



PARLIAMENT
OF AUSTRALIA

Australian Parliamentary Delegation

Thirty-First Annual Meeting of the
Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum

Manila, The Philippines

23–26 November 2023

REPORT | OCTOBER 2024



© Commonwealth of Australia 2024

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 4.0 International License

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>.

ISBN 978-1-76092-711-0 Printed version

ISBN 978-1-76092-712-7 PDF version

Contents

Members of the Delegation	1
Leader of the Delegation	1
Delegates.....	1
Officials.....	1
The Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF)	2
Background.....	2
Member countries.....	2
APPF structure and Rules of Procedure	3
31st APPF, Manila, November 2023	5
The Australian delegation.....	5
Meeting program	6
Executive Committee meeting	8
Inaugural ceremony	8
Meeting of women parliamentarians.....	8
Working Groups and Drafting Committee meetings.....	9
Plenary sessions	9
Plenary 1: Political and Security Matters	10
Plenary session 2: Economic and Trade Matters.....	11
Plenary session 3: Regional Co-operation in the Asia-Pacific.....	12
Final plenary session.....	13
Concluding comments.....	14
Appendix A – Program, APPF Manila	15
Appendix B – Australian-sponsored draft resolutions.....	19
Appendix C – Joint communique	26
Appendix D – APPF-30, Bangkok Thailand.....	32
Appendix E – APPF Rules of Procedure.....	33

Members of the Delegation

Leader of the Delegation

Mr Steve Georganas MP
Member for Adelaide, South Australia
Australian Labor Party

Delegates

Mrs Bridget Archer MP
Member for Bass, Tasmania
Liberal Party of Australia

The Hon Michelle Landry MP
Member for Capricornia, Queensland
Liberal National Party of Queensland

Ms Tracey Roberts MP
Member for Pearce, Western Australia
Australian Labor Party

Officials

Mr Russell Chafer
Delegation Secretary

The Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF)

Background

The Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) is an assembly of national Parliaments which meets annually to discuss political, security and socio-economic issues and challenges affecting the region. Membership is open to all national Parliaments of sovereign states in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum members and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF).

As a regional parliamentary forum, the APPF reflects the spirit of multilateralism, emphasising the common goals and values of the peoples of the Asia-Pacific. The APPF's stated objectives are to provide opportunities for national parliamentarians of the Asia-Pacific region to:

- identify and discuss matters of common concern and interest and to highlight them in a global context;
- deepen their understanding of the policy concerns, interests and experiences of the countries of the region;
- examine the critical political, social, and cultural developments resulting from economic growth and integration;
- encourage and promote regional cooperation at all levels on matters of common concern to the region; and
- play the roles of national parliamentarians in furthering their respective countries' sense of regional cohesion, understanding and cooperation.

The APPF was an initiative of former Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, with its inaugural meeting being held in Tokyo in 1993. At that meeting the APPF's foundational document, the *Tokyo Declaration*, established the APPF's objectives, principles and structure.¹

The host nation for the APPF's annual meetings has subsequently rotated amongst the member countries, with Australia last hosting in January 2020. The Republic of Korea hosted a virtual APPF in 2021, given the COVID pandemic, with in-person meetings resuming in Thailand in 2022. Decisions at the annual meetings are made by consensus.

Member countries

The following countries are members of the APPF, with the majority sending delegations to the Annual Meeting in the Philippines.² Some member countries were unable to attend given domestic circumstances (for example, New Zealand was unable to attend due to its national elections):

- Australia
- Brunei Darussalam
- Cambodia
- Canada
- Costa Rica
- Chile

¹ Available at www.appf.org.pe.

² A full list of participants is available at <https://www.appfph.org/conference-documents/conference-outputs> (accessed September 2024).

- China
- Colombia
- Ecuador
- Fiji
- Indonesia
- Japan
- Republic of Korea
- Lao PDR
- Malaysia
- Marshall Islands
- Mexico
- Federated States of Micronesia
- Mongolia
- New Zealand
- Papua New Guinea
- Peru
- The Philippines
- The Russian Federation
- Singapore
- Thailand
- The United States of America
- Vietnam

APPF structure and Rules of Procedure

The procedural arrangements for the APPF were first set out at the 1994 Annual Meeting and have been progressively updated. The APPF's current Rules of Procedure are at Appendix E of this report.

The APPF is organised into four sub-regions:

- Northeast Asia, comprising China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia and the Russian Federation;
- Southeast Asia, comprising Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam;
- Oceania, comprising Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and Papua New Guinea; and
- the Americas, comprising Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and the United States.

Each sub-region appoints two representatives (from different countries) to serve on the APPF's Executive Committee for a four-year term, together with a representative from the previous, current and next Annual Meeting host countries if otherwise not represented. Australia has served on the Executive Committee since 2020.

The host, date and venue for each Annual Meeting are typically determined at the preceding meeting. The host Parliament for the Annual Meeting makes the necessary arrangements, consistent with the APPF's Rules of Procedure and in consultation with the Executive Committee.

A provisional agenda is developed by the host country in advance of the Annual Meeting and member Parliaments are then notified. The final agenda is adopted by motion at the commencement of the Annual Meeting, on advice of the Executive Committee.

31st APPF, Manila, November 2023

The 31st Annual Meeting of the APPF (APPF-31) was hosted at Manila by the Congress of the Philippines from 23 to 26 November 2023. The theme of the Annual Meeting was 'Resilient Partnerships for Peace, Prosperity and Sustainability'.

