



## Colombo Declaration of the 8<sup>th</sup> GA

(ICAPP/8GA/011/Rev)

1. We, the leaders and representatives of political parties from Afghanistan, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, East Timor, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Laos, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey and Vietnam, gathered here in Colombo, the capital city of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, for the Eighth General Assembly of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP). The Assembly was co-hosted by the governing Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the opposition United National Party of Sri Lanka from September 18 to September 20, 2014 under the main theme of “Building an Asian Community.”

2. We noted that the 8<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the ICAPP was held in the context of a rapidly changing world, in which the global balance of economic, cultural and political power is shifting inexorably to Asia. We also noted with great satisfaction that the ICAPP is becoming a solid platform and a unique forum open to all political parties across the ideological spectrum to bring out the best of Asia’s unity in diversity by leading the way forward in what is now generally accepted as the “Asian Century”, and by building a bridge of peace, friendship, unity and cooperation among all countries in the region.

3. In particular, we renewed our commitment to “building an Asian community” as our ultimate goal that would bring about lasting peace and shared prosperity in our region and enrich the minds and spirits of all our peoples. We also reminded ourselves of this vision of an Asian community of common interest, common destiny and common responsibilities, and emphasized the importance of collectively striving to strengthen coordination and cooperation among countries through expanded roles of political parties.

4. In doing so, we reaffirmed our commitment to the principles—and the spirit—of the ICAPP Charter and of the Declarations we had adopted at our biennial General Assemblies in Manila in 2000, Bangkok in 2002, Beijing in 2004, Seoul in 2006, Astana in 2009, Phnom Penh in 2010, and Baku in 2012. We also reaffirmed that mutual recognition of territorial integrity and sovereignty, adherence to the resolution of conflicts by peaceful means, respect for each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and consensus orientation, among others, would remain the main pillars of the ICAPP principles.

### **Enhancing Mutual Trust for Regional Security and Political Stability**

5. We noted that the ever-increasing interdependence and interconnectivity might create unforeseen challenges to regional security due to the failure to foster a corresponding environment for better understanding of diverse national interests and security perspectives of the countries in the region. In this regard, we expressed our deep concern at the lingering conflicts in our region, and stressed that all the potentially dangerous flashpoints in our region, including Afghanistan, Armenia-Azerbaijan, Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Korean Peninsula, Pakistan and Syria, should be resolved peacefully through dialogue, upholding international laws and

the United Nations (UN) Resolutions. We also noted that the current territorial issues in some parts of our region might pose serious potential threats to overall security in the region.

Under these circumstances, we agreed that the ICAPP should play a bigger role in building an Asian community, as a leading platform by safeguarding unity and cooperation among all political parties, by exchanging diverse and different views in a frank and friendly atmosphere, by forging consensus through consultations, and by exploring practical ways to promote security cooperation in the region with the new concept of ensuring common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. We also agreed to further expand ICAPP activities to strengthen communication and coordination among political parties in various sectors and fields, and constantly promote mutual understanding.

6. We stressed that proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) constitutes a serious threat to not only regional but global peace and security, and endorsed the comprehensive prohibition and thorough elimination of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery. We also reiterated the need to implement an unequivocal undertaking to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons agreed by nuclear weapon states at the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 2010, and called for a prompt start of negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention, as proposed by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

In this regard, we noted that nothing in the NPT should be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all the parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

7. In addition, we noted with grave concern that our region was confronted with a plethora of challenges in non-traditional security fields. First and foremost, we strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestation as they only work to destabilize our region and counter the goals of the ICAPP. Urgent crises in our region, however, are not limited to terrorism. There are other equally serious crises, such as heinous acts against innocent civilians in conflict areas, transnational crimes against humanity including human trafficking, humanitarian catastrophe and large-scale devastation caused by natural disasters, and sufferings of many people under abject poverty.

