



ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ORGANIZATION
27TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
10 - 15 SEPTEMBER 2006 ▲ CEBU CITY, PHILIPPINES

REPORT
on the
27TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCTION

The 27th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO) was held on 10 – 15 September 2006 at the Marco Polo Plaza Hotel, Cebu City, Philippines.

PARTICIPANTS

The General Assembly was attended by delegations from AIPO Member countries: **Kingdom of Cambodia** led by H.E. Samdech Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly; **Republic of Indonesia** led by H.E. Agung Laksono, Speaker of the House of Representatives; **Lao People's Democratic Republic** led by H.E. Thongsing Thammavong, President of the National Assembly; **Malaysia** led by Hon. Datuk Lim Si Cheng, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives; **Republic of the Philippines** led by Hon. Antonio V. Cuenco, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives; **Singapore** led by H.E. Abdullah Tarmugi, Speaker of Parliament; **Thailand** led by H.E. Suchon Chaleekure, President of the Senate and Acting President of the Parliament; and the **Socialist Republic of Vietnam** led by H.E. Nguyen Phu Trong, President of the National Assembly.

Also present were Special Observer Delegations from **Brunei Darussalam** led by Hon. Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Indera Mahkota Pengiran Anak (Dr.) Hall Kemaludin ibni Al-Marhum Pengiran Bendahara Pengiran Anak Mohd. Yassin, Speaker of the Legislative Council, and the **Union of Myanmar** led by H.E. Dr. Tun Shin, Deputy Attorney General and Member of the National Convention Convening Work Committee; and Observer Delegations from **Australia** led by Hon. Peter Slipper, Member of Parliament; **Canada** led by Hon. Joseph Day, Senator of Parliament; **People's Republic of China** led by Hon. Wang Yingfan, Member of the Standing Committee and Vice Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, National People's Congress; **European Parliament** led by Hon. Hartmut Nassauer, Member of Parliament; **Japan** led by Hon. Akio Koizumi, Member of the House of Councillors; **Republic of Korea** led by Hon. Kim Young Sun, Member of the National Assembly; **New Zealand** led by Hon. Dr. Richard Worth, Member of Parliament; **Independent State of Papua New Guinea** led by Hon. Bob Dadae, Deputy Speaker of the National Parliament; and **Russian Federation** led by Hon. Boris Plokhotnyuk, Member of the State Duma.

Guests included ASEAN Secretary General, **H.E. Ong Keng Yong**; Mr. AIPO **Hon. Manuel M. Garcia**; representatives from the **media, Hanns Seidel Foundation, Parliamentarians Network on the World Bank (PNoWB)** and the **Centrist Democrat International**.

The list of delegates from AIPO Member, Special Observers and Observer Countries is attached as [Annex “A”](#).

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

An Executive Committee meeting was held on Sunday, 10 September 2006 at 9:15 o’ clock in the evening. Leaders of delegations and two delegates from each member Parliament, together with representatives from the Special Observer Countries Brunei Darussalam and Myanmar, attended the meeting presided over by H.E. Jose de Venecia, President of AIPO.

The Executive Committee considered the following:

1. Program of Activities for Delegates and Observers
2. Agenda for the 27th General Assembly
3. Topics for Dialogue with Observer Countries
4. Membership of Committees/WAIPO
5. Date and Venue of the 28th General Assembly

The Executive Committee agreed to hold the 28th AIPO General Assembly in Malaysia on the third week of August 2007.

The following were also favorably considered:

1. Reading of the speech of Mr. AIPO No. 1, Professor Dr. Prasop Ratanakorn during the First Plenary Session;
2. Presentation of the Report by Thailand on the Regional Seminar for Parliamentarians from South East Asia and the Asia-Pacific Region on Security Sector Reforms in the National and Regional Contexts, as an agenda item of the Committee on Political Matters;
3. Inclusion of the proposal of Indonesia to adopt a resolution on the Middle East relative to the Lebanon crisis, as an agenda item of the Committee on Political Matters;
4. Inclusion of the proposal to adopt a resolution on Common Legislative Initiatives on Improving the Quality Standard and Quantity of Agriculture Products, as an agenda item of the Committee on Economic Matters;
5. Inclusion of the proposal to adopt a resolution of Common Legislative Initiatives on Pandemic Diseases as the First Test Case, as an agenda item of the Committee on Social Matters;
6. Inclusion of the proposal to adopt a resolution on the creation of an Anti-Disaster Fund, as an agenda item of the Committee on Social Matters on Disaster Management and Emergency Response.

The Executive Committee, upon the recommendation of H.E. Agung Laksono of Indonesia, also favorably considered the request of the Chairman of the AIPO Ad Hoc Committee to present its Report on the Transformation of AIPO into a more Effective and Closely Integrated Institution at the First Plenary Session of the 27th General Assembly.

The Report of the Executive Committee Meeting is attached as [Annex “B”](#).

The Program of Activities, the Agenda for the 27th General Assembly and the Topics for Dialogue with Observer Countries are attached as [Annexes “C”](#), [“D”](#), and [“E”](#), respectively.

CALL ON H.E. JOSE DE VENECIA, JR. BY LEADERS OF DELEGATIONS OF AIPO MEMBER COUNTRIES, SPECIAL OBSERVER COUNTRIES AND OBSERVER COUNTRIES

The heads of delegations paid a courtesy call on H.E. Jose de Venecia, Jr., Speaker of the Philippine House of Representatives and President of the AIPO, at the Shanghai Room, Marco Polo Plaza Hotel on 11 September 2006 at 8:00 o'clock in the morning.

OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 27TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Opening Ceremony of the 27th AIPO General Assembly was held on 11 September 2006 at 9:00 o'clock in the morning at the Grand Ballroom of the Marco Polo Hotel.

