

**Chairman's Statement of the Asian Peace and Reconciliation Council  
Preparatory Meeting  
The Plaza Athenee, Bangkok, 4-5 September 2012**

1. The Preparatory Meeting for the official launching of the Asian Peace and Reconciliation Council (APRC), held in Bangkok, Thailand, on 4-5 September 2012, was organised by the Saranrom Institute of Foreign Affairs Foundation (SIFAF) and chaired by H.E. Professor Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai, President of the Saranrom Institute of Foreign Affairs Foundation, and former Deputy Prime Minister, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and former Minister of Finance of Thailand.

2. The Meeting took place in the form of closed and informal sessions, whereby participants from within and outside the Asian region engaged in free-flowing and candid discussion. The Meeting was well attended by sixteen Founding Members of the APRC, all of whom are distinguished high-level former Asian and European policy makers, diplomats and prominent thinkers, namely, H.E. Mr. José Ramos Horta, former President of Timor Leste and a Nobel Peace Prize laureate; H.E. Tun Abdullah Badawi, former Prime Minister of Malaysia; H.E. Mr. Shaukat Aziz, former Prime Minister of Pakistan; H.E. Dr. Alfred Gusenbauer, former Chancellor of Austria; H.E. Mr. José de Venecia, Jr., former Speaker of the Philippines' House of Representatives; H.E. Mr. Jusuf Kalla, former Vice President of Indonesia; H.E. Professor Shunmugam Jayakumar, former Deputy Prime Minister and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Singapore; H.E. Dr. Hassan Wirajuda, Advisor to the President of Indonesia and former Minister of Foreign Affairs; H.E. Professor Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai, former Deputy Prime Minister, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and former Minister of Finance of Thailand; H.E. Tan Sri Dato' Seri Syed Hamid Albar, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, former Minister of Defence, and former Minister of Home Affairs of Malaysia; H.E. Mr. Yashwant Sinha, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and former Minister of Finance of India; Professor Dr. David Kennedy, Director of Institute for Global Law and Policy, Harvard Law School; Mr. Juha Christensen, Director of Peace Architecture and Conflict Transformation Alliance (PACTA), Finland; H.E. Dr. Tej Bunnag, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand; H.E. Mr. Weerasak Kowsurat, former Minister of Tourism and Sports of Thailand; and Dr. Sorajak Kasemsuvan, former Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand.

3. Other Founding Members who were unable to attend the Meeting but had given the APRC their full support include H.E. Mr. Aleksander Kwaśniewski, former President of Poland; H.E. Mr. Ricardo Lagos, former President of Chile; H.E. Mr. Romano Prodi, former Prime Minister of Italy and former President of the European Commission; H.E. Mr. Li Zhaoxing, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of China; H.E. Mr. Jose Isidro Camacho, Vice Chairman of Credit Suisse Asia- Pacific and Former Secretary for Finance of the Philippines; H.E. Ms. Yoriko Kawakuchi, Member of the House of Councillors and former Minister of

Foreign Affairs of Japan. In addition, the Government of Timor-Leste also expressed its intention to contribute financial support to the APRC, once it has been established.

4. The Meeting recalled that the idea of creating a network of experts and experienced individuals to be a mechanism for peace and reconciliation in Asia was first initiated by the speakers at the international Symposium entitled “Asia in the Next Decade”, convened in Bangkok on 24-25 August 2011 by the SIFAF, the Institute of Global Law and Policy (IGLP) of Harvard Law School and the IGLP programme of the Faculty of Law at Chulalongkorn University. The distinguished speakers endorsed the idea of setting up a regional, non-governmental organisation that pulls together diverse individuals with experience in conflict resolution, peace-building and reconciliation and hence, the APRC’s founding Bangkok Declaration was approved on 25 August 2011 by nine Founding Members. Later, several other prominent individuals agreed to join as Founding Members of the APRC.

5. The idea of setting up the APRC was once again met with much enthusiasm and endorsed by participants at the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP) in Nanning in September 2011 and also by the participants at the Centrist Asia Pacific Democrats International (CAPDI) Conference in Phnom Penh in September 2011 and, subsequently, in Timor Leste in 2012.

6. This Preparatory Meeting for the official launching of the APRC has, therefore, been convened to solidify commitment to the APRC and clearly define and consolidate the vision, principles, role, organizational structure and future direction of the APRC.

