


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Declaration of the Fifth Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting (ASEP V)

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Pursuant to the Rules of Procedure of ASEP, the conference will adopt the Declaration of the 5th Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting. The declaration will be drafted by the secretariat and submitted to all member parliaments. Member parliaments are encouraged to submit their contribution to the first draft final document by the date of **14 June**.

(Translation)

Declaration of the Fifth Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting (ASEP V)

(Draft)

Beijing, 18-20 June 2008

1. The Fifth Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting (ASEP V) was held in Beijing, China on 18-20 June 2008. Parliamentarians from ASEM Partners and the European Parliament attended the Meeting at the invitation of Chairman Wu Bangguo of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China. This was the first meeting after the second round of ASEM enlargement that increased ASEP membership to 43 (See list of delegates in Annex) (...).
2. Chairman Wu Bangguo inaugurated the Meeting and extended a warm welcome to all delegates. He pointed out in his welcoming remarks, (...).
3. The Meeting welcomed the new members to ASEP, believing that their participation in the Meeting will make ASEP more representative and dynamic.
4. ASEP parliamentarians expressed deep sympathies on the heavy casualties and property

losses incurred in the recent cyclone in Myanmar and the earthquake in Sichuan, China and extended condolences to the bereaved. They expressed the hope that life in the affected areas will be brought back to normal at an early date.

5. ASEP parliamentarians recalled the previous four Meetings in Strasbourg (1996), Manila (2002), Hue City (2004) and Helsinki (2006), and held comprehensive, in-depth and fruitful discussions on issues of common concern and interest.

Promote the Doha Round of WTO Negotiations and facilitate trade and investment between Asia and Europe

- ASEP parliamentarians reaffirmed the importance of the open, rule-based, multilateral trading system under the WTO to global trade balance and economic growth and financial stability of all countries and regions, believing that such a system will be the most effective in regulating and expanding trade relations among ASEM Partners.
- ASEP parliamentarians voiced concern over the slow progress in the multilateral trade negotiations and surging trade protectionism and expressed the view that this would have an adverse impact on the trade environment of the world, developing members in particular. They undertook to urge their governments to push the Doha Round of negotiations to a comprehensive, balanced and early conclusion to ensure the realization of the development goals of the Doha Round for the real benefits of developing members.
- Noting that agriculture is a key issue in the Doha Round of negotiations, ASEP parliamentarians called on developed countries to demonstrate greater sincerity and flexibility in reducing agricultural subsidies that distort the international market and lowering taxes for agricultural products. Substantive steps should be taken to ensure that agreement on modalities of negotiations on agricultural and non-agricultural products is reached at the earliest possible date.
- Noting with concern the growing inflationary pressure on countries from the rising global food prices and their severe impact on the life of the poor population of developing countries and the global poverty-reduction endeavor, ASEP parliamentarians urged countries, developed ones in particular, to take measures under the guidance and coordination of the United Nations to increase emergency aid in the short-term and increase agricultural input and strengthen capacity-building in the medium- and long-term, so as to bring about a fundamental solution to the issue of food security.
- Believing that regional trade arrangements/free trade agreements are useful supplements to the multilateral trading system advocated by the WTO, ASEP parliamentarians supported regional cooperation carried out by ASEM Partners in compliance with the WTO rules to promote cross-regional economic opening up and integration.
- Reiterating that ASEM Partners should work together to deepen the Asia-Europe economic partnership through closer cooperation and take concrete actions to reduce trade and investment barriers to facilitate trade opening up and mutual investment between Asia and Europe, ASEP parliamentarians called on all ASEM Partners to regularly review the implementation of the *Hanoi Declaration on Closer ASEM Economic Partnership*.

- Noting that the *ASEM Investment Promotion Action Plan (IPAP)* is aimed at promoting the two-way flow of investment between Asia and Europe, ASEP parliamentarians expressed concern over the lack of substantive progress of ASEM in investment promotion in recent years, and urged ASEM Partners to continue to encourage their investment institutions to deepen multilateral exchanges, information sharing and cooperation and explore the possibility of establishing a multilateral investment promotion mechanism under the guidance of the Action Plan.

- ASEP parliamentarians recognized the strong impetus European trade integration has given to the economic integration and overall growth of the region and welcomed the regional trade arrangements/free trade agreements that have been reached or are under negotiation in Asia. They also called for more in-depth studies on measures to promote Asia-Europe trade, including the establishment of an Asia-Europe free trade area.

- Noting that this year is the year for mid-term review of the UN Millennium Development Goals (UNMDGs) and that the UN will hold a UNMDGs high-level event in September, ASEP parliamentarians called on ASEM Partners to seize the opportunity and work together for the worldwide fulfillment of the MDGs on schedule.

- Agreeing that the international community should work to create an enabling external environment for the poverty-reduction and development endeavors of developing countries so that they can better meet the MDGs, ASEP parliamentarians urged developed countries to fulfill, as soon as possible, their commitment of increasing their ODA to 0.7% of their GNI.