The Philippine National Anthem was sung. This was followed by the singing of the AIPO Song and the ASEAN Song by the Mandaue Children's Choir.

- A. H.E. Jose de Venecia, Jr. delivered the Welcome Address, citing that the Philippines and Cebu, in particular, are blessed to host two major regional gatherings this year, this AIPO General Assembly, and the ASEAN Leaders' Summit in December. As he bid welcome to the delegates and other participants, he expressed the hope of laying the solid foundations for the evolution of AIPO into a more effective and closely integrated Assembly of ASEAN parliamentary constituencies.
- B. Hon. Manny Villar, President of the Senate of the Philippines, delivered his Remarks. In his Remarks, Senate President Villar noted the emergence of AIPO as an important vehicle in the search for peace, unity and prosperity. He pointed out that although the priorities of ASEAN nations may differ, the solutions to some problems are defined to a large extent by the influence of our respective cultures, and there is a need to articulate a common agenda with policy recommendations and action strategies for expanded regional collaboration.

He believes that high on the agenda are the threat of global terrorism, the challenge of a globalized economic order and the creation of an ASEAN economic community, and we can remove the seeds of suspicion, mistrust and hate that are transformed into acts of terror by promoting continuous dialogues and building consensus.

Senate President Villar also underscored the role that an ASEAN economic community will play in paving the way for the flow of inter-regional investments, saying that if it becomes easy for any home-grown investor to put money, technology and other resources in any place in ASEAN under the context of regional economic liberalization, then we can look forward to greater growth and expansion in the region's economy.

The text of Senate President Manny Villar's Remarks is attached as [Annex "F"](#).

- C. H.E. Noli de Castro, Vice President of the Philippines, delivered his Address to the General Assembly. In his Address, Vice President de Castro noted the significance of the AIPO 27th General Assembly in achieving the vision of the ASEAN. He recalled that the ASEAN founding fathers envisioned a community of nations encompassing all the countries in the region. Today, ASEAN has ten member countries bound together in multi-dimensional ties when ideological differences no longer matter.

He suggested that ASEAN must reinvent itself to be more relevant to our modern society, and acknowledged ASEAN's efforts in the establishment of several milestones such as the ASEAN Free Trade Area, the Vientiane Action Plan and the Bali Concord II. However, he stressed that much work still needs to be done toward the realization of building a people-centered community of caring societies.

Vice President de Castro wished that the Region's Parliamentarians, while considering topics such as Regional Economic Integration, Terrorism, and the Transnational crimes, should also consider ways of bringing the ASEAN closer to the people of the Region. He said that the Philippines intends to work on regional environmental concerns, energy security, counter-terrorism, and the ASEAN Charter during its chairmanship of the ASEAN Standing Committee.

The Vice President stressed on parliamentary diplomacy to benefit the ASEAN Community. He said that AIPO can be a key mechanism for building friendship and material cooperation as well as regional peace and prosperity, and toward a more solid ASEAN. He urged AIPO to take conscious effort in championing the Millennium Development Goals.

Vice President Noli de Castro's Address is attached as [Annex "G"](#).

- D. The Keynote Address by H.E. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, President of the Philippines, was delivered through video.

President Arroyo welcomed the delegates to the Philippines and conveyed her gratitude to the ASEAN friends for the support in bringing a just and lasting peace to Mindanao.

The President emphasized ASEAN's central role on peace and order, political and social stability and economic growth in each country at a time when there are lingering doubts about the ability of the WTO to manage global trade and the United Nations to restore peace and order around the world.

She highlighted the Philippines' hosting of various ASEAN meetings, including the 12th ASEAN Summit in December 2006, with the theme "One Caring and Sharing Community". Thus, it is expected that for a year, the Philippines will lead ASEAN in the pursuit of closer cooperation in ASEAN energy, security, counter-terrorism, the welfare and protection of migrant workers, and the formation of an ASEAN Charter.

She urged AIPO member countries to consider adopting national legislation on energy and security that would be in harmony with similar laws of other member countries. She also proposed that AIPO agree on collective development on a large scale of alternative and indigenous energy sources that are available in the region.

She called on all ASEAN member countries which have not yet acceded to the agreement on information exchange in counter-terrorism to consider doing so, and for those who have adopted it to expedite ratification of the accord. Likewise, the agreement on disaster management and emergency response and on AIPO's contribution to the process of drafting the ASEAN Charter.

Lastly, she wished that the 27th AIPO General Assembly discussions will be guided by its common interest to make the Southeast Asian region a peaceful and prosperous place, and a caring and sharing community.

The text of the Keynote Address of H.E. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is attached as [Annex “H”](#).

WRITTEN MESSAGES FROM HEADS OF STATE/ GOVERNMENT

Written messages from Heads of State/Government of Member Countries were distributed to the delegates pursuant to Resolution No. 19 WC-GA/0/98/06 on the Hosting of AIPO General Assemblies.

The texts of the messages are attached as Annex “I”.

FIRST PLENARY SESSION

The First Plenary Session of the 27th General Assembly was held on 11 September 2006 at 10:15 o'clock in the morning.

A copy of the Order of Business is attached as [Annex “J”](#).

A. Opening Statement by AIPO President

In his speech, Speaker de Venecia cited the parallel steps that AIPO and its mother organization, the ASEAN, are taking at the beginning of an epoch-making transformation – the ASEAN, at it moves towards its vision of unifying the whole of Southeast Asia and transforming the region into one caring and sharing community, with AIPO providing the parliamentary and constituency support towards this vision.

He stressed the crucial role that AIPO, as representatives of the people, will play in unifying Southeast Asia, considering that such transformation can only happen if the ASEAN people embrace the same vision that the ASEAN’s architects want to realize.

