THE 15TH ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE ASIA PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

(Sponsored by the Republic of Korea and Russian Federation)

THE 15TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM,

Noting increasing interdependence and deepening globalization and informatization in the international community,

Recognizing that the advent of the information society and the subsequent digital divide that has widened due to factors such as income, education, age, and region, are aggravating social and economic inequality,

Stressing that information technologies and means of telecommunication create broad opportunities for further development of human civilization and cooperation for the common good of all States,

Recalling at the same time concern expressed by the UN General Assembly in its resolutions 53/70, 54/49, 55/28, 56/19, 57/53, 58/32, 59/61, 60/45 and 61/54 that these technologies and means can potentially be used for purposes that are inconsistent with the objectives of maintaining international stability and security and may adversely affect the integrity of the infrastructure of States to the detriment of their security in both civil and military fields and *recognizing* the necessity to take into consideration this potential in the process of making efforts to build the information society and bridge the digital divide,

Further noting that in the process of rapid transition into an information society, the digital divide has emerged as a new cause for the widening gap between advanced countries that are leading the trend and developing countries that are lagging behind,

Concerned that in this information and communications revolution, if the imbalance between advanced and developing countries is left unattended, the gap between these countries, in terms of quality of life and economic strength, will grow even wider,

Highlighting the discussions undertaken at UNESCO, UNDP and the 2000 World Economic Forum held in Davos under the theme 'Sustainable Growth and Bridging the Divides: A Framework for Our Global Future',

Welcoming the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) held to address the global digital divide,

Acknowledging the leading facilitating role of ITU, UNESCO and UNDP in implementing the WSIS outcomes,

Referring to the fact that the WSIS defined the Internet as a key element of the information society infrastructure and stressed that the international management of the Internet should be multilateral, transparent and democratic with full involvement of governments, the privet sector, the civil society and international organizations. It should ensure an equitable distribution of resources, facilitate access for all and ensure a stable and secure functioning of the Internet.

Reaffirming that the digital divide, an issue of paramount importance that needs to be resolved to ensure the transition to an information society, has become the center of global attention,

RESOLVES TO:

1. *Invite* member States to develop regional and subregional cooperation in implementing the WSIS outcomes in particular to contribute to bridging the digital divide.

2. *Urge* all member states to scale up efforts to close the digital divide that is ascribable to factors such as income gap, education, age, and region;

3. *Encourage* member parliaments to support their governments through regional and international workshops and seminars to share information, experience, and best practices concerned with bridging the digital divide;

4. *Encourage* member states to build global information networks and to implement substantive policies on information utilization education in close cooperation with international organizations including ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, and IPAIT (International Parliamentarians' Association for Information Technology);

5. *Suggest* that member states consider a possibility to set up a special fund directed at addressing the digital divide in East Asia;

6. *Encourage* advanced countries to render support to ensure that developing countries utilize the special fund effectively and efficiently and to monitor the effects and achievements of the fund;

7. *Put priority on* resolving the digital divide at home by providing sufficient funds and resources.