ICAPP/4GA/003

Declaration of the 4th General Assembly of the ICAPP
(Seoul, Korea, September 7-10, 2006)

We, leaders and representatives of 90 political parties from Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Cyprus, East Timor, Fiji Islands, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Republic of Korea, Laos, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Russian Federation, Samoa, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, and Vietnam, gathered in Seoul for the Fourth General Assembly of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP), jointly organized by the governing Uri Party and the opposition Grand National Party of the Republic of Korea under the main theme of "Peace and Prosperity in Asia." We aimed to further strengthen our collective endeavor to bring about stability, peace and prosperity in Asia by building mutual confidence and fellowship among Asian political organizations, by seeking political consensus through consultation, and by sharing our experiences and developing common political strategies for all our peoples, as envisioned in Manila in September 2000, and as confirmed in Bangkok in November 2002, and reconfirmed in Beijing in September 2004.

1. We noted with great satisfaction that the ICAPP has become a solid platform to advance our common vision and an effective channel to bridge diverse ideologies and cultures existing in Asia. With renewed commitment, this year, we pledged ourselves to continue our utmost efforts to further promote mutual understanding and cooperation among the peoples and the political parties in the region. As a result, we presented the future direction that the ICAPP should be progressing towards, on the basis of the principles confirmed by the past three General Assemblies, in the following paragraphs with the sincere aim of seeing our region realize its full potential and ultimately witness permanent peace and shared prosperity all across Asia.

Regional Security and Political Stability

2. With firm conviction that regional security and political stability are necessary foundations in achieving these goals, we carefully deliberated on our responsibilities as political leaders and identified our common tasks to meet the challenges arising in the region, firmly reminding ourselves that we must pursue peaceful settlement of disputes through dialogue, while respecting the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-intervention in domestic affairs.

3. First and foremost, we strongly condemned all forms of terrorism as they only work to destabilize the region and counter the goals of the ICAPP. Accordingly, we stood united in agreeing to work together in finding and implementing measures, which effectively confront terrorism, while complying with relevant obligations under international law. We called on the international community to work towards eradicating the root causes of terrorism and advocated the strengthening of coordination and collaboration between countries and regional organizations toward this goal.

4. In this regard, we also supported the initiative for the Inter-Faith Dialogue which would bring together peoples with different religious beliefs and cultural heritages, thus isolating the extremists who attempt to resolve their differences through violence. These inter-faith dialogues should engage people of all faiths including, but not limited to, Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, and Buddhists.

5. We affirmed the fact that proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) poses a threat to the existence and development of mankind, and is a major element affecting

regional security and political stability. Thus, we fully endorsed the comprehensive prohibition and thorough elimination of nuclear weapons and we opposed the proliferation of WMD and their carriers.

6. In this regard, we noted United Nations Security Council Resolution 1695 of 15 July 2006, which supported the six-party talks, called for their early resumption, and urged all the participants to intensify their efforts on the full implementation of the 19 September 2005 Joint Statement, with a view to achieving verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in a peaceful manner, and to maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in north-east Asia. We also welcomed the signing of the treaty on the creation of nuclear weapons free zone in Central Asia on 8 September 2006.

7. In recognition that the principle of democracy is a fundamental value as it respects the will of the majority, protects the rights of individuals and minority groups, and subjects governments to the rule of law, we emphasized the importance of making concerted efforts in the promotion of democracy across Asia. We acknowledged the need for more systemic support to modernize political parties in some parts of our region and agreed, as a means to achieve this goal, to set up a clearing house where political parties can exchange ideas and best practices to better serve political interests of the peoples. We are confident that such collective exertion shall bear positive results for the region.

8. We acknowledged that human security issues including drug and human trafficking, piracy, and other trans-national crimes are obstacles to peace and stability in the region which must be overcome. If left uncontrolled, they threaten to directly counteract the work exerted in achieving our goals. Thus, we welcomed all initiatives which aim to prevent, control, and eliminate all such transnational crimes, not only on an individual country-by-country basis, but also at the regional level.

9. We recalled the large-scale natural disasters that the region recently experienced and conveyed our condolences to the victims and their bereaved families. Recognizing that through collective effort, such tragedies can be surmounted, we fully supported the establishments of the UN Anti-Disaster Unit, a Global Fund, and early warning systems to prevent and minimize the dangers of calamities created by large-scale natural disasters. Further, we applauded the efforts in the region to prevent and find an answer to avian influenza and other pandemic diseases.

Poverty Reduction and Good Governance

10. By recognizing that Asia has been the stage of many miracles, particularly in the economic area, and that the positive effects have not been enjoyed universally and across the region, we reaffirmed the need to address poverty and inequality still prevalent in the region. For its appropriate remedy, we proposed equitable share among countries in view of the interests and rights of all countries, including access to resources. We concurred that it is our obligation to pursue a policy of sustainable development, to share development experiences, and to expand economic and technical cooperation, all actions which partake in the curing of such ailments.