Speaker de Venecia also cited the significance of regular AIPO-ASEAN consultation, with the AIPO President briefing ASEAN of its activities at their yearly summit, and the ASEAN Chairman addressing AIPO in its yearly Assembly. Since AIPO can be effective in raising the awareness of ASEAN among its people, he urged AIPO members to speak in favor of an ASEAN Charter that truly expresses the sentiments of ordinary Southeast Asians.

Speaker de Venecia reported to the Assembly the proposals which he, as AIPO President, presented to the ASEAN Standing Committee – inviting the six powers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to accede to the ASEAN agreement on counter-terrorism, and the creation of a Standby ASEAN Disaster Relief Fund. He further proposed the creation of an Interfaith Council in the United Nations system, and a large-scale debt-for-equity program that would enable the 100 poorest countries, in agreement with creditor-states and lending institutions, to divert a percentage of their debt-service payments into national anti-poverty programs under the UN’s Millennium Development Goals.

In conclusion, he maintained that with all these initiatives, the AIPO is increasingly regarded as the precursor of what would be an ASEAN Parliamentary Council or an ASEAN Parliamentary Union – the beginnings of an ASEAN Parliament.

The text of Speaker de Venecia's Opening Statement is attached as [Annex "K"](#).

B. Statement of the Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee

Hon. Alberto G. Romulo, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, and Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee delivered a Statement through video.

Secretary Romulo noted that the ASEAN community is in the forefront of a changing global economic landscape, and the Asia Pacific region has become the engine of growth of the world economy, led by China and India. ASEAN has the potential to compete in terms of investment opportunities. Through regional economic integration and broader multilateral linkages with our trade partners, ASEAN has the collective strength to compete with the rest of the world.

He observed that today presents an opportunity for the Philippines to reaffirm its unwavering resolve to do its share for genuine community-building. As Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee from July 2006 to July 2007 and host of the 12th ASEAN Summit in Cebu in December, the Philippines commits itself to usher the region towards one ASEAN community. And to underscore its resolve to do so, it has chosen the theme – "One Caring and Sharing Community" for its chairmanship in the ASEAN.

The text of the Statement of Secretary Romulo is attached as [Annex "L"](#).

C. Statements by Leaders of AIPO Delegations

The Leaders of Delegations of the Member Countries made their respective statements.

1. H.E. Samdech Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly of the **Kingdom of Cambodia** expressed his profound gratitude and warmest congratulations to the House of Representatives of the Philippines for hosting the 27th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO) and for the warm hospitality extended to the Cambodian Delegation.

According to him, globalization, while considered a powerful and dynamic force for strengthening cooperation and accelerating growth and development, also presents risks and challenges. He urged ASEAN country members to make every possible effort to ensure that the whole ASEAN is marching forward on the same pace. At the ASEAN level, Cambodia supports the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) to bridge the development gaps between newer and older ASEAN members.

AIPO, according to him, is entering a new security era, and AIPO member countries today are faced not only with security matters which cover conventional security issues, but also political, economic, and social security, at large. It is necessary to confront the challenge of fighting terrorism in the ASEAN.

In conclusion, the President of the National Assembly and Head of Cambodian Delegation reiterated that peace, stability and prosperity of ASEAN are the ultimate objectives of AIPO.

2. Hon. Agung Laksono, Speaker of the House of Representatives of **Indonesia**, emphasized that the 27th General Assembly is indeed timely and strategic in AIPO collective effort to better place the organization into a more effective and closely integrated institution to support the ASEAN Integration toward an ASEAN Community. In this regard, he commended the Ad Hoc Committee on the Transformation of AIPO held in Indonesia which undertook substantive work on this effort. He hoped that the 27th General Assembly would consider and endorse the outcome of the Ad Hoc Committee, and in particular, the amendment of the AIPO Statute. In addition, he reiterated Indonesia's proposal to change the name of AIPO into ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) which signify the important nature of the transformation process.

He commended the enhanced interaction between AIPO and ASEAN as demonstrated in the inaugural consultation between the Chairman of the 38th ASEAN Standing Committee and the President of the AIPO and the meeting of the AIPO and Eminent Person Group of the ASEAN Charter. He further proposed a similar dialogue between AIPO and the members of both the 39th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting and the ASEAN Economic Ministers' Meeting both recently held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He hoped that ASEAN could continue maintaining sustained peace, stability, security and prosperity to the fullest benefits of its people and playing a determinant voice on human rights protection, democratization, good governance, and combating corruption. In this regard, he hoped that each and every parliament member of AIPO exert its pivotal legislative role domestically in facilitating various ratification processes of the agreements already reached at the ASEAN level.

Hon. Agung Laksono addressed the situation in the Middle East. He strongly condemned the Israeli military aggression in Lebanon and expressed Indonesian support to the cessation of hostilities and withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon based on UNSC Resolution 1701. On the issue of Myanmar, he expressed concern over the slow pace of the democratization as well as the lack of progress in the national reconciliation process. He emphasized that Myanmar should honor its commitment to implement the Roadmap to Democracy and to release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD members.

3. H.E. Mr. Thommvong, President of the National Assembly of the **Lao People's Democratic Republic** made a statement that focused on three key points: firstly, that Lao PDR being a relatively new member of ASEAN needs the support and assistance in various areas from the senior members especially on employment creation. Along this line, he emphasized that employment is linked with migration from places with less economic activities to places with more economic activities both in country and abroad. Thus, he further emphasized the need for a harmonious legal system in the field of labor migration between ASEAN countries to be among the main focus of AIPO legal cooperation to ensure that labor migration is safe, legal and free from abuses.

Secondly, the Lao PDR appreciates the progress made by the Ad Hoc working group of AIPO in making a more effective and integrated organization especially on the relations between AIPO and ASEAN and welcomes the renaming of the organization with the revision of the statute making it more responsive to current realities.

