



ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ORGANIZATION
27TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
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Statement delivered by

H.E. SAMDECH HENG SAMRIN
(President of the National Assembly, Kingdom of Cambodia)

*Honorable Jose de Venecia, Jr., Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Philippines and
President of AIPO,
Your Royal Highness,
Honorable Speakers of Parliaments of AIPO Member Countries,
Honorable Special Observers and Dialogue Partners,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is my great honor and special privilege to attend the 27th General Assembly of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO) in the beautiful city of the Angels. On behalf of my delegation and my own, I wish to extend my profound gratitude and warmest congratulations to the House of Representatives of the Philippines, in particular to the Honorable Jose de Venecia, Jr. for hosting this very important meeting of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO) and for the warm hospitality extended to all of us. I am very delighted to be present among the distinguished colleagues from the parliaments of our ASEAN region.

I am also pleased and impressed by the remarks of Honorable Manny Villar, President of the Senate, and Honorable Noli de Castro, Vice President of Republic of the Philippines and the insightful Keynote Address of Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, President of Republic of the Philippines. Despite our achievements and success, I believe that it is important for us to continue to work together as one region with greater unity and solidarity in order to remain prosperous, equitable and a caring society.

However, in order to contribute to the distinguished General Assembly of AIPO, I wish to raise three important issues, which I consider our parliaments should be proactively thinking about and strategically exploring the possibility of making a valuable contribution in terms of innovative and practical approaches.

1 – ASEAN Integration

We are now in the age of globalization, which can be a powerful and dynamic force for strengthening cooperation and accelerating growth and development. However, globalization presents not only opportunities but also risks and challenges. It has increased the vulnerability of the developing and the least-developed countries, which are in the process of being integrated into the world economy. For this reason, to cope with those risks and challenges, we, in ASEAN, have to make every possible effort to ensure that the whole ASEAN is marching forward on the same pace.

I am of a view that it is essential to set up strategies and programs to eliminate or reduce substantially the disparities within ASEAN countries as soon as possible. In doing so, we will be able to integrate the economies of ASEAN as a whole, and to cope with the globalization phenomenon. At the ASEAN level, we support the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) to bridge the development gaps between newer and older ASEAN members.

2- Tourism

It was a pleasure recently for the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia to host the AIPO Ad Hoc Committee Study Meeting on promoting and funding cultural and eco-tourism in the region. We have a precious heritage in Southeast Asia. We are rich in history and cultural diversity. People come from all over the world to experience this precious legacy.

Tourism is an excellent means for less-developed member countries to generate local employment opportunities and stimulate economic development without destroying their environmental endowments. Cambodia tourism has played a crucial role in poverty reduction. As other developing countries, we should leverage tourism to promote sustainable economic development.

I am certain that, with the support and cooperation of AIPO Member and Special Observer delegation, and the ASEAN Secretariat, we will find ways and means to promote cultural and eco-tourism. And, in doing so, we will foster development throughout Southeast Asia and advance the integration into the regional and global economies.

3 – Regional Security

We have gathered here in an atmosphere of hope for enduring peace and stability in our region. Our meeting will be addressing a number of developments unfolding in the world that have critical implications for the long-term security of our region and of the world and for the economies of our countries and the well-being of our people. We will be looking at ways of mitigating the adverse impact of these events on the people immediately affected, our own people, the security and stability of our region, and the prospects of peace in the world.

With those new challenges and threats, AIPO is entering a new security era. In this context, what is really being faced by its member countries today are no longer security matter which cover only conventional security issues, but also as well political, economic, and social security, at large. The current thinking of security is more complex and involves more actors as we need to manage the increasingly challenging transnational nature of the security problem in the world today. I believe that we must remain vigilant in our concerted efforts to confront the challenge of fighting terrorism in our region. We must cooperate even more among our security-related agencies, especially at the operational level. Peace, stability and prosperity of ASEAN are the ultimate objectives of AIPO.

Mr. President

Honorable Heads of Delegations

Honorable Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

In my conclusion, I wish every distinguished member of the 27th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization the very best and much success in the pursuit of peace, development, and prosperity.

Thank you for your attention.