Brief Introduction of the ICAPP

As of 14 September 2022

The International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP) was launched in Manila, Philippines in September 2000 to promote exchanges and cooperation among political parties with various ideologies in Asia and Oceania.

The ICAPP seeks to enhance mutual understanding and deepen trust in the region and in doing so, promote peace and prosperity through the unique role and channel of political parties.

At first, few people thought it would be possible to bring together competing governing, opposition and independent political parties of Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, West Asia, the Middle East, and Oceania. However, since its inception, the ICAPP has grown steadily in both membership and influence.

Now more than 350 political parties in the region with diverse political and ideological backgrounds are eligible to participate in the ICAPP activities. By bringing together leaders of political parties in Asia at regular assemblies, the ICAPP has become a positive force for mutual understanding among Asian countries and peoples. The ICAPP meetings have been visionary, cordial, constructive and successful.

The ICAPP has also become institutionalized through wide-ranging programs and a sophisticated structure. The General Assembly, which welcomes all eligible political parties across Asia and Oceania, is held biannually. The Standing Committee, which is composed of political party representatives from 23 countries, meets semi-annually to address general matters of the ICAPP. Special Conferences are held on timely topics upon recommendations from the Standing Committee, and small-scale workshops are also held targeting specific audiences and topics. Themes of previous Special Conferences and workshops include, among others, prevention of political corruption, green development, migration and refugees and promotion of business opportunities, among others. The ICAPP Youth Wing and Women's Wing have also been established and their annual meetings focus on issues related to education, employment, human rights, and equal opportunities. Other subsidiary bodies, such as ICAPP Media Forum, ICAPP Tourism Promotion and Inter-City Cooperation Council (TOPIC), ICAPP Business Council (IBC), and Asian Cultural Council (ACC) have also been set up under the Standing Committee and hold their meetings on a regular basis.

The ICAPP has also established channels of dialogue with political parties in Africa, Europe, and the Americas. This is manifested through the partnership among the ICAPP, the Permanent Conference of Political Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean (*COPPPAL*), and the Council of African Political Parties (CAPP). The CAPP is the product of coordinated efforts by the ICAPP and *COPPPAL* to help political parties in Africa establish a forum. The ICAPP and *COPPPAL* have been holding joint sessions annually since 2009 and the trilateral meetings among the Members of ICAPP Standing Committee, *COPPPAL* Coordinating Body and CAPP Executive Committee have been held since 2016. At the 3rd Trilateral Meeting among the ICAPP-*COPPPAL*-CAPP, which was held in Moscow, Russia in 2018, the three organizations agreed to designate the ICAPP Secretariat as the Common Secretariat to further joint cooperation in the future.

The Asia-Europe Political Forum (AEPF), which is regularly co-organized by the ICAPP and the political party groups represented in the European Parliament is also a product of such intercontinental cooperation. The first meeting of the AEPF was held in Seoul, Korea in 2017 after discussions between the ICAPP and political party groups of the European Parliament to enhance mutual understanding and cooperation between Asia and Europe. The second AEPF meeting was held in London, United Kingdom in 2018, the third meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 2019, and the fourth meeting in Prague, Czech Republic in July 2022 under the auspice of European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR).

In recognition of the ICAPP's role in bringing together various political parties to promote understanding and friendship among countries not only in Asia, but also in Africa, Europe and Latin America, a number of governments in the region, including those of Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Iran, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, have signed the inter-governmental "MOU on Cooperation to Support the Activities of the ICAPP" in 2013. More governments are encouraged to join in signing the MOU.

The ICAPP strives to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals by raising awareness on key issues and fostering dialogue on the design and implementation of policies that can bring positive change. In 2018, the UNESCO acknowledged the ICAPP as an international organization of political parties of independent states and signed the "Cooperation Agreement between the UNESCO and the ICAPP." The ICAPP will continue to play its role not only in building a cohesive community in Asia, but also in contributing to the global quest for peace and prosperity.

The 5th General Assembly held in 2009 decided to establish the ICAPP Secretariat in Seoul, Republic of Korea. Thanks to the support of many governments in the region, the Secretariat has been able to develop and expand the scope of the ICAPP activities.

The ICAPP Secretariat can be reached by email at secretariat@theicapp.org. More detailed information on the ICAPP and its activities can be found on its website at www.theicapp.org.

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