Thirdly, the Lao PDR's commitment of their best efforts to contribute to the common causes of AIPO with the hope that Lao PDR will likewise continue to enjoy AIPO's kind support in their future priority undertakings.

4. Hon. YB Datuk Lim Si Cheng, head of the delegation from **Malaysia**, highlighted the other growing vital function played by the Parliaments – the inter-parliamentary relationship or Parliamentary Diplomacy. Parliamentary diplomacy is vital in resolving current issues facing the international community. Mr. Cheng stressed the need to create more regional platforms for Parliamentarians to air their common views. A concrete example is the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) which can be an avenue for us to establish an inter-parliamentarian forum to discuss issues pertaining to security matters covering not only the ASEAN region but also the Asia Pacific region with the inclusion of the super powers.

To justify his call, Hon. YB Datuk Lim Si Cheng defined and emphasized the new kind of freedom – Human Security. This is freedom from fear and freedom to live in dignity as promoted in the UN Millennium Development Goals Declaration should be embraced by all member states as part of their effort to create a just ASEAN community based on the principles of rule of law, human rights and democracy.

The Bali Concord affirms the ARF as “the main forum for regional security dialogue” and “the primary forum in enhancing political and security cooperation in the Asia Pacific region, as well as the pivot in building peace and stability in the region.” Thus, Hon. YB Datuk Lim Si Cheng believed that establishing an ARF inter-parliamentary forum will enable parliamentarians to effectively deliberate vital issues particularly those pertaining to comprehensive security that have regional consequences.

5. H.E. Mr. Abdullah Tarmugi, Speaker of Parliament of **Singapore** stated that responses to the challenges presented by the changing global marketplace and international economic competition will shape the future of ASEAN. He said that countries have pursued “prosper thy neighbour” policies allowing goods, services and capital to flow with ease into and out of ASEAN states, thus, business in the region will be cheaper, and local businesses will be able to compete globally.

He stressed that ASEAN will continue to work through other regional foray like the ASEAN Regional Forum, the ASEAN+3 framework and ASEAN’s Dialogue Relationships to create an open and inclusive architecture for the region.

Speaker Tarmugi noted that AIPO is well positioned to reflect the views and aspirations of ASEAN citizens, thus aligning AIPO with ASEAN’s goal of diminishing the distance between citizens and officials.

He understood that there had been good progress on establishing the ASEAN Charter. This would give greater definition to regional cooperation, help strengthen regional processes and institutions, as well as push regional integration efforts.

Lastly, he believed that AIPO should be transformed into a more effective, closely integrated institution and urged members to consult and work more closely with ASEAN towards the common vision of building an ASEAN Community.

6. H.E. Suchon Chaleekure, President of the Senate and Acting President of the Parliament of **Thailand**, conveyed his gratefulness to the 39th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) held in July, saying that the successful work of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) on the ASEAN Charter is expected to streamline ASEAN mechanism and processes paving the way for the establishment of an ASEAN Community.

He expressed his belief that the amendment of the AIPO Statutes is one of the keys to achieving AIPO transformation. He also cited that the AIPO Ad Hoc Committee on the Transformation of AIPO into a More Effective and Closely Integrated Institution has moved towards consolidating cooperation among member parliaments and providing legislative oversights for a stronger role of legislative institution in the South East Asian region.

He also expressed confidence that the initiative of the Philippines on an additional Chapter in the AIPO statutes regarding partnership with funding institutions and donor countries, as well as changing the name of AIPO shall be lengthily deliberated on.

He wished that the 27th AIPO General Assembly would contribute with all the efforts for a fruitful concrete step to transform the AIPO to a realistic legislative institution working together with the ASEAN for the sake of peace, stability and prosperity progress in the region.

7. H.E. Mr. Nguyen Phu Trong, President of the National Assembly of the **Socialist Republic of Vietnam** noted that the Southeast Asian region remains stable and is experiencing economic growth amidst the complicated developments in the world's political and security landscape. President Phu Trong pointed out that ASEAN solidarity and intra-regional cooperation have been strengthened and promoted. He applauded the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Transformation of AIPO into a More Effective and Closely Integrated Institution. He likewise endorsed the initiative of establishing regular consultation between AIPO and ASEAN thru reciprocal attendance of AIPO and ASEAN leaders in the major events of each organization. He expressed optimism in making AIPO more substantive and meaningful in the ASEAN region's political affairs. In closing, he reaffirmed the Vietnam National Assembly's commitment in carrying out its responsibilities as a member of AIPO.
8. Hon. Antonio V. Cuenco, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives of the **Philippines** and Chairman of the 27th AIPO Organizing Committee, welcomed the parliamentarians of Asia and of the world. Being a native of Cebu, he boasts of Cebu as being a rare combination of leisurely living and efficient, serious business. Among its many features, the South Road Properties or SRP serves as its newest investment attraction. With a total of 300 hectares or prime property which can house manufacturing, commercial, tourism, IT and other service enterprises, he informed the assembly that the said property is now open for business.

Focusing efforts on issues that immediately confront us, the Philippine delegation called for the adoption of the ASEAN Declaration on the Rights of Migrant Workers and a holistic and people-centered approach to counter terrorism, particularly the establishment of an AIPO Interfaith Council. He proudly reported that in March of this year, the Philippines, in cooperation with Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand, co-chaired the Cebu Dialogue on Regional Interfaith Conference for Peace, Development and Human Dignity which issued a Cebu Concord bearing the same name. And among the many other complex issues confronting us, our leaders' effort to craft an ASEAN Charter will fortify our common resolve to promote the well-being of our collective peoples.