11. In particular, we found that poverty is a prominent issue which needs to be urgently addressed. Therefore, we were united in endorsing the efforts to realize the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which includes, but is not limited to, reducing global poverty by half by the year 2015. We also supported other goals of the MDGs that ensure environmental sustainability and develop a global partnership for development.

12. We reaffirmed that success in our efforts for eradicating poverty depends, *inter alia*, on good governance within each country. We identified the following as characteristics of

good governance: participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and following the rule of law. In addition, we renewed our determination to fight against corruption, which is a vice still deeply rooted in some parts of our region. We also agreed to embrace attempts to improve corporate governance, establish financially sound regulation, and promote a cleaner and more transparent community in the region.

13. Further, we stressed that good governance at the international level is equally important to achieve our common goal to free the entire human race from want. Our success depends on transparency in the financial, monetary and trading systems. In this regard, we reaffirmed our commitment to an open, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system. We shared the view that the idea of creating the Asian Monetary Fund and the Asian Anti-Poverty Fund should be given wider support to help many economies in the region to better cope with potential financial challenges, generate more appropriate jobs, and create social wealth. We also agreed to push ahead with the large scale debt-to-equity conversion initiative, which had been unanimously endorsed by G-77, as one of anti-poverty programs under the MDGs.

14. We agreed to intensify the investment of our time and energy to improve access to proper nutrition, basic social services, healthy environment, educational opportunities and gainful employment. We agreed to continue our efforts to mainstream women, ethnic minorities, handicapped individuals, and other marginalized populations. We also shared our concern on the impact of high oil prices and emphasized the need to develop energy resources, including alternative fuels, in ways to alleviate the sufferings of the poor.

15. Moreover, we concluded that the Special Workshop on Women Politicians, held for the first time during this General Assembly, reminded us of the need to firmly recommit ourselves in the effort to promote the political empowerment and social participation of women. We determined that this would entail proactive endeavors to create practical and specific formulation, such as the micro-financing programs introduced in less developed countries. We recognized that the elevation of women to their rightful base, ultimately works to counteract the ailments, particularly that of poverty. Thus, we noted that workshops, focusing on women's issues in future General Assemblies, would be most beneficial.

Building an Asian Community

16. As we proclaimed in the Asian Declaration adopted at the First General Assembly of the ICAPP in Manila in 2000, it is our ultimate goal to build an Asian community that will bring about permanent peace and shared prosperity in the region and will enrich the minds and spirits of all our peoples. We reminded ourselves of this vision of an Asian community and emphasized the importance of collectively striving to strengthen coordination and cooperation among countries, in particular through expanded roles of political parties.

17. In this regard, we reaffirmed our support and endorsement of the efforts being made by various regional groupings toward building an Asian community, including the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Central Asian Union, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Shanghai Cooperation Organization, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Plus Three, ASEAN Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), Conference on Interaction and Confidence- Building in Asia (CICA), ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO), and East Asia Summit.

18. In particular, we endorsed the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) initiative, which the

Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace (AAPP) had agreed to convert itself into at its 5th General Assembly in Islamabad in November 2004, and expressed our firm conviction that such efforts to foster integration of the region will lead us a step closer to ultimately draw upon our respective strengths and creating the synergy to build an Asian community.

19. We agreed that further institutionalization of the ICAPP is necessary in order to achieve this goal. We understood that it would be a long term exercise, involving all the political parties in the region, and that the steps to share our experiences and knowledge in party-building and modernization should be incorporated in the process. With this understanding in mind, we adopted the Charter of the ICAPP, which is attached as Annex, and mandated the current Standing Committee of the ICAPP to prepare the plan to implement the Charter from the Fifth General Assembly of the ICAPP. It is our firm conviction that the Charter, together with the recent launching of the website, will be a solid foundation in the development of the ICAPP.

Conclusions

20. With the continually transforming political, economic, and social landscapes, the ICAPP is an embodiment of our ideal to unite the region of Asia and create an environment where all people of the region flourish. Bearing this in mind, we have gathered here in Seoul and remained loyal to the objectives of the ICAPP. Our pursuit of the common goal and spirit of cooperation have made the dialogue, which we have extensively engaged in during the Fourth General Assembly, truly productive and reassuring. Although we must now part, we do not leave empty handed. We take with us fond memories of the ICAPP to serve as reminders of the immense potential of Asia and the close friendship which exists between us. We shall now return invigorated to our respective nations, and work to guarantee the continuity of our commitment.

21. Finally, we express our deepest gratitude to the Uri Party and the Grand National Party for co-hosting this historic ICAPP meeting. Further, we thank the government and the people of the Republic of Korea for their support and warm hospitality. The impeccable arrangements by the Organizing Committee and the Secretariat of the Fourth General Assembly, with the support of The Korea Foundation, The Federation of Korean Industries, Korea International Trade Association, The Korea Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Korea Securities Dealers Association, Lotte Hotel in Seoul, Hanns Seidel Stiftung, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, and The United Nations Development Program, have made this conference a monumental gathering.

Adopted unanimously on this 10th day of September 2006 in Seoul, Republic of Korea.