The 3rd Meeting of the ICAPP Media Forum
(Seoul, July 7, 2017)

ICAPP/3MF/003

Seoul Statement on the Role of Media in Political Democratization and Building an Asian Community

We, the journalists from Azerbaijan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Iran, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam, countries which are represented in the Standing Committee of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP), gathered in Seoul, Korea on July 7, 2017, together with the representatives of political parties from Azerbaijan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey and Vietnam held the 3rd Meeting of the ICAPP Media Forum back-to-back with the 28th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the ICAPP.

The meeting had two central themes. The first theme was the "Role of Media in Political Democratization" with the recent experience in Korea, where the media played a great role in the political change. The second one was the "Role of Media in Building an Asian Community", on the basis of the previous discussion on "Cooperation to Promote One Asia" in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in September 2016, with view to enhancing democratic values, peace and sustainable development, dealing with challenges such as terrorism, poverty and environmental degradation, whilst simultaneously promoting communication, interaction and cooperation between political parties and media in the region.

First of all, we reaffirmed our commitment to support ICAPP activities to enhance mutual trust and promote understanding and friendship among Asian countries and create a conducive environment for peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

In this regard, we fully supported the "Kuala Lumpur Declaration," which was adopted by the 9th General Assembly of the ICAPP on September 3, 2016, and expressed our hope that the visions and commitments laid out in the declaration will be duly and successfully translated into reality with cooperation of all political parties in the region.
After learning that the press and media played a critical role in the recent developments that occurred in Korea, including the corruption and cronyism scandal, massive candlelight rallies, impeachment, and the presidential election seven months ahead of the original schedule, we shared the view that the press and media should carry out an important function for the development of society and strengthening of the democratic political system. In this regard, it was stressed that the press must be a 'watch-dog' always monitoring the corruption of power

based on the serious investigative journalism; that the press must play a role of 'moderator' to mediate social conflicts and be a public-sphere for social integration; moreover, that the press must build society's agendas through constant communications with civil society using various media, including the internet, SMS, social media and direct contacts.

We confirmed our commitment to building an "Asian community" or "One Asia," as our ultimate goal. We believe that building a community of common interest, common destiny and common responsibilities with freer movement of people and goods will lead to greater peace and prosperity by enriching the mind and spirit of all our peoples, easing political and historical tensions, and raising the standard of living for the peoples.

In this regard, we noted that the orientation and effort of political parties in various countries are very important in building a community of Asia. We further noted that Asia is characterized by its diversity in terms of race, language, religion, culture and level of economic development. Hence the role of political parties is all the more important since they can influence to a great extent the policies of the incumbent and future governments as well as the awareness and activities of civil society in making efforts to build an Asian community.

While recognizing the need to avoid malicious fake news spreading, we affirmed the main duty of media is to promote prosperity of Asia and to ensure the peace and stability of Asia. Speaking truth to power is an important and, indeed, indispensable ingredient of the media's role in 21st Century Asia.

We identified terrorism, wide spread in the world, which has no religion or ethnicity, as one of major obstacles hindering the promotion of cross-border cooperation and thereby highlighted the significant role of journalists and representatives of political parties in the region to address the task of eliminating terrorism more vigorously. In particular, we condemned the terrorist attacks afflicted on the journalists who were heralding the truth of the society and agreed that the journalists should be better protected from potential terrorist attacks.

We shared the view that the Media Forum of the ICAPP is a very useful platform in terms of not only promoting 'One Asia' but also enhancing the understanding and cooperation among journalists. In this regard, we expressed our hope that there should be an abundant and effective institutional mechanism to encourage more journalists to participate in this Forum, and further agreed that we need to initiate a program fostering mutual exchange and cooperation among journalists in Asia, hopefully from the year 2018.

We reminded ourselves that in addition to expressing our strong support for such efforts of the ICAPP to reach out to other regions in the world as continuing close relationships with the COPPPAL, the Permanent Conference of Political Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean and the CAPP, the Council of African Political Parties, we encouraged the ICAPP

to establish contacts with organizations of political parties in Europe at the 1st Meeting of the ICAPP Media Forum in Seoul, Korea in September 2015. In this regards, we noted with great satisfaction that the Asia Europe Political Forum will be held for the first time in Seoul, the Republic of Korea on July 9, 2017. We reiterated our hope that the ICAPP will eventually develop into a global institution encompassing all political parties in the world regardless of differences in ideological orientations.

We reaffirmed that the role of the ICAPP Media Forum is to help promote communication, interaction and cooperation between political parties and the media in the region, and agreed to encourage more active monitoring and coverage of ICAPP activities by the media, particularly through promotion of digital connectivity.

Finally, we expressed our gratitude to the ICAPP Secretariat for preparing for the 3rd Meeting of the ICAPP Media Forum and extended our special thanks to the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea and the ICAPP Parliamentarians' Union in the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea for their co-sponsoring and warm hospitality to make the event successful.

Adopted in Seoul, Republic of Korea on 7th July 2017