Copies of the texts of the statements delivered by the Heads of Delegation is attached as Annex "M"

D. Report of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Transformation of AIPO into a More Effective and Closely Integrated Institution

As approved by the Executive Committee, Hon. dr. H. Abdul Gafur, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Transformation of AIPO into a More Effective and Closely Integrated Institution presented the report of the Ad Hoc Committee.

A copy of the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Transformation of AIPO into a More Effective and Closely Integrated Institution is attached as [Annex "N"](#).

E. Statements by Leaders of Special Observer Delegations

1. H.E. Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Indera Mahkota Pengiran Anak (Dr.) Hall Kemaludin ibni Al-Marhum Pengiran Bendahara Pengiran Anak Mohd. Yassin, Speaker of the Legislative Council of **Brunei Darussalam**, observed that there had been some challenges in the region such as natural disasters in Indonesia and the Philippines, the threat of avian influenza and the rising oil price. Terrorism also remains to be the main threat to our peace and security. Despite all these problems, it is noted that ASEAN continues to make progress including in its joint efforts to address these current challenges. Regular consultations are taking place at all levels including among our leaders. Cooperation is expanding in many areas.

His Excellency expressed satisfaction that ASEAN is making every effort to realize the ASEAN community. The progress of ASEAN integration is also moving along quite well, and the continued commitment of ASEAN members as well as the dialogue partners, is expected to provide assistance to the four C.L.M.V. countries through the I.A.I. programs.

He reported that ASEAN foreign ministers last year signed an agreement for disaster relief and emergency response aimed at providing response to natural disasters in our region, and he urged the call for early ratification of this agreement by ASEAN member countries.

According to him, Brunei Darussalam is very concerned with the situation in the Middle East, condemning all acts of terror, violence and destruction, and calling upon all parties concerned to respect and implement the United Nations Security resolution, including the ceasefire.

He also expressed concern over the issue on human trafficking in women and children, and has further enhanced its efforts to combat human trafficking by bringing into force, legislation which criminalizes any form of human trafficking and imposes heavy penalties upon offenders.

2. H.E. Dr. Tun Shin, Deputy Attorney and Member of the National Convention Convening Work Committee of the **Union of Myanmar**, indicated that, as a member country of ASEAN, Myanmar has been actively cooperating with other countries in the ASEAN Region in the economic and social areas, in prevention of human trafficking, combating terrorism and the total elimination of narcotics.

He reported that the Government of Myanmar has initiated the Seven (7) Step Road Map in the year 2003, and they are now in the stage of reconvening the National Convention which is the most essential step for the emergence of a disciplined democratic state. In

building a disciplined democratic state a new Constitution would be drafted based on the basic principles laid down at the National Convention which is the first step of the Seven Step Road Map. In accord with the new Constitution, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Legislative Assembly) will form a new government.

He further reported that at present, the government, although encountered with interferences and difficulties, has adopted correct attitude and goodwill fostered to preserve peace and stability of the state and laid down systematically implemented plans for the development in the economic, social, educational, health and transportation sectors.

In conclusion, he underscored the determination of Brunei Darussalam to actively participate in the activities of the AIPO and to actively cooperate with other ASEAN member countries for the peace, stability and development of the Asian region, including the ASEAN member countries.

The texts of all statements delivered by leaders of Special Observer delegations are attached as Annex "O".

F. Statement by Mr. AIPO No. 1

Mr. AIPO No. 1 Prof. Dr. Prasop Ratanakorn of Thailand, due to health reason, was not able to attend the 27th General Assembly. His statement, however, was read to the assembly.

Prof. Dr. Ratanakorn expressed his gratitude for the invitation accorded him to come to Cebu. One who never missed AIPO meetings, he regretted though that he was not able to come to the 27th General Assembly for health reasons. He is, however, optimistic that he will be able to participate in next year's AIPO General Assembly.

The text of Prof. Dr. Ratanakorn's statement is attached as [Annex "P."](#)

G. Statements by Leaders of Observer Delegations

The First Plenary Session was resumed at 2:30 p.m.

Heads of Observer Delegations delivered their respective statements.

1. Hon. Peter Slipper, leader of the delegation from **Australia**, noted that Australia, being the first country to establish a multilateral relationship with ASEAN, appreciated the contribution which ASEAN has made to peace, regional cooperation and prosperity in Southeast Asia since 1967. Similarly, Australia welcomed the opportunity to be able to join as founding members in the ASEAN Regional Forum and in the new East Asia Summit. The Interfaith Dialogue processes guided Australia in its contribution to mutual understanding and tolerance among religions and cultures across the region. Presently, Australia and New Zealand are negotiating the Free Trade Agreement with ASEAN. Once this is finalized, Australia's economic integration with the region will be consolidated and the same will complement existing FTAs with Singapore and Thailand, and the pending FTA with Malaysia. Education is a key element in the cooperation of Australia. Australia has opened its schools to 69,000 students from ASEAN. Australian institutions have also established many centers in the ASEAN region including the RMIT campus which has been established in Ho Chi Minh City; the private research and teaching university in Singapore being established by the University of New

South Wales, and the medical college to be opened by Monash University in Malaysia next year. Finally, Australia emphasized the enormous mutual benefits gained from inter-parliamentary visits.

