



Press Release
ASEAN SG Appeals for, and Receives Full Support from ASEAN
Parliamentarians for Community-Building Efforts
Pattaya, Thailand, 4 August 2009

ASEAN parliamentarians, meeting for the first time since the adoption of the ASEAN Charter, have committed towards providing full support to ASEAN community-building efforts.

Meeting at the 30th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) being held in Pattaya, Thailand, representatives from the ten ASEAN Member States said they would support the ASEAN Charter and efforts towards the building of the ASEAN Community by 2015.

ASEAN parliamentarians have responded to an appeal for them to be fully engaged in community-building efforts, said the Secretary-General of ASEAN. "With their help, we can move the community forward," Dr Surin Pitsuwan today. To operationalise the agreement, the Secretariats of both ASEAN and AIPA are to carry out more consultations and coordination.

Dr Surin, in his Statement at the plenary session of the Assembly, noted that the engagement between ASEAN and AIPA reached a historic moment when an AIPA delegation was invited to attend an Informal Meeting with the ASEAN Leaders during the 14th ASEAN Summit earlier this year in Cha-am, Hua Hin.

Calling for AIPA support for the work of ASEAN, Dr Surin said parliamentarians in ASEAN can assist in expediting the ratifications of ASEAN treaties and agreements. Assistance in ensuring national implementation of ASEAN agreements can also be another initiative for AIPA to consider.

Another proposed initiative includes establishing "Parliamentarians Friends to the ASEAN Secretariat". This is envisaged to involve a core group of selected AIPA parliamentarians with whom the Secretariat would regularly contact and disseminate information to. They could also be invited to attend forums organised by the Secretariat to provide the parliamentary perspective.

"I sincerely hope that we can build on what we have already achieved in the past. Moving towards the realisation of the ASEAN Community, a mere five years away, would require a strong partnership between the ASEAN government machinery, the ASEAN Secretariat and of course, with you, our representatives of the people. Building the ASEAN Community needs the support from the legislatures in ASEAN. The role of AIPA is indeed critical in this endeavour," he said.

Through their respective constituencies, Dr Surin said the region's visions could be more effectively communicated to its citizens. This would then really put meaning to words that people are at the centre of community-building efforts, and of building a caring and sharing community.

At the current 30th Assembly being held from 2-8 August 2009, Brunei Darussalam was accorded full membership status in AIPA.

Apart from delegations from the ASEAN Member States, there were also representatives from observer delegations such as Australia, Canada, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Russia, the United States and from the European Parliament. Representatives from Timor-Leste and the Inter-

Parliamentary Union also attended the Assembly as special guests of the host parliament, the National Assembly of Thailand.