The Australian delegation

Australia's delegation to the Annual Meeting comprised Mr Steve Georganas MP (Delegation Leader), Mrs Bridget Archer MP, the Hon Michelle Landry MP and Ms Tracey Roberts MP. Mr Georganas and Ms Landry additionally undertook a bipartisan program of engagements with senior Philippines government and parliamentary representatives in the lead-up to the Annual Meeting.



Delegation Leader Mr Steve Georganas MP and then President of the Philippines Senate, the Hon Juan Miguel Zubiri



Mr Georganas MP and the Hon Michelle Landry MP meet the Speaker of the Philippines House of Representatives, the Hon Martin Romualdez, and other Members of Congress

Meeting program

In accordance with usual practice the program for the APPF Annual Meeting comprised:

- a meeting of the Executive Committee
- the inaugural ceremony
- meeting of women parliamentarians:
 - sub-topic on gender and the sustainable development goals
 - sub-topic on women's participation and leadership
- Working Group and Drafting Committee meetings
- Plenary Session 1 on political and security matters:
 - sub-topic on strengthening the capacity of Parliaments to promote peace and stability
 - sub-topic on combatting transnational crimes
- Plenary Session 2 on economic and trade matters:
 - sub-topic on re-thinking critical infrastructure
 - sub-topic on human development and inclusive growth

- Plenary Session 3 on regional co-operation in the Asia-Pacific region:
 - sub-topic on regional co-operation through education and culture
 - sub-topic on universal health care in the Asia-Pacific
- a roundtable discussion for young parliamentarians (Australia was not a participant)
- the final plenary session and closing ceremony

The full program for the Annual Meeting is at Appendix A.

Australia's delegation additionally participated in bilateral meetings with like-minded delegations from other countries, including those of Japan, Canada and host nation the Philippines, to discuss issues of mutual concern and our respective approaches to the resolutions under consideration in the Working Group and Drafting Committee meetings.



Discussions between the Australian and Canadian delegations to APPF-31



The Australian and Japanese delegations to APPF-31

Executive Committee meeting

The Executive Committee, co-Chaired by the Presiding Officers of the Philippines Congress and including Mr Georganas as a representative for the Oceania sub-region, met on Thursday 23 November as the first item of business.

The Executive Committee adopted the agenda for the Annual Meeting, considered proposed amendments to the APPF's Rules of Procedure, ratified the appointment of various members of the Philippines Congress as chairs of the various plenary sessions and Working Groups, and referred draft resolutions submitted by member Parliaments (including Australia) to the relevant Working Groups.

Although proceedings at the Executive Committee were largely a formality, Australia was pleased to work with like-minded partners to prevent a draft resolution lodged by the Russian Federation on 'combatting glorification of Nazism, Neo-Nazism and Other Discrimination Practices' being further considered at the Annual Meeting. In keeping with Russia's behaviour in other international fora, the draft resolution sought to legitimise Russia's spurious pretexts for its ongoing illegal military aggression within the internationally-recognised sovereign territory of Ukraine. Australia and other countries were similarly vigilant in considering the language in other Russian resolutions which did proceed to debate in the Working Groups and Drafting Committee meetings.

While the consensus model used for decision-making at the APPF makes exclusion of the Russian Federation from annual meetings challenging, the Australian delegation notes that the APPF's Rules of Procedure commit all APPF members to promote co-operation for the further advancement of peace, freedom, democracy and prosperity. The Australian delegation also endorses the resolution of the global organisation of national Parliaments, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine and calling for an immediate end to the military occupation of sovereign Ukrainian territory, and supporting the resolutions of various international bodies to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators of possible war crimes committed in Ukraine.³

Inaugural ceremony

After the agenda for the Annual Meeting had been adopted by the Executive Committee, the inaugural ceremony for APPF-31 was held on the evening of Thursday 23 November. The ceremony was addressed by the co-hosts, the Philippines Speaker of the House of Representatives the Hon Martin Romualdez and then President of the Senate the Hon Juan Miguel Zubiri and, on behalf of the immediate past host country, the President of the Senate of Thailand the Hon Pornpetch Wichitcholchai.

Meeting of women parliamentarians

The APPF meeting of women parliamentarians took place on Thursday 23 and Friday 24 November, with Mrs Archer, Ms Landry and Ms Roberts all participating on behalf of the Australian delegation. Resolutions proposed by member countries, on the topics of gender and the sustainable development goals and women's participation and leadership, were discussed and merged into two resolutions which were forwarded to the Drafting Committee for adoption.

³ <https://www.ipu.org/news/press-releases/2022-10/ipu-assembly-calls-end-russian-occupation-ukraine> (accessed September 2024).

Australia submitted a draft resolution on women's participation and leadership, a copy of which is at Appendix B. Ms Landry additionally spoke to the topic at the meeting; in her speech she drew on Australia's experience to acknowledge the steady increase in the representation of women in parliamentary roles in the Asia-Pacific, but also reflected on the barriers that see the percentage of seats held by women in national Parliaments across the region still below the global average of 25 per cent.