2. Hon. Joseph A. Day, leader of the delegation from Canada, was pleased to meet with parliamentary counterparts from Southeast Asia affording forum for increasing trade and economic partnership. Senator Day looked forward to the dialogue with ASEAN countries. He recognized the serious impact of global integration to the regional security, regional conflict, health pandemics and arms and drug trafficking that can have repercussion on Canada as well. Nevertheless, Southeast Asia presents a significant opportunity for Canada who wants to increase its presence in the region. Senator Day emphasized the importance of cooperation in reducing the impact of natural disasters, reducing the spread of virulent disease and reducing the adverse effect of human activities on environment. Senator Day stressed the significance of developing alternate and renewable sources of energy for ASEAN countries energy security. He mentioned about China's bilateral development programs with several Southeast Asian countries and its development assistance in the region through the Canadian International Development Agency's Southeast Asia Regional Program with priorities on economic integration, the environment, governance, security and the rule of law. Senator Day ended his speech with the assurance of continued support for the development of Southeast Asia.
3. After extending his congratulations to the AIPO and appreciation to the host country, Hon. Wang Yingfan, Member of the Standing Committee and Vice Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, National People's Congress, **People's Republic of China** enumerated the recent positive developments of ASEAN. He acknowledged the role of AIPO in facilitating these achievements of ASEAN.

He highlighted the fact that 2006 is the 25th anniversary of dialogue partnership with China and ASEAN. He enumerated the milestone in China-ASEAN relationship: The China strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity and East Asian Cooperation. Hon. Wang likewise expected that the meeting of the heads of state of China and ASEAN nations and the ASEAN Secretary General next month in Guangxi, China will be another milestone in China – ASEAN relationship.

China is ready to work with ASEAN countries to fully implement the plan of action that will promote the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area (CAFTA). It will intensify security cooperation in counter-terrorism, drug control, law enforcement and maritime security and push forward with the great Meckong Sub-region Cooperation (GMS), Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) and the Forum on Economic Cooperation of Baibu Rim.

Hon. Wang ended by expressing China's wish that AIPO and its member parliaments will play an even greater role in promoting ASEAN integration.

4. After conveying the warmest greeting of the European Parliament to AIPO, Hon. Hartmut Nassauer, Member of the European Parliament, pointed out that the European Union is greatly interested in the development of ASEAN for several reasons. He also stated that ASEAN and the EU face similar question. First, which aims should be pursued on a supra-national level and which should be followed under the conditions of globalization on the national level? Second, what methods are organizing the cooperation of States must be chosen to meet these aims?

Mr. Nassauer noted that the aims of ASEAN and the EU are almost identical. However, the methods used by ASEAN and the EU are different. The EU chose the so-called “community method.” EU member-states don’t cooperate as such but delegate national competencies to the supra-state level, thereby needing the creation of a new institution besides the member states. Thus, there exists what could almost be called a European government – the European Commission – as well as the European Parliament – directly elected by the citizens of Europe. The EU Community has its own competencies independent of the member-state. The community method proved to be successful in organizing the common market.

On the other hand, ASEAN’s method is intra-state cooperation. The key players are the governments or those institutions charged with this task. ASEAN intra-state cooperation which is founded on consensus does not have to be less effective than the community method of the EU. As long as the ASEAN member-states agree on an aim, all that is required is a decision by the representatives of the member to form the foundation for the creation of a law on the national level.

Europeans realize that the experience of ASEAN states can be learned from. EP notes with great interest the drafting of the an ASEAN Charter and the acceleration of ASEAN’s search for ways of closer cooperation.

ASEAN and EU share economic interests because the 10 ASEAN countries collectively is EU’s largest trading partner after Japan. EU is ASEAN’s second largest export market and the third largest trading partner.

It is recommended that AIPO explore the possibility of an EU-ASEAN free trade agreement, and to strengthen the role of parliaments in EU-ASEAN relations by demanding that ASEM meetings be accompanied by ASEP meetings of parliamentarians.

5. Hon. Akio Koizumi, Head of the Japanese Delegation, stated that the year 2006 marks the 50th anniversary of Japan’s membership of the United Nations, likewise the 50th anniversary of the restoration of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Philippines.

He emphasized that ASEAN has been positioned as a priority region in Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA). Recently, in addition to conventional ODA, Japan has directed towards the development of backward districts, such as the Mekong area. Japan has provided cooperation utilizing ODA in such aspects as anti-terrorism, anti-piracy, and disaster counter-measures.

In addition, he mentioned that at present, Japan is the largest non-regional trading partner of ASEAN, and ASEAN is a most important trade and investment partner for Japan. Highlights of his speech covers on the various Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and negotiations which have been concluded or pursued to be concluded between and among countries in the ASEAN region with the ultimate goal of bringing about economic development, prosperity, harmony in the region.

In conclusion, he pledged that from now on the Japanese Diet will endeavor to eliminate threats to regional and international security and peace through continuous active participation in the AIPO and dialogues with other countries.

6. Hon. Kim Young Sun, Member of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea expressed that the ASEAN, at present, is Korea's No. 5 trading partner and No. 3 investment destination. Korean-ASEAN FTA negotiations also are proceeding smoothly. However, Korea and the ASEAN should go beyond economic cooperation to bolster partnership, and move towards cooperation in information and communication technology (ICT), environmental regeneration, prevention of communicable diseases around the world and security.

To bridge the digital divide between countries, Korea has offered training programs to IT experts from ASEAN countries, sent Internet volunteers to seven countries and established Information Access Center in four nations. Korea is also ready to share experiences with ASEAN in resolving environmental problems, and closely cooperates with the HIV/AIDS program of the U.N. and other nations. On the security issues on the Korean Peninsula, Korea emphasizes the importance of the six-party talks or the ARF for the co-prosperity of ASEAN and the Asia-Pacific region.

7. At the outset, Dr. Richard Worth of New Zealand pointed out that the Philippines and New Zealand are now enjoying their 40th year of diplomatic relations.

He recalled that a lot has happened since the ASEAN – New Zealand meeting in Vientiane. New Zealand has signed ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation and it is implementing the package of initiative announced by its Prime Minister at the ASEAN – New Zealand Commemorative Summit in Vientiane in 2004. A symposium on New Zealand and Southeast Asia relations took place in Singapore earlier this year. At the political level, New Zealand was invited to participate in the first East Asia Summit hosted by Malaysia last December. On the economic front, negotiations on an ASEAN – New Zealand Free Trade Agreement are making headway. In addition, New Zealand will deliver NZ\$48 Million directly to ASEAN countries under bilateral, multilateral, NGOs and regional programs.

