successful and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda of the U.N."

5. (**Unique Functional Nature of Political Parties' Association**) Second, another feature of ICAPP is that it is a network of political parties, both in ruling and in opposition. While ruling parties can virtually be identified as the governments themselves, opposition parties also influence and engage substantively in the activities of the governments through championing alternative policies, platforms, and agendas, sometimes together with a shadow cabinet. In this sense, we believe that political parties constitute part and parcel of governments, and ICAPP could be characterized as a quasi- intergovernmental organization, starkly different from other NGOs.

6. In this connection, I would like to recall that the Member States gave special considerations in granting observer status to the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 2002 and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean in 2009. The General Assembly is inclined to take a holistic approach, taking into account the purposes and activities of the organizations concerned, when reviewing the eligibility of the organizations for observer status.

7. (**Compatibility of ICAPP's Activities with Those of the UN**) Third, with regard to the purposes and activities of ICAPP, my delegation would like to highlight that the Charter of ICAPP upholds the Charter of the United Nations and its foundational principles. ICAPP has been actively engaging in various activities in furtherance of international peace and security, human rights, and development, covering all three pillars of the United Nations.

8. Special conferences and workshops have also been convened on key global issues such as poverty alleviation, environmental degradation, natural disasters, women's empowerment, human trafficking, green development, regional economic cooperation, prevention of corruption, and reviving the Silk Road. ICAPP will host another special conference on migration and refugees in Istanbul, Turkey next month.

9. This is a clear indication that ICAPP does engage in activities in furtherance of the United Nation's purposes and principles. My delegation firmly believes that this is in line with the criteria of the General Assembly decision on granting observer status in relation to "whose activities cover matters of interest to the General Assembly."

10. (**Initiatives for Interregional Cooperation among Political Parties**) Fourth, ICAPP has been trying to reach out to political parties in other regions, including Latin America and Africa, through regular joint meetings with the Permanent Conference of Political Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean (COPPPAL) as well as the Council of African Political Parties (CAPP).

11. ICAPP further hosted the first Trilateral Conference among political parties in Asia, Africa and Latin America in Jakarta in April 2016, together with a major group of political parties in the European Parliament as an observer. They reaffirmed their commitment to the intent and spirit of the U.N. Charter. They also identified poverty and environmental degradation as two most serious common challenges, and agreed to work toward the goal of "launching a global forum of political parties in the future," encompassing all political parties in the world.

12. (**Intergovernmental MOU in Official Recognition and Support of ICAPP**) Finally, as an effort to strengthen ICAPP's character closer to an intergovernmental organization, an intergovernmental Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to provide support for ICAPP activities has been signed so far among eleven governments, i.e. Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Iran, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. More governments, like Indonesia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines and Turkey, are in the process of taking domestic procedures to join the MOU.

13. The official recognition and support of the activities of ICAPP by these governments clearly demonstrates their endorsement of ICAPP's positive role and of its bid to enhance its relational character much closer to an Inter-Governmental Organization level as well.

14. In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, my delegation is of the view that ICAPP substantially and sufficiently meets the criteria of granting observer status in the General Assembly, and sincerely calls upon the members of the committee to consider ICAPP's application for observer status in a positive and forward-looking way so that we will be able to reach consensus this time to embrace a long-cherished hope and aspiration of the parties and peoples in the Asia-Pacific region. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.