Founding Chairman's Message

Excellencies, dear friends and colleagues in ICAPP and allies in other realms,

Twenty years ago, on September 17-20, 2000, forty political parties from 21 Asian countries responded to our invitation to inaugurate the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP) in Manila.

Although few people thought it would be possible to bring together political parties with different ideologies under one roof in a common political house, we thought that with 40 major parties for a start - - those in power and those in opposition - - coming together to talk about shared solutions to problems they have in common was an achievement in itself.

Twenty years ago, we came together to write our own chapter in Asia's political history. And despite the diversity of our cultures and ideologies, we had moved together toward a political vision of what our continent could become.

Twenty years today, we the more than 350 political parties from 52 Asian countries, have been helping advance the causes of peace, security and development in our region and the international community through fraternal consultations and political cooperation.

We commend the ICAPP Secretariat based in Seoul, for meticulously attending to the myriad work of our organization.

We regard our endeavor as parallel to the efforts of our governments and parliaments to bring about Asia-wide stability and concord.

We regard as our greatest challenges the work of completing our political and economic modernization - - eradicating mass poverty - - combating terrorism, false ideologies and violent extremism - - battling climate change and diseases - - and enabling our peoples to cope with the technological and knowledge revolution.

To meet these challenges, Asia's leaderships must raise strong political will. And this political will, only Asia's political parties can provide. For, while governments come and go, parties remain - - as mechanisms for the peaceful transfer of political power.

We also see our end-object as that of setting the stage for the economic and political integration of the Asia region.

That this goal may seem utopian should not intimidate us.

And we do not think it should matter that our generation may never see the fruits of its labors.

What should matter is that we are taking the first steps - - on a journey of many, many steps and thousands of miles - - to arrive someday at the Asian destination and achieve the Asian dream.

For you and I, we are like old men and old women who plant trees we may never sit under.

But this is only fitting and proper, because - - as leaders and special representatives of the Asian political parties - - we are agents of the transcendent Asian community - - we are acting on behalf of the Asian future.

Jose de Veneica
Former Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Phillippines