A report on the results of the meeting of women parliamentarians was delivered by the Chair of the meeting, Philippines Senator Pia Cayetano, at the final plenary session on Saturday 25 November.⁴

Working Groups and Drafting Committee meetings

In the lead-up to the Annual Meeting, 37 draft resolutions were submitted by 10 member Parliaments on the sub-topics mentioned earlier, including four from Australia (on: women's participation and leadership; the capacity of Parliaments to promote peace and stability; regional co-operation through education and culture; and rethinking critical infrastructure).

The draft resolutions – excluding the resolution from Russia deferred at the Executive Committee meeting – were then negotiated at Working Group meetings held on Thursday 23 and Friday 24 November. The Working Groups enabled delegates to consider in detail the various draft resolutions on each sub-topic and, wherever possible, merge them into a single draft resolution for consideration by the Drafting Committee.

The Drafting Committee in turn met on Friday 24 and Saturday 25 November to negotiate the wording of merged resolutions where possible (or defer consideration where not) and develop a joint communique for adoption, along with the agreed resolutions, at the final plenary session.

Despite its small size Australia's delegation all participated in the overlapping Working Groups and Drafting Committee meetings at different stages. The draft resolutions submitted by member countries, and the resolutions agreed by the Drafting Committee, are available at the APPF-31 website.⁵ Australia's four draft resolutions are at Appendix B of this report.

Plenary sessions

Much of the conversation at the APPF Annual Meeting takes place through plenary sessions organised around the three main themes and sub-topics. The plenary sessions allow delegates from each country to make longer contributions, speak to their countries' draft resolutions and debate various aspects of the themes.

Australia was represented by members of its delegation in all three plenary sessions.

⁴ www.appfph.org/conference-documents/conference-outputs (accessed September 2024).

⁵ www.appfph.org/conference-documents/draft-resolutions and www.appfph.org/conference-documents/conference-outputs (accessed September 2024).

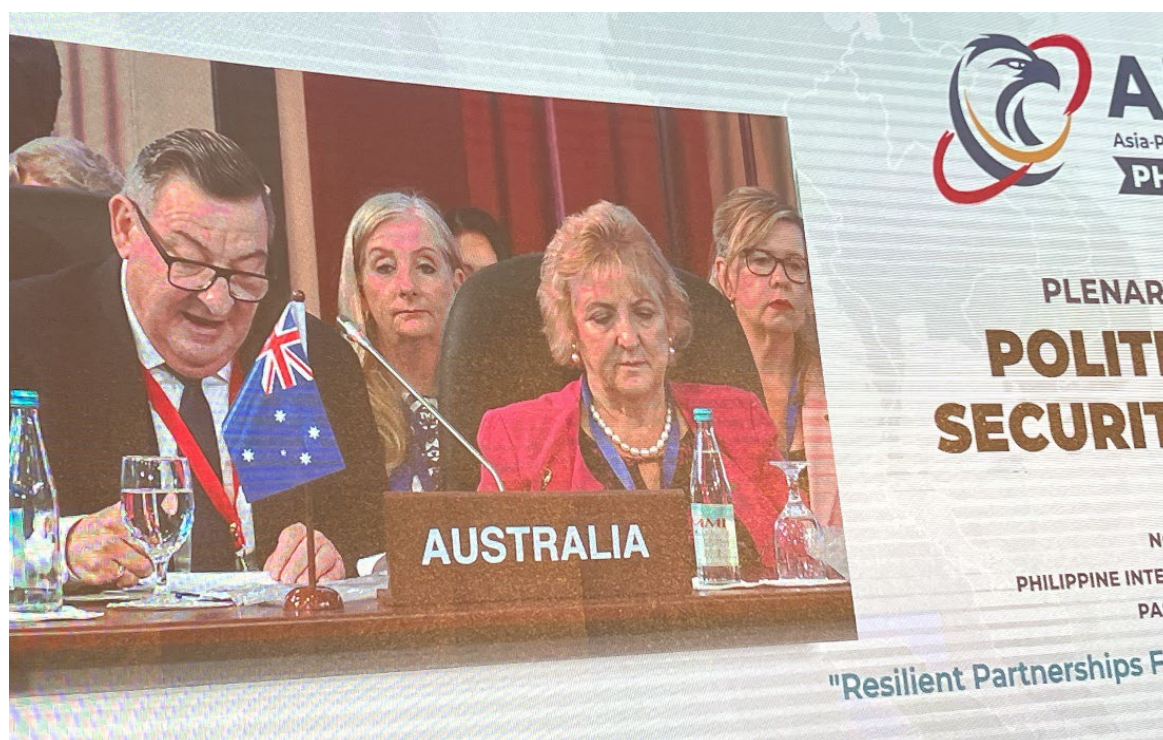
Plenary 1: Political and Security Matters

Two sub-topics were discussed in the plenary session on political and security matters: strengthening the capacity of Parliaments to promote peace and stability, and combatting transnational crimes.

Australia submitted a draft resolution on the capacity of Parliaments to promote peace and stability, a copy of which is at Appendix B. Mr Georganas and Mrs Archer spoke to the theme during the plenary session.

In his speech Mr Georganas emphasised the capacity of regional Parliaments to promote peace and stability. He noted the strong links between the peoples and Parliaments of South East Asia, and the capacity of regional Parliaments to work together to confront challenges to peace posed by armed conflict, terrorism and authoritarianism, as well as the threats of climate change and global pandemic. He also noted Australia's efforts to uphold international human rights, and its support for regional aid, development and peacekeeping efforts.