8. With this in mind, we shared the view that safeguarding regional security and political stability through enhancing mutual trust among countries and peoples would be a strong and basic foundation for achieving sustainable development and integration in all sectors of our region.

In this regard, we obligated ourselves as political leaders to support and coordinate efforts in finding and consolidating various types of collective and multilateral arrangements in our region on the basis of the ICAPP principles. In particular, we expressed our hope that such frameworks of regional cooperation and integration like the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) among ASEAN members, and closer unity among the members of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) will be formed in other parts of our region, and will ultimately be applicable at an all-inclusive pan-Asian level. We further agreed to closely coordinate our endeavors with the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) and the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) in the political, economic, social and cultural fields.

## **Deepening Economic Integration for Shared Prosperity**

9. We reaffirmed our conviction that substantial regional economic integration would lead to greater peace and stability by not only raising the standard of living for the peoples and but also easing deep-rooted political and historical tensions. We shared the view that cooperation would generate strength while isolation would only lead to weakness, and that pursuing common interests and seeking win-win cooperation by promoting common interests should be the way forward, which would enable us to create a new miracle in our region and enable us to play a larger role in global governance. We also reminded ourselves of our vision to gradually integrate Asia into a region with free movement of goods, services, investments, skilled labor, and capital.

In this regard, we noted with great satisfaction rapid increase of the intra-regional trade and other economic transactions in our region, and stressed the need to further develop Asia-oriented economic cooperation strategies to narrow the development divide among countries and better utilize each country's distinct development path as stimulus for complementarity and mutual enforcement. We also stressed the importance of potential, strategic role to be played by the ICAPP in linking up and mobilizing all the sub-regional cooperation efforts, such as ASEAN, SAARC, GCC, SCO, Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building in Asia (CICA), Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS), South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC), Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC), and Asian Peace and Reconciliation Council (APRC) into a larger pan-Asian architecture.

10. We reconfirmed our commitment to uphold open regionalism as our guiding principle to achieve our goal of economic integration in our region. We also stressed the need to actively seek economic cooperation, in the fields of trade, finance, and science and technology, with other regions in the world for mutual benefits with an outward-looking and inclusive attitude. In doing so, we agreed to enhance coordination and cooperation with our intra-regional political partners, such as the Permanent Conference of Political Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean (COPPPAL) and the Council of African Political Parties (CAPP).

11. We noted with grave concern that poverty and inequality were still the most prevalent and prominent issue in our region which should be urgently addressed. In this regard, we called for increased efforts among all countries to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which included, but was not limited to, reducing global poverty by half by 2015. We reaffirmed that success in our efforts for reducing poverty depended on, inter alia, the increased North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation and good governance, which should be characterized by transparency, accountability, responsiveness, effectiveness, efficiency and rule of law, not only within each country but also at the international level.

In this regard, we reaffirmed our resolve to establish an Asian Anti-Poverty Fund and an Asian Micro-Financing Fund—as called for at the ICAPP Special Conference on Poverty Alleviation in July 2010. We also reaffirmed our proposal to enlarge the objective area of the Fund to a Global Anti-Poverty Fund following consultations with COPPPAL, CAPP and other international organizations.

12. We recognized that our region receives the second largest number of tourism arrivals in the world, and called for joint strategies to cooperate on tourism resources, capitalize on untapped tourism markets, diversify tourism products and services, and curtail barriers to intra-regional tourism growth. We reaffirmed that the expansion of intra-regional tourism would not only strengthen regional reconciliation and unity but also generate considerable spillover effects on all sectors of our society, including free flow of capital and investment, poverty reduction, socio-cultural identity construction, and development of human resources.

13. We further noted that our region accounts for more than 30 million migrant workers, and confirmed our commitments to bringing domestic legal frameworks into conformity with the fundamental principles and conventions of the International Labor Organization (ILO) to ensure a basic level of protection for workers, particularly low-skilled, domestic and female workers. We also stressed the importance of promoting active exchanges of professionals and skilled workers to ensure equal access to shared knowledge and technologies across the region. In this regard, we recommended improving job market assessment and mutual recognition of qualifications among countries in the region.

