



**Statement by the APA Acting Secretary-General,**

**H. E. Dr. Masoud Islami**

**At the Inaugural Session of the 8th APA Plenary**

Phnom Penh  
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Honorable Speakers,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Dignitaries,  
Distinguished Representatives from Observer Organizations  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am grateful to witness once again an important APA gathering with so many distinguished participants from so many Asian parliaments. Allow me to begin with expressing my gratitude to the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia for its generous hospitality and for the leadership of its Honorable President Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei HENG Samrin and his distinguished Vice, Honorable Dr. NGUON Nhel in organizing the 8<sup>th</sup> APA Plenary Session. I should also recognize with honor, the presence of H. E. Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN Sen, the outstanding Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia in this fascinating inaugural ceremony. Let me also extend my sincere appreciation to all members of the local organizing committee and the APA permanent secretariat for the excellent job they have done to bring us together here today.

Honorable Delegates,  
Dignitaries,  
Distinguished Guests,

Parliamentary diplomacy is an increasingly important dimension of international relations in our age. In light of the global integrative trends in the world, parliaments are becoming more active players both in domestic and foreign affairs. Although, the principal function of parliaments in democratic systems of governance is mainly legislative, they also possess substantial weight in setting the agenda for the executive branch of their respective governments both in domestic and foreign affairs.

In line with the increasing importance and growing relevance of parliamentary diplomacy at regional and international levels, APA does



provide a reliable framework for consultation and collaboration among its Member Parliaments on a range of important cultural, economic, political and environmental issues. As the largest Asian inter-parliamentary organization, APA facilitates communication, interaction and cooperation among its members and helps them to harmonize their positions vis-à-vis regional as well as global issues. Indeed, the APA has already made significant accomplishments in this direction by adopting resolutions, on the basis of consensus, which identify priority areas for further integration among Asian nations.

The notion of Asian integration has been central to the APA parliamentary diplomacy. For this central notion to come close to reality, daunting conditions are to be met and formidable challenges have to be overcome. Regional and international integration is not a commodity to be ordered, purchased or imported. It is rather a multi-factor and multi-faceted process which requires prolonged and continuous cooperation. Chronic poverty and disparity in many countries of the continent, where nearly half of the continent's population earn less than two dollars per day, has created an unfavorable condition in Asia. Climate change and environmental degradation together with extreme violence, terror, and foreign occupation are ravaging through the fundamentals of security and stability in important parts of Asia. The cradle of civilizations is now suffering from savage killings and massive destruction. The violence and atrocities taking place in the Middle East, by Daesh, Israel, and other terrorist entities are not also bane to peace and security in Asia, they are counterproductive to our integration and integrity as well.

Honorable Delegates,  
Dignitaries,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The splendid theme chosen for the APA 8<sup>th</sup> Plenary: *Promoting Peace, Reconciliation and Dialogue* could not be any more timely and relevant to our common anxieties and hopes for Asia. Besides the speeches and remarks

by dignitaries and parliamentary leaders of both the host and the guest countries during the general debate, it is expected that constructive discussions will take place on various topics addressed in our standing committees meetings. I am confident that by the end of this Plenary Session and as the result of thoughtful and vigorous debates and deliberations, we will have achieved yet another successful event and shall move forward in our right direction which is the direction of peace, prosperity, cooperation, and harmony among all Asian nations.

History has been made by men and women with foresight and determination. We should cherish Asian Parliamentary leaders who founded the APA with their foresight and determination aimed at greater cooperation and integration in Asia. Europe, Africa and Americas have established parliaments with various functions and mandates. It is the time for the APA and Asia to overcome all the hurdles on the path towards an Asian Parliament.

Thank You.