In her speech Mrs Archer noted that transnational crime has evolved in the three decades since the APPF was established and presents significant challenges for the security of the region, driven in part by new technologies that make law enforcement particularly difficult. She noted that around 70 per cent of Australia's serious and organised crime threats are based offshore or have strong offshore links, and highlighted the strong contribution to combatting regional transnational crime being made by Australia's law enforcement agencies, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC).



Australia's delegation during Plenary Session 1 on Political and Security Matters



Australia's delegation during Plenary Session 1 on Political and Security Matters

Plenary session 2: Economic and Trade Matters

Two sub-topics were discussed in the plenary session on economic and trade matters: re-thinking critical infrastructure, and human development and inclusive growth.

Australia submitted a draft resolution on re-thinking critical infrastructure, a copy of which is at Appendix B.

Mr Georganas spoke to the topic of human development and inclusive growth during the plenary session. In his speech, Mr Georganas noted that focussing on our workforces is one of the most intelligent investments regional countries can make to ensure sustained growth and development. He highlighted Australia's efforts to understand and meet the needs of its changing workforce, including through the establishment of Jobs and Skills Australia, the commissioning of the *Working Future* white paper and ensuring that education and training keeps pace with technological development. Mr Georganas also noted the importance of ensuring that the benefits of economic growth are shared across all strata of society, irrespective of gender, age, race, ethnicity or region.



Mr Georganas MP speaks during Plenary Session 2 on Economic and Trade Matters

Plenary session 3: Regional Co-operation in the Asia-Pacific

Two sub-topics were discussed in the plenary session on regional co-operation in the Asia-Pacific: regional co-operation through education and culture, and universal health care.

Australia submitted a draft resolution on regional co-operation through education and culture, a copy of which is at Appendix B. Mrs Archer and Ms Roberts spoke to the theme during the plenary session.

In her speech Mrs Archer spoke on the importance of universal health coverage in the Asia-Pacific. She noted improvements in neo-natal mortality rates and health workforce ratios across the region, and shared Australia's own progress in providing universal health care and addressing the challenge of providing adequate health services in rural and remote locations. Mrs Archer also noted Australia's significant financial and logistical support for the region during the COVID-19 pandemic, and our contribution to international efforts to improve reporting, preparedness and responses for future pandemics.

In her speech Ms Roberts spoke on the importance of regional co-operation through education and culture. She noted the remarkable strides across the region in improving literacy rates and school enrolments at both primary and secondary levels, but with ongoing challenges in addressing the mismatch between worker skills and employer needs. Ms Roberts referred to Australia's experience in negotiating the National Skills Agreement with the aim of strengthening the vocational educating and training sector.

Ms Roberts emphasised the importance of confronting issues of equity and inclusion in the region, including improving education access for women and girls, adapting learning for children with disabilities, and addressing the impact of poverty on education. She also highlighted Australia's strong commitment to fostering education in the region, through development assistance and dedicated programs such as the Australia Awards Scholarships and the Australia Pacific Training Coalition.



Ms Roberts MP and Mrs Archer MP at Plenary Session 3 on Regional Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific

Final plenary session

The final plenary session and closing ceremony was held on Saturday 25 November. At the plenary session the report of the meeting of women parliamentarians was presented, and the final resolutions and joint communique agreed by the Drafting Committee were formally adopted. The joint communique outlined the work undertaken at APPF-31 and was signed by each country's delegation leader. A copy of the joint communique is at Appendix C.



Mr Georganas MP signs the joint communique for Australia



Delegation leaders at the closing ceremony

Concluding comments

The Australian delegation welcomed the opportunity to build and sustain relationships with regional counterparts at the APPF-31 Annual Meeting. This was particularly so as APPF-31 represented Australia's first opportunity to resume its customary full participation in an APPF Annual Meeting in a neighbouring country since 2019 – noting that in 2020 Australia hosted, in 2021 the Annual Meeting was held virtually due to the pandemic, and in 2022 Australia sent an observer delegation to APPF-30 in Thailand but was not able to sponsor and speak to draft resolutions in accordance with usual practice due to the timing of the 2022 federal election.

The delegation would like to thank our hosts, the Presiding Officers of the Philippines Congress Speaker the Hon Martin Romualdez and President the Hon Juan Miguel Zubiri, for their hospitality, and we commend the staff of the Congress for their care and attention to detail in running a successful Annual Meeting. The delegation records its appreciation to our Liaison Officer from the Congress, Ms Aren Jimenez-Aguila, for her hard work in supporting our participation.

The delegation would also like to thank the staff of the International and Parliamentary Relations Office, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Parliamentary Library for their assistance in the extensive preparations necessary for an APPF Annual Meeting.

At the time of preparing this report the future of the APPF is uncertain – the next host country has yet to be identified, and it seems unlikely that an Annual Meeting will be held in 2024. Delegation members can attest to the benefits of direct engagement with their counterparts in the Asia-Pacific, and endorse the Australian Parliament's participation in the APPF and other regional fora.