- Noting the exacerbated fluctuations in the international financial market and the expanded fallout of the subprime crisis, ASEP parliamentarians called on ASEM Partners to increase dialogue and cooperation on financial policies to jointly safeguard stability of the regional financial market. They welcomed the active efforts of finance ministers of Asia and Europe to explore effective measures to deepen financial cooperation between the two regions, including continued implementation of the *Tianjin Initiative on Closer ASEM Economic and Financial Cooperation* and the establishment of an emergency dialogue mechanism to address economic and financial contingencies. ASEP parliamentarians applauded the efforts of Asian members in promoting financial and monetary integration, including the Chiang Mai Initiative, the Asian Bond Markets Initiative and the Asian Bond Fund.

- ASEP parliamentarians welcomed active participation of the business communities in Asia and Europe in the ASEM process, reaffirmed the role of the Asia-Europe Business Forum as a bridge for closer contacts among the business communities of ASEM Partners and a good platform for business-government interaction, and called on ASEM Partners to implement more recommendations from the Business Forum.

- ASEP parliamentarians reiterated the importance of closer cooperation on trade in services and among SMEs, and called on ASEM Partners to implement the recommendations made at the inaugural ASEM SMEs Ministerial Meeting held in Beijing in October 2007 and work together to promote trade in services in Asia and Europe by encouraging dialogue, in the form of business fora and talks, between companies in the service sector and helping them find partners and business opportunities.

Protect cultural diversity and promote dialogue among civilizations

- ASEP parliamentarians recognized that globalization brings both growing opportunities for exchanges and interaction among different cultures, civilizations and religions and development imbalances and uneven distribution of benefits. Prejudice, misunderstanding, intolerance and even confrontation and conflict due to differences in culture and civilization still exist and violence, war, hostility and unrest on the pretext of religion break out from time to time, posing a challenge to human wisdom and civilization. It is all the more urgent to strengthen dialogue among cultures and civilizations.
- ASEP parliamentarians reiterated their commitment to taking concerted actions and continuing to promote dialogue among cultures and civilizations, advance interaction and reconciliation among religions, strengthen regional and international cooperation, and build a world of peace and harmony.
- ASEP parliamentarians reiterated that ASEM Partners include ancient cultures and civilizations in the East and the West, and that cultural diversity is a defining feature of this region and an important foundation for Asia-Europe cooperation and exchanges. They stressed the need to respect cultural diversity, and called for understanding, tolerance, mutual respect and harmonious co-existence among various social systems, development paths and cultures.
- ASEP parliamentarians reaffirmed the positive role of dialogue among cultures and civilizations in eradicating poverty, protecting the environment and promoting sustainable economic growth and common prosperity, and called on ASEM Partners to work together, in the spirit of inclusiveness and dialogue, for a world featuring harmonious co-existence, equality, mutual respect and common development of different cultures and civilizations.
- ASEP parliamentarians reiterated that they oppose extremism and are committed to promoting peaceful and effective solutions of conflicts, preventing and combating all forms of terrorism, and opposing the use of force in the name of religion, faith and ideology and any attempt to provoke conflicts over differences in culture, race and value in Asia, Europe and other parts of the world.
- ASEP parliamentarians commended ASEM's efforts to promote dialogue among cultures and civilizations, and applauded the positive outcome of the ASEM Conference on Cultures and Civilizations and the ASEM Interfaith Dialogue as well as the rich cultural exchanges sponsored by the Asia-Europe Foundation. They also hailed the role of NGOs and civil societies in deepening dialogue among cultures and civilizations.
- ASEP parliamentarians emphasized the importance of education in promoting cultural exchanges and dialogue among civilizations, and called on ASEM Partners to engage in educational cooperation and academic exchanges in a more active way and provide opportunities to people, youth in particular, to enable them to better appreciate and respect different cultures and civilizations.
- ASEP parliamentarians emphasized the important role of the media in respecting cultural diversity and difference and promoting understanding and tolerance among cultures and civilizations, and called on the media to explain and spread, in the interest of social justice and harmony, values of peace that all cultures accept.

- ASEP parliamentarians acclaimed the contribution made by relevant countries and regional and international organizations to promoting dialogue among cultures and civilizations, including the *Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations*, the *UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, and the UN Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, and welcomed the implementation of these initiatives in the social, youth, education, media and other areas.

Further strengthen the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership

- ASEP parliamentarians shared the view that the second decade for ASEM is an important period to deepen the ASEM process, and called on ASEM Partners to further enhance dialogue and cooperation, especially cooperation in economic affairs and trade, to enable people in Asia and Europe to benefit more from such cooperation. ASEP parliamentarians also supported measures taken by ASEM Partners to raise the profile and influence of ASEM and win broader public recognition and support.

- ASEP parliamentarians stressed the need for closer links between ASEP and ASEM, and reiterated their readiness to contribute to the advancement of the ASEM process.

- All delegates to ASEP V expressed their sincere appreciation to the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, host of the Meeting, and Chairman Wu Bangguo, president of the Meeting.

- ASEP parliamentarians agreed to hold the next ASEP in 2010 in Europe and looked forward to their reunion in two years' time.

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