### **The Need for the APRC**

7. The Meeting agreed that there were many pockets of conflicts and potential conflicts within and between societies in Asia - ranging from ethnic, religious, land boundary, maritime territorial to political conflicts. While there exists a number of mechanisms to promote peace and resolve conflicts in Asia, the Meeting agreed that there was ample room for the APRC to augment those ongoing efforts at both the governmental level and non-governmental level. Therefore, the Meeting underscored the need for the establishment of the APRC which will serve as a Pan-Asian body where collective expertise and experiences can be shared, research funded and experts deployed to assist in peace dialogue, peace-building process, and conflict management to create peace and reconciliation in Asia.

8. The Meeting agreed that the APRC is unique due to its two key characteristics. Firstly, the APRC will consist of Founding Members who can offer a wealth of knowledge, experiences, and understanding of bureaucracy,

social political structure and realities, business community, interstate relations, the administration of government and international relations, peace building and conflict resolution as well as first-hand knowledge on the political decision making process. Secondly, the APRC, once established, will be a non-governmental and impartial body that will have unparalleled access to decision-makers involved in conflict situations.

### **The Principles of the APRC**

9. The Meeting agreed that the APRC will act on the principle of non-interference, silent/quiet diplomacy, consensus and upon request. Nevertheless, the APRC may choose to engage in any conflict resolution process provided that all parties involved grant their consent. The Meeting also emphasised that the APRC will adhere to the principle of inclusiveness. The Meeting welcomed and encouraged additional high level former policy makers, academics, experts and experienced individuals from various fields and regions to join the APRC.

### **The Role of the APRC**

10. The Meeting agreed that the members of the APRC, who will consist of former leaders, ministers, diplomats and thinkers, will serve as prime movers, facilitators and pathfinders of peace dialogues and reconciliation. With their extensive networks of trust and contacts, collectively the APRC could offer their good offices, knowledge and expertise to assist governments, organisations and societies in Asia and beyond. With its diverse set of members and their impartiality, the Meeting agreed that the APRC will be able to offer a comfort level for parties to the conflicts.

11. The Meeting stressed that the APRC is a global initiative which will operate in ways that are complementary to the mechanisms in Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as well as other regional organizations and processes within and outside Asia.

### **The Organisational Structure of the APRC**

12. The Meeting agreed that the APRC will be an organization that is international, independent, and non-governmental. The Meeting agreed that the APRC Secretariat will be located in Thailand, registered as non-profit foundation under the Thai Law. The Meeting underscored that APRC members are global citizens who do not and will not represent any government, country or political party.

13. The Meeting agreed that the APRC will be an action-oriented body whose views and actions are supported by its in-house think tank as well as drawing on the expertise from other academic institutions and research institutes within and outside Asia.

14. The Meeting concurred that the APRC Secretariat will be responsible for coordinating the APRC's efforts mainly through electronic means, which include the circulation of cases the APRC will take on for Member's deliberation as well as sharing and exchanging the APRC's research and analyses. Nevertheless, the Meeting stressed that there still remained a need for Members of the APRC to meet at least once a year.

### **Future Direction of the APRC**

15. The Meeting agreed that the APRC is officially launched today and its organizational structure to be completed before the end of 2012.

16. The Meeting further agreed that the APRC will, at the initial stage, be selective and highly focused on the issues that it will work on which will have to first be discussed and agreed upon among all of the Founding Members. In this regard, the Meeting proposed that a working group shall be set up to determine which project(s) should be taken up by the APRC.

17. The Meeting agreed that seeking funding for the APRC's project and the administration of the secretariat office will be a collective responsibility and draw on each of the Founding Members' network of connections. The Meeting also agreed to form a working group to oversee the decision on possible sources of funding in order to ensure the independent and impartial nature of the APRC.

18. Finally, the Meeting thanked H.E. Professor Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai, the Organising Committee, the Saranrom Institute of Foreign Affairs Foundation and all student volunteers for their outstanding hospitality, coordination, steadfast commitment, and generous support which led to the success of this Meeting.

19. All participants of this Meeting were most grateful to Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn for granting them an opportunity to have an audience.

20. The participants took note, with much appreciation, of the kind sponsorship for the two-day Meeting from the SIFAF, the Thai Beverage Public Company Limited, the PTT Public Company Limited (PTT), the PTT Exploration and Production Public Company Limited (PTTEP), the TOT Public Company Limited and the Government of Switzerland.

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