Steve Georganas MP
Delegation Leader

Appendix A – Program, APPF Manila



23 to 26 November 2023

Philippine International Convention Center

“Resilient Partnerships for Peace, Prosperity and Sustainability”

PROGRAM

Tuesday, 21 November and Wednesday, 22 November

Arrival of Delegates

Thursday, 23 November

Geopolitical Group Meetings (optional)
(Summit Halls E and F, 4th Floor)

10:00-11:00 **Executive Committee Meeting**
(Summit Hall D, 4th Floor)

11:00-12:00 **Meeting of Delegation Secretaries and Advisors**
(Summit Hall C, 4th Floor)

12:00-13:00 Lunch for the Members of the Executive Committee and
Heads of the Country Delegations (Amorsolo Room, 2nd Floor)
Lunch for all Delegates (Banquet Halls 1,2,3, 2nd Floor)

13:30-15:30 **Meeting of Women Parliamentarians**
(Summit Hall C, 4th Floor)

- a. Gender and Sustainable Development Goals
- b. Women’s Participation and Leadership

13:30-15:30 **Meeting of the Working Groups**
Political and Security Matters (Summit Hall E, 4th Floor)

- 16:30-17:30 **Inaugural Ceremony**
(PICC Plenary Hall)
 Photo Session at the PICC Main Lobby
(Heads of Delegation with Senate President Zubiri and House Speaker Romualdez)
 Opening Ritual - Sanduguan
 Welcome Address
 by The Honorable Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez
Speaker of the House of Representatives and Co-Chair of the Executive Committee and APPF 31
 Message from the Immediate Past Host
 from the Honorable Pornpetch Wichitcholchai Senate President of the Parliament of Thailand
 Eagle Dance/Bagobo Dance
 Keynote Address
 by The Honorable Juan Miguel F. Zubiri
President of the Senate and Chair of the Executive Committee and APPF 31
- 18:00 Departure for Malacañang Palace
- 19:00-21:00 **Welcome Reception hosted by His Excellency Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. President of the Republic of the Philippines**
Venue: Malacañang Palace

Friday, 24 November

- 09:00-12:30 **Plenary Session I: Political and Security Matters**
(Meeting Room 1, 3rd Floor)
 a. Strengthening the Capacity of Parliaments to Promote Peace and Stability
 b. Combatting Transnational Crimes
- 09:30-12:30 **Meeting of the Working Groups**
 Meeting of Women Parliamentarians *(Meeting Room 10, 3rd Floor)*
 Economic and Trade Matters *(Summit Hall F, 4th Floor)*

- 09:30-12:30 **Meeting of the Drafting Committee** (*Summit Hall D, 4th Floor*)
- 10:30-12:30 **Roundtable Discussion of Young Parliamentarians**
(*Summit Hall C, 4th Floor*)
- 12:30-13:30 Lunch for all Delegates (*Banquet Halls 1,2,3, 2nd Floor*)
- 13:45-17:30 **Plenary Session II: Economic and Trade Matters**
(*Meeting Room 1, 3rd Floor*)
- a. Rethinking Critical Infrastructure
 - b. Human Capital Development and Inclusive Growth
- 13:45-17:30 **Meeting of the Working Groups**
- Regional Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region
(*Summit Hall G, 4th Floor*)
- 19:00-21:00 **Dinner Reception hosted by
The Honorable Juan Miguel F. Zubiri, President of the Senate**
Venue: Shangri-la at the Fort, Bonifacio Global City

Saturday, 25 November

- 09:00-12:30 **Plenary Session III: Regional Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region** (*Meeting Room 1, 3rd Floor*)
- a. Regional Cooperation through Education and Culture
 - b. Universal Health Care in the Asia-Pacific
- 09:30-12:30 **Meeting of the Drafting Committee** (*Summit Hall D, 4th Floor*)
- 12:00-14:00 Lunch for all Delegates (*Banquet Halls 1,2,3, 2nd Floor*)
- 14:00-16:00 **Final Plenary Session and Closing Ceremony**
(*Meeting Room 1, 3rd Floor*)
- Report of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians
(Senator Pia S. Cayetano)
 - Report of the Meeting of the Drafting Committee
(Senate President Pro-Tempore Loren Legarda)
 - Chairman's Statement on APPF Work
(Senate President Juan Miguel F. Zubiri)
 - Adoption of Resolutions and Joint Communiqué
 - Signing of Joint Communiqué
 - Future of Work of APPF & Presentation by the next host parliament
 - APPF's Flag hand-over ceremony to the next host parliament
 - Closing Statement from Co-Chair of APPF31
(House Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez)

18:30-21:30

**Farewell Dinner Reception hosted by
The Honorable Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez,
Speaker of the House of Representatives** *Venue:*
Makati Shangri-La Hotel

Sunday, 26 November

Cultural Tour

Option 1: Manila-Makati Tour

Option 2: Tour of Tagaytay City hosted by Senator Francis N. Tolentino

Departure of Delegates

Monday, 27 November and Tuesday, 28 November

Departure of Delegates

Appendix B – Australian-sponsored draft resolutions

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

Proposed by Australia

We, the parliamentarians of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) gathering in Manila for the 31st Annual Meeting under the theme *Resilient Partnerships for Peace, Prosperity, and Sustainability*:

Recalling past APPF Annual Meeting resolutions on empowerment of women and girls to increase the political, economic and social participation of women, and to promote gender equality for sustainable development and shared prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region;

Reaffirming our commitment to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 5 which targets the most significant challenges of achieving gender equality and empowerment for all women and girls;

Recalling international treaties enhancing the protection and promotion of women's rights, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Charter of the United Nations and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women;

Welcoming the UNSCR1325 on women, peace and security, adopted by the United Nations Security Council in 2000, and subsequent resolutions which acknowledged the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women and girls and the vital role that women's leadership and full, equal and meaningful participation plays in preventing conflict;