### **Promoting Cooperation for Sustainable Development**

14. We confirmed that combating climate change is one of our most important and urgent tasks, and agreed to continue our watchdog activities to prevent further degradation of environment and eco-system caused by climate change, and renewed our resolution to support all efforts to promote eco-safety and moderate the effects of climate change.

In this regard, we welcomed the launching of “Global Parties’ Climate and Ecological Alliance (GPCEA)” by the International Eco-Safety Cooperation Organization (IESCO) in July 2014 and expressed our willingness to actively participate in the GPCEA’s works and initiatives to combat ecological degradation and climate change, and promote green growth and sustainable development, in cooperation with COPPPAL, CAPP and the Centrist Asia-Pacific Democrats International (CAPDI) and in line with ICAPP’s principles and purposes. We also committed ourselves to engage governments, enterprises and civil societies in the construction of green economies.

15. We emphasized the importance of mainstreaming women and young people in all our regional agenda as a comprehensive approach to ensure incorporation of gender and youth perspectives in all central political, economic, social and cultural activities, including development, implementation and monitoring of policies and resource allocation. We also emphasized the importance of engaging women and young people in all dialogues among countries, and agreed to coordinate our efforts to build their capacity and strengthen their networks among countries to help enable them to contribute to regional development.

In this regard, we commended the increasingly important roles played by the ICAPP Women’s Wing and the ICAPP Youth Wing as main fora in our region to advance the goals of equality, development and peace for all women and young people in the interest of all humanity, and to promote exchanges and cooperation among women and young people for the search of common vision and strategy to resolve various issues such as poverty, violence, crime, sexuality and prejudice especially faced by them in our region and beyond.

16. We acknowledged the importance of uniting our efforts on all fronts in addressing large-scale natural disasters that have claimed so many lives and led to the massive loss of property in our region, and providing timely relief and rehabilitation for the affected peoples and areas in a safe and effective manner. We also noted with grave concern the spread of pandemic diseases accompanied by the increase of exchanges in the region.

In this regard, we committed ourselves to exerting every effort in establishing cross-border crisis management systems and preventive mechanisms, and expressed our hope for the increased role of the ICAPP Medical Emergency Forum (IMEF), which was launched in July 2010 as a new humanitarian initiative of the ICAPP to facilitate timely action on urgent crises and disasters in our region.

### **Promoting People-to-People Contacts for Mutual Understanding and Friendship**

17. We shared the importance of enhancing people-to-people contacts to promote mutual understanding and friendship, and expressed our strong support for promoting inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogues among various cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups in the region. In this regard, we welcomed the proclamation of an International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022) at the 37<sup>th</sup> General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in November 2013. We stood united in agreement that this dialogue would further foster harmonious co-existence and sustained interaction among various sectors of our society, and counter extremism in all its aspects by easing rising politico-religious tensions.

18. We also encouraged promoting intra-regional educational cooperation and research collaboration among academic institutions to establish a shared quality assurance framework and to cultivate more and better talents in the region. In this regard, we welcomed the university exchanges program under the “Collective Action for Mobility Program of University Students in Asia (CAMPUS Asia)” launched by China, Japan and Republic of Korea in 2012, and expressed our hope that the scale and scope of such program can be further expanded to involve more countries in the region.

19. Finally, we expressed our profound gratitude to the people and the government of Sri Lanka, for their warm hospitality. We also thanked our gracious co-hosts, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the United National Party of Sri Lanka, for their excellent arrangements to make the 8<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the ICAPP a resounding success.

Our special thanks went to H.E. Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. Without his initiative and support, this gathering would not have been possible.

We also expressed our gratitude to the representatives of political parties and institutions from various countries outside Asia, including the COPPPAL and the CAPP, who participated in the 8<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, for their cooperation and solidarity.

Adopted unanimously on this 20<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2014 in Colombo, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.



