



## **ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**

**The AIPA Secretariat-ASEAN Secretariat Retreat Note**

**Nusa Dua, Bali, 4 - 7 September 2012**

### **Background**

Recent decades have shown an enormous progress in the ASEAN regional integration process. It has been highlighted, among others, by the conclusion of the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AFTA), the entry into force of the ASEAN Charter in 2008, and above all by maintaining a peaceful, mutual respective coexistence between all ASEAN Member States. Therefore the regional organisation has been better recognized, and has been propelled to the status of a profound partnering multilateral and bilateral cooperation. In order to accomplish more goals ahead, such as a full functioning ASEAN Community by 2015, cooperation between the ASEAN Secretariat and the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) remains an important precondition in order to include the legislative process into the framework of ASEAN integration. So far, ASEAN through its Member States has proposed policies and measures requiring legislative intervention, while the AIPA offers resolutions and recommendations espousing the necessity of executive actions.

One issue that the AIPA Secretariat had brought to the ASEAN Secretariat's attention is how to monitor the implementation of the adopted resolutions and recommendations in the ASEAN Member States. Reason for such obstacle is, among others, lack of a more integrated way to exchange information between the two Secretariats, for the sake of attention and/or follow-ups on issues of common concern. Currently, regular official consultations to

communicate activities of the two organisations are neither specified nor formalized. Furthermore, mutual exchange mechanisms between the two organisations are not sufficiently available although the two have acknowledged the existence of such exchange mechanism.

Mindful of such reality, the AIPA Secretariat and ASEAN Secretariat aimed to enhance relations and to gradually build a mechanism for communication, consultation and cooperation. As the ASEAN Charter sets out the mandate of ASEAN to engage with various stakeholders, the ASEAN Secretariat acknowledged the important role of AIPA as the legislature of ASEAN to facilitate early ratification, enforce and execute the agreements, as well as to help harmonise legislations and policies, in order to deepen regional integration and community-building. On the other hand, the AIPA Statute clearly defined its purpose to help facilitate the achievement of the goals of the ASEAN.

### **Resume of the Retreat**

The AIPA/AIPA Secretariat-ASEAN Secretariat Retreat took place in Ayodya Hotel, Nusa Dua Bali from 4 to 7 September 2012 attended by parliamentarians from Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia and Singapore, as well as officials from the ASEAN Secretariat and the AIPA Secretariat. At the opening of the Retreat, remarks were presented by Secretary General of AIPA, Hon. Antonio Cuenco, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for Community & Corporate Affairs, H.E. Bagas Hapsoro, Representative of the German Embassy in Jakarta, Ms. Jessica Engel, and GIZ Principal Advisor, Mr. Gert Reinberger.

The Retreat is an initiative of AIPA with support from the GIZ Capacity Projects, in collaboration with the German Embassy and Hanns-Seidel Foundation, aimed to build mutual trust, foster cooperation and enhance communication between the two Secretariats. Communication and cooperation between the AIPA Secretariat and the ASEAN Secretariat is important to fulfill both legislative and executive agenda for peace and prosperity in Southeast Asia region.

The Retreat was moderated by Dr. Melinda Crane, an experienced moderator for a wide range of international organizations and firms. Dr. Crane studied History and Political

Science at Brown University and studied Law at Harvard University. She received her PhD. in Political Economy at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

Upon thorough studies and discussions of current situations, challenges, realities, shortages/constraints and expectations for better future engagement and commitment, **the AIPA/AIPA Secretariat and the ASEAN Secretariat agreed to note the following:**

- Awareness Building

There is need for awareness building on ASEAN among parliamentarians, as well as on AIPA among national ASEAN officials pertaining the goals and objectives of respective institutions. Public awareness on AIPA and ASEAN should be continuously developed to comply with the aim to establish a people-centered ASEAN;

- Communication Enhancement

Enhancing effective communication between the two Secretariats is a must. The two Secretariats noted the importance of communication instruments such as a Focal Point as well as Liason Officers between the two respective entities;

a. The ASEAN Secretariat has informed that for issues pertaining to AIPA, DSG Bagas Hapsoro has been mandated as the Focal Point by H.E. Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary General of ASEAN. Such mandate was pursuant to the statement of SG of ASEAN's in the 31<sup>st</sup> AIPA General Assembly in Paththaya, Thailand. The ASEAN Secretariat further informed that *liason* officers for AIPA related matters from theirs side is the officers from the AIPA, ASEAN Foundation, AICHR and Other Entities Associated with ASEAN (AAAOEA) Division;

b. The ASEAN Secretariat queried on the Focal Point as well as *liason* officers from the AIPA Secretariat. The AIPA took note of such query and informed that they will further inform the ASEAN Secretariat once a Focal Point and *liason* officers from their side have been determined; In this regard, AIPA discussed that Speakers of each AIPA Parliament members will assign/appoint a Senior Parliamentarian for particular engagement with AIPA

and ASEAN in the lead up to enable the two institutions embarking on formal communication aimed at strengthening awareness of each other's crucial roles to achieve the set goals.

- Consultation

Explore possibilities of consultation between Speakers of AIPA members with the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR). AIPA and the ASEAN Secretariat agreed that effective consultation and cooperation between the two institutions should be built and developed in a step-by-step evolutionary manner;

There is a need for assessment and evaluation of the AIPA Secretariat, particularly of its capacity to do monitoring of the implementation of adopted resolutions in its meetings, as well as its ability to communicate with the ASEAN Secretariat on the process of parliament ratification of resolutions and recommendations approved by the ASEAN. In addition, there is also a need to focus on current important issues faced by ASEAN that have been unattended to in the last three years;

To enhance the capacity of the AIPA Secretariat, and to improve its ability to cope with the growing demand to handle entrusted tasks, the AIPA Secretariat should identify its needs and redefine its scope of functions and tasks to obtain a result-based actions. Henceforth the Statute of AIPA should be reviewed, especially pertaining to the functions and roles of the AIPA Secretariat.

- Cooperation

The two Secretariats noted on the possibilities of common platforms for cooperation. Some questions were raised in this field of follow-up, i.e.: What would be the best practices of cooperation between the two Secretariats? What can be key areas for basis of cooperation between AIPA and ASEAN Secretariats?

The AIPA/AIPA Secretariat and the ASEAN Secretariat Retreat concluded with an evaluation of the proceedings and the presentations. Creative and tangible efforts for result-oriented consultation and cooperation were promoted. Participants agreed the Retreat planted

the seed for a more enhanced relation and cooperation between the ASEAN Secretariat and AIPA.

Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia, 7 September 2012