Recognising the importance of involving both women and men in promoting women's empowerment, eliminating gender-based violence and advancing women's political participation in all decision-making bodies;

Concerned by the low percentage of women in parliaments, and the obstacles to women's full, equal and meaningful participation in decision-making in our region; and

Understanding that women's full, equal and meaningful participation in political and public life is necessary to promote gender equality and women's empowerment;

RESOLVE TO:

1. **Call on** governments to ensure women and girls are safe from violence, economically secure and fully represented in all levels of decision-making;
2. **Encourage** nations to ratify, implement and monitor treaties, conventions and regulatory frameworks related to gender equality and women's empowerment;
3. **Encourage** member countries to improve access for women and girls to education, innovation and technology;
4. **Reaffirm** our commitment to strengthening the presence of women in parliamentary and other leadership roles in our region, under generally recognized principles and rules of international law;

5. **Encourage** gender-sensitive parliaments that adopt measures to enable elected representatives to balance family and public responsibilities – and in particular, encourage parliaments to ensure that their timetables and working methods enable elected representatives of both sexes to reconcile work and family life;
6. **Promote** gender equality at a regional and global level, through dialogue and cooperation;
7. **Promote** the meaningful inclusion of women in peace processes in order to enhance security, peace and sustainable development;
8. **Call on** governments to adopt mechanisms to enhance women's income security, labour market participation and economic autonomy, including through reducing the burden of unpaid work on women; and
9. **Strengthen** data collection on women's participation in parliamentary and leadership positions, as well as labour force participation statistics, to measure the effectiveness of our actions.

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF PARLIAMENTS TO PROMOTE PEACE AND STABILITY

Proposed by Australia

We, the parliamentarians of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) gathering in Manila for the 31st Annual Meeting under the theme *Resilient Partnerships for Peace, Prosperity, and Sustainability*:

Noting that the global community faces a variety of interconnected threats to peace and stability, such as climate change, a heightened risk of pandemics, a rise in authoritarian populism and risks surrounding artificial intelligence;

Recognising that the global community must address these challenges while continuing to respond to more conventional security threats, such as inter-state conflict, civil conflict and terrorism;

Emphasising that Asia and the Pacific will contribute approximately 70 per cent of global economic growth in 2023, according to the International Monetary Fund, and threats to peace and stability in our region will therefore have adverse global consequences;

Highlighting that parliamentary diplomacy is an underutilised resource, which can enhance traditional diplomatic efforts by: raising awareness of key issues among law-makers; facilitating opportunities for dialogue, including on difficult issues; and enabling parliamentarians to build relationships with counterparts and policymakers that can be used to promote peace and stability;

Observing that Parliaments represent their societies, and the promotion of inter-parliamentary collaborative relationships can serve to improve links and understanding between societies; and

Noting that Parliaments can also use their budgetary, oversight and representative roles to promote peace by supporting investments conducive to peace and stability, using committee systems to hear from experts and publish reports promoting their findings, and raising public awareness of issues;

RESOLVE TO:

1. **Call on** governments to consider ways in which parliamentarians can make useful contributions to the conduct of international diplomacy, such as participating in international negotiations, attending diplomatic conferences, participating in delegations and undertaking special roles for which a parliamentarian has specific knowledge or experience;
2. **Support and promote** global and regional institutions – such as the APPF, the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association – that promote collaboration between Parliaments, giving parliamentarians opportunities to share information about their countries' experiences, challenges and perspectives, and expertise and best practice in areas relevant to fostering peace and security;
3. **Encourage** Parliaments to scrutinise declarations of war and deployment of military forces;
4. **Take steps** to ensure that Parliaments reflect the societies they represent so that they include the widest possible range of perspectives, drawing especially from groups that tend to be marginalised on issues of peace and stability such as women and young people;

5. **Recognise** that promoting peace and stability requires grassroots involvement, and that the capacity of parliaments to promote peace and stability will be strengthened insofar as they focus on inclusive engagement to build stronger physical infrastructure and central government institutions;
6. **Recognise** that restarting local economies to create sustainable economic opportunities is as important to promoting peace and stability as high-level political negotiations;
7. **Encourage** parliaments to focus on achieving social peace, in which a society can manage its conflicts non-violently and where institutions contribute to establishing trust between different groups, rather than focusing only on mediation and bringing warring parties to the table to agree peace terms; and
8. **Recognise** that many peace processes fail and many peace agreements are never implemented; and that Parliaments should therefore support long-term commitments to maximise the probability that a peace process is brought to fruition and endures.

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON RETHINKING CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Proposed by Australia

We, the parliamentarians of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) gathering in Manila for the 31st Annual Meeting under the theme *Resilient Partnerships for Peace, Prosperity, and Sustainability*:

Recognising that resilience efforts fall under Sustainable Development Goal 9 (SDG9), which is to 'build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation', and the 2015 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction;

Noting that while definitions of critical infrastructure differ across countries, a common understanding includes the 'systems, assets, facilities and networks that provide essential services and are necessary for the national security, economic security, prosperity, and health and safety of their respective nations';

Recognising that the COVID-19 pandemic has driven a new focus on critical infrastructure and highlighted the fragility of essential services, and that several other risks to critical infrastructure have come into sharper focus in recent years – including climate change and the associated increase in severe weather events, infrastructure failures due to social unrest, and the particular risks to ICT systems posed by cyber-attacks;