Dr. Worth hailed the draft ASEAN – New Zealand Framework for Cooperation as an excellent initiative. He believes it will provide structure to ASEAN – New Zealand rulings on three key areas of the Vientiane Action Programme.

He concluded by emphasizing that New Zealand greatly values its partnership with ASEAN.

8. According to Hon. Bob Dadae, Deputy Speaker of the National Parliament of Papua New Guinea, encouraged by the economic prosperity of the ASEAN region, Papua New Guinea is equally concerned with the unresolved global issues, i.e. transnational crimes: terrorism, drugs trafficking, human smuggling, money laundering that continue to threaten its security. It is important that all AIPO and non-AIPO members fully consider all conceivable measures that lend themselves towards the protection of all countries. This is the reason that Papua New Guinea, along with the members of the Melanesian Spearheads Group (MSG) – Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, are actively pursuing the proposition to establish the "Melanesian Security Intelligence Concept" (MELSIC) through which any information gathered can be disseminated to National Intelligence Organizations of the respective members of MSG.

Papua New Guinea is excited about the prospects offered by ASEAN Economic Union (AEU) as it is believed that benefits under the overall framework of AEU would be unprecedented.

Believing in the benefits of parliamentary visits for both the host and the visiting parliament, Papua New Guinea encouraged more exchanges with other countries.

9. Hon. Boris Plokhotnyuk of the Russian Federation thanked the Philippines for its great work in this 27th AIPO General Assembly. He stated that the situation in the Asia-Pacific region has a substantial impact on the global state of affairs. For this reason, Russia has put Asia-Pacific affairs on top of its priorities. He extended Russian's willingness to support a mutually beneficial partnership with ASEAN. He emphasized anti-terrorist cooperation in Asia as of paramount interest to Russia. Several significant international documents on the matter were adopted during inter-sessional meetings on terrorism and transnational crimes. In fact, the Statement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response was a result of Russia's motion during these inter-sessional meetings. He said that Russia is working with the APEC and abides by the APEC Anti-Terrorist statement and contributes to the APEC counter-terrorism task force. Russia is also actively involved in the energy supplies and transport in the Asia-Pacific region and might hold the APEC Energy Working Group Meeting this year. In addition, Russia seeks to use its membership in the APEC to integrate its Syberian potential into the existing framework for economic cooperation. Further, interaction in terms of science, culture, mass media, and tourism would be mutually beneficial for each of the ASEAN nations. Finally, he conveyed his country's readiness to engage in bilateral as well as multilateral discussions on strengthening inter-parliamentary relations to boost cooperation among nations.

The texts of the Statements delivered by the Heads of Observer Delegations are attached as Annex "Q."

H. Statement of the ASEAN Secretary General

Hon. Ong Keng Yong, ASEAN Secretary General delivered a Statement to the Assembly. He noted that AIPO has grown to be a viable organization and an important partner in supporting ASEAN's regional initiatives, and that AIPO's development has run parallel with that of ASEAN, and the contributions of ASEAN Parliamentarians towards regional integration efforts have helped share ASEAN into a cohesive entity which is held as an example worldwide.

According to him, while the Vientiane Action Program (VAP) provides a blueprint to realize the ASEAN Community, there is still much that needs to be done to fully realize the vision of an ASEAN Community. An important challenge is the implementation of agreements and treaties agreed at the regional level, and there is a need to mainstream the work of ASEAN in the agenda of the national legislatures to ensure that regional and national priorities are harmonized.

Another challenge is narrowing the development gap that exists between ASEAN Member Countries. The Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) has been put in place as a mechanism through which the more advanced and developed ASEAN Member Countries can assist in building capacity and strengthening institutions in the new and less developed ASEAN Member Countries. In undertaking activities under the IAI, the concerned Member Countries seek funding through their national budgetary process. As national budgets are approved by their respective national legislatures, parliamentarians can play a critical role in supporting these funding requests.

He expressed the hope that for the vision of an ASEAN Community to take hold and be a reality, it must be socialized into the minds and hearts of all ASEAN citizens. AIPO is an organization of "people's representatives" and therefore an important conduit for bringing ASEAN to the people.

The text of the Statement of the ASEAN Secretary General is attached as [Annex “R.”](#)

I. Adoption of Items in the Order of Business

The General Assembly considered and adopted the following items in the Order of Business:

1. Program of Activities for Delegates and Observers
2. Agenda for the 27th General Assembly
3. Topics for Dialogue with Observer Countries
4. Membership of Committees

It was agreed that the 28th General Assembly will be held in August 2007 in Malaysia

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Committee meetings were held on 12 September 2006, beginning at 8:30 a.m.

The following were appointed as Chairpersons and Rapporteurs of the various committees:

Committee on Political Matters

Chairperson : Hon. Matias V. Defensor, Jr.
Rapporteur : Hon. Ramon “Red” H. Durano VI

Committee on Economic Matters

Chairperson : Hon. Herminio G. Teves
Rapporteur : Hon. Eduardo C. Zialcita

Committee on Social Matters

Chairperson : Hon. Nerissa Corazon S. Soon-Ruiz
Rapporteur : Hon. Emmylou J. Taliño-Santos

Committee on Organizational Matters

Chairperson : Hon. Edgar M. Chatto
Rapporteur : Hon. Vincent H. Garcia

Committee on WAIPO

Chairperson : Hon. Josefina M. Joson
Rapporteur : Hon. Clavel A. Martinez

Drafting Committee on Joint Communique

Chairperson : Hon. Josefina M. Joson
Rapporteur : Hon. Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr.