Noting that international fora have advocated for 'building back better' with more resilient infrastructure;

Emphasising that critical infrastructure is no longer solely a domestic issue, with globalisation of service delivery and increasing foreign investment in infrastructure provision making transnational collaboration for critical infrastructure resilience essential; and

Highlighting regional cooperation on critical infrastructure resilience through fora including the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, the Pacific Islands Forum and the Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility;

RESOLVE TO:

1. **Encourage** members to develop a common understanding of the impacts of critical infrastructure failures, with a focus on the risks applicable to our region;
2. **Promote** regional sharing of best practice for critical infrastructure resilience and risk mitigation, and implementation of consistent standards that infrastructure providers must adhere to in order to meet risk management obligations;
3. **Encourage** collaborative work to prioritise risks and sectors for investment;
4. **Encourage** a 'build back better' approach to replacing critical infrastructure that is either obsolete or impacted by natural disasters;
5. **Call on** governments to acknowledge climate change impacts in developing infrastructure resilience, and support preparedness planning for severe weather events and shared response capabilities;

6. **Promote** a consistent approach to combatting cyber-crime, given that malicious activity may disrupt critical infrastructure delivery, and sharing of information on cybersecurity threats to critical infrastructure; and
7. **Promote** the sustainability of pandemic-response capabilities, so that the lessons of COVID-19 can help mitigate future dangers.

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON REGIONAL COOPERATION THROUGH EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Proposed by Australia

We, the parliamentarians of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) gathering in Manila for the 31st Annual Meeting under the theme *Resilient Partnerships for Peace, Prosperity, and Sustainability*:

Highlighting that Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG4) is to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all';

Noting that UNESCO and UNICEF's 2021 *5-Year Progress Review of SDG 4 – Education 2030 in Asia-Pacific* found that, despite overall progress, most countries surveyed were not on track to achieve SDG4;

Recognising that 27 million children and adolescents across the region remain illiterate, and there is significant disparity in terms of education accessibility, level and infrastructure;

Acknowledging that the COVID-19 pandemic and associated school closures resulted in unprecedented disruption to education across the region, with a particularly notable effect on girls' education; and

Noting that many countries in the region are facing skills shortages and finding it difficult to respond to the skills needs of their workforce;

RESOLVE TO:

1. **Call on** governments across the region to increase investment in education;
2. **Encourage** governments to transform education systems and build resilience in the post-Covid environment (including building more flexible, inclusive, digital and sustainable systems);
3. **Promote** recovery of education and learning outcomes following delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic;
4. **Encourage** members to continue to address barriers to girls' education; and
5. **Promote** greater investment in post-primary and secondary education, to improve skills training and ensure the necessary supply of skilled workers to meet demand in key industries across the region.

Appendix C – Joint communique



**31st ANNUAL MEETING
THE ASIA-PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM (APPF 31)
23 - 26 NOVEMBER 2023
Philippine International Convention Center, Pasay City, Philippines**

"Resilient Partnerships for Peace, Prosperity and Sustainability"

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

Upon the invitation of the Senate of the Philippines and House of Representatives of the Philippines, the 31st Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) was held in Pasay City, Philippines from 23 to 26 November 2023. A total of 267 delegates from Member Countries of the APPF, and one guest of the host attended the Meeting (Annex A).

Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee, chaired by Senator Juan Miguel F. Zubiri, President of the Senate of the Philippines, and co-chaired by Representative Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Speaker of the House of Representatives, approved the Agenda and Program of Activities in a meeting held on 23 November 2023.
2. The Meeting approved the designation of the Chairs, Co-Chairs, and Alternate Chairs of the Drafting Committee, Plenary Sessions, Working Groups on Political and Security Matters, Economic and Trade Matters, Regional Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region, Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, and the Roundtable Discussion of Young Parliamentarians (Annex B).
3. The Executive Committee approved the agenda, which includes the Philippine delegation's proposal to amend the Rules of Procedure to institutionalize the "Meeting of Young Parliamentarians" in the Annual Meeting of the APPF.
4. The Chair informed the Executive Committee that the host invited guests from the United Nations and UNITE Parliamentarians Network for Global Health.
5. The Executive Committee was apprised that 37 draft resolutions were submitted by 10 Member Parliaments. In accordance with the practice of APPF Annual Meetings, the host secretariat proposed draft joint resolutions to consolidate submissions with similar content and facilitate their consideration by the Working Groups. The Executive Committee Meeting approved the referral of 36 draft resolutions to the appropriate Working Groups and the deferred resolution from the 30th APPF to the Drafting Committee.
6. The Executive Committee resolved to defer the "Resolution on Combating Glorification of Nazism, Neo-nazism, and Other Discrimination Practices" to the Annual Meeting next year.

7. The Executive Committee approved the referral of Indonesia’s draft “Resolution on Enhancing Maritime Security Cooperation in Asia-Pacific” to the Working Group on Political and Security Matters.

8. The draft “Resolution on Achieving Denuclearization and Peace on the Korean Peninsula” proposed by Japan, and the draft “Resolution on the “Korean Peninsula” proposed by the Republic of Korea, were likewise referred to the Working Group on Political and Security Matters for consideration.

Inaugural Ceremony

9. The Inaugural Ceremony was held on 23 November 2023. Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez delivered the welcome remarks. In his remarks, he emphasized that solidarity and cooperation are vital components in building a resilient and sustainable Asia-Pacific region. He emphasized that peace remains a paramount objective and expressed support for a rules-based international order, governed by the principles of international law and informed by the principles of equity and justice. Speaker Romualdez sought the support of APPF Member Countries for the Philippines’ candidature to the United Nations Security Council for the term 2027-2028.

10. The Honorable Pornpetch Wichitcholchai, Senate President of the Parliament of Thailand, delivered a message as last year’s host. In his opening address, he said that the promotion of economic development, peace, and prosperity is a prerequisite for the achievement of the sustainable development goals. He added that addressing great challenges requires the spirit of cooperation and goodwill in international relations, as well as the harmony and concord of APPF.

11. Senate President Juan Miguel F. Zubiri delivered the Keynote Address. He recognized that the gathering of Asia-Pacific Parliamentarians in Manila affirmed the spirit of Asia-Pacific parliamentary solidarity remains active. He underscored the importance of building resilient partnerships for peace, prosperity, and sustainability—a theme which resonates in our collective post-pandemic experience and continuing aspirations to make the 21st Century, a truly Asia-Pacific Century. He encouraged Parliamentarians to remain determined to recover and overcome any of the remaining traces of the pandemic and soar above the current challenges of the region.

Proposal to Amend the Rules of Procedure

12. APPF31 agreed and is committed to consider the Philippines’ proposed amendment to the Rules of Procedure (Annex C), to conduct a Meeting of Young Parliamentarians in subsequent APPF meetings and to further consider the same at the 32nd Annual Meeting of the APPF.

Meeting of Women Parliamentarians

13. The Meeting of Women Parliamentarians was conducted on 23 November 2023. Senator Pia S. Cayetano chaired and Representative Camille Villar co-chaired the meeting. The Meeting covered two topics: (a) Gender and Sustainable Development Goals and (b) Women’s Participation and Leadership.

14. The APPF Member Parliaments highlighted the timeline for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals and emphasized that the fulfillment of the SDGs is directly linked to gender equality. They emphasized the need to establish strategies for the development and

execution of policies aimed at enhancing the status of women, and the elimination of gender-based violence and discrimination. They also stressed the importance of gender equality in the workplace, equal pay for all and digital inclusion.

15. The APPF Member Parliaments recognized that women bring unique perspectives and experiences that enrich the entire governance process. An emerging topic discussed by the delegates is on unpaid care and domestic work, urging the re-examination of traditional roles that are assigned based on gender, which can hinder women's full participation and leadership. The delegates called for equal representation in policy-making bodies, in all areas of decision-making on issues involving climate change, healthcare, and the negotiation of conflict.

Roundtable of Young Parliamentarians

16. The Roundtable of Young Parliamentarians was held on 24 November 2023. House of Representatives Deputy Majority Floor Leader Jude Acidre chaired and Senate Deputy Majority Floor Leader Mark Villar co-chaired the Roundtable.

17. The APPF Member Countries acknowledged the opportunities and benefits of digital technology, especially for the youth. They expressed optimism that digital economy development around the world will contribute to the growth of labor productivity, reduction of production costs, creation of new skilled jobs, and in overcoming poverty and inequality.

18. The APPF Member Countries likewise called for intensified efforts to reduce the "digital divide" between developed and vulnerable developing countries, as well as the socio-economic inequality within states. They likewise expressed the necessity of investing and allocating more resources to digital literacy and capacity-building.

19. Participants in the Roundtable signed a Declaration (Annex D) recognizing the potential role that young parliamentarians can play in addressing contemporary challenges while advocating for the value of having young people represented in policy discussions and in parliamentary bodies.

Drafting Committee

20. The Drafting Committee conducted meetings from 24 to 25 November 2023 to consider the resolutions referred to it by the Executive Committee and Working Groups. It was chaired by Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda and co-chaired by House of Representatives Deputy Majority Floor Leader Lorenz Defensor. Senate Minority Floor Leader Aquilino Pimentel III and Senate Deputy Majority Floor Leader Joseph Victor Ejercito served as alternate chairs.

21. The Drafting Committee, through the leadership of the Philippines and the collaborative and diligent efforts of all participating delegates, successfully navigated through several contentious issues, fostering consensus on key matters. The resolution of these issues reflects the commitment of all APPF Member Parliaments to constructive dialogue and compromise, highlighting the spirit of cooperation that underlies our collective pursuit of shared objectives. This collaborative achievement reinforces our belief in the effectiveness of parliamentary diplomacy and the power of consensus-building in addressing complex challenges.

22. After extensive yet productive discussions, the Drafting Committee approved all resolutions referred to it by the Working Groups—a notable achievement in the history of APPF:

- a. Resolution on Strengthening the Capacity of Parliaments to Promote Peace and Stability;
- b. Resolution on the Korean Peninsula;

- c. Resolution on Combatting Transnational Crimes;
- d. Resolution on Gender and Sustainable Development Goals;
- e. Resolution on Women's Participation and Leadership;
- f. Resolution on Rethinking Critical Infrastructure;
- g. Resolution on Enhancing Regional Cooperation on Climate Action, Biodiversity Conservation, and Disaster Risk Reduction;
- h. Resolution on Human Capital Development and Inclusive Growth;
- i. Resolution on Regional Cooperation through Education and Culture; and
- j. Resolution on Regional Cooperation on Universal Health Care in the