Reports of the different Committees are attached as Annex “T”

DIALOGUE WITH OBSERVER DELEGATIONS

Dialogues with Observer delegations were held in separate function rooms of the Marco Polo Plaza Hotel beginning at 2:15 o'clock in the afternoon of 12 September 2006.

Each Dialogue Panel was chaired by individual chairpersons from the Philippine delegation as follows:

Country	Chairperson
Australia	Hon. Juan Miguel F. Zubiri
Canada	Hon. Edgar M. Chatto
China	Hon. Robert "Ace" S. Barbers
European Parliament	Hon. Ramon "Red" H. Durano VI
Japan	Hon. Robert "Ace" S. Barbers
Korea	Hon. Matias B. Defensor, Jr.
New Zealand	Hon. Eduardo C. Zialcita
Papua New Guinea	Hon. Catalino Figueroa
Russian Federation	Hon. Herminio Teves

DAY OF REST AND RELAXATION

On 13 September 2006, some of the delegates and their accompanying persons were brought to the island of Bohol for a day of rest and relaxation. Some opted to stay in Cebu and joined a golf fellowship at the Alta Vista Golf and Country Club.

SECOND PLENARY SESSION AND CLOSING CEREMONY

The Second Plenary Session of the General Assembly was held on 14 September 2006 at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon. Deputy Speaker Raul V. del Mar of the Philippine House of Representatives, presided over the Second Plenary Session.

A. Presentation of Reports of the Committees and Adoption of the Reports

The Chairpersons of the Committees on Political Matters, Economic Matters, Social Matters, Organizational Matters, Panel Dialogue with Observer Countries, and Joint Communique presented their respective reports. The reports were approved by the General Assembly.

The Report of the Committee on Political Affairs, together with the Resolutions adopted, are attached as [Annex "T-1."](#)

The Report of the Committee on Economic Affairs, together with the Resolutions adopted are attached as [Annex "T-2."](#)

The Report of the Committee on Social Affairs, together with the Resolutions adopted are attached as [Annex "T-3."](#)

The Report of the Committee on Organizational Affairs, together with the Resolutions adopted are attached as [Annex "T-4."](#)

The Report on the Dialogue Meetings with Observer Countries is attached as [Annex “T-5.”](#)

The Report of the WAIPO, together with the Resolutions adopted are attached as [Annex “T-6.”](#)

The Report of the Committee on Joint Communique is attached as [Annex “T-7.”](#)

B. Date and Venue of the 28th AIPO General Assembly

It was agreed that the 28th AIPO General Assembly will be held in Malaysia in August 2007.

C. Signing of the Joint Communique

The leaders of delegation of the AIPO Member Countries and Special Observer Countries signed the Joint Communique.

A copy of the Joint Communique is attached as [Annex “U.”](#)

CLOSING CEREMONY

The Closing Ceremony of the 27th AIPO General Assembly was held on 14 September 2006, following the signing of the Joint Communique.

A. Closing Speech – Deputy Speaker Raul V. del Mar

Hon. Raul V. del Mar, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, took the place of H.E. Jose de Venecia, Jr. Speaker of the House of Representatives and outgoing AIPO President, as Presiding Officer, explaining that Speaker de Venecia had to leave to accompany Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to the Summit Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement in Havana, Cuba.

He noted that with the culmination of the conference, there comes a realization that, despite the cultural and socio-economic diversities of our countries, there is a passion shared by all to lift up the lives of our people and to unite the region into one caring and sharing community.

Deputy Speaker del Mar underscored the gains brought about by the sharing of ideas among ASEAN member-states. He also acknowledged the solid achievements of the AIPO Presidency of Speaker Jose de Venecia, Jr., citing the cooperation established between AIPO and the ASEAN leadership in bringing the vision of a Southeast Asian community to our peoples.

In conclusion, he expressed pleasure over the opportunity to host the 27th General Assembly, and looks forward to seeing everyone again in Malaysia next year.

The text of the Closing Speech of Deputy Speaker Raul V. del Mar is attached as [Annex “V”](#)

B. Transfer of Offices of AIPO President and Secretary General

1. Deputy Speaker del Mar, acting on behalf of H.E. Jose de Venecia, Jr., outgoing AIPO President, handed over the gavel, symbol of the AIPO Presidency, to Hon. Datuk Lim Si Cheng, who received the same and signed the Instrument of Transfer on behalf of the incoming AIPO President, H.E. Tan Sri Dato’ Seri Diraja Ramli Ngah Talib.

2. Similarly, Hon. Josefina D. Azarcon, outgoing Secretary General, handed over the Office of the Secretary General to Madam Roosme Hamzah, Acting Secretary General, who received the same on behalf of Hon. Mahmood Adam, Secretary General of the House of Representatives of Malaysia.
3. Instruments of Transfer of Offices of the President and Secretary General of AIPO are attached as Annex “W”.

C. Acceptance Speech by Incoming President of AIPO

Hon. Datuk Lim Si Cheng, Deputy Speaker of Malaysia, delivered the acceptance speech on behalf of H.E. Tan Sri Dato’ Seri Diraja Ramli Ngah Talib as incoming President of AIPO.

Hon. Datuk Lim Si Cheng expressed appreciation for the opportunity to renew and strengthen the bonds of friendship, respect and cooperation among the ASEAN nations. He underscored the significant role the parliamentarians can play in strengthening state bilateral and multilateral diplomatic relations, and in resolving current issues facing the international community.

The text of the acceptance speech is attached as [Annex “X.”](#)

CONCLUSION

The 27th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization was held in the traditional ASEAN spirit of friendship, brotherhood, cooperation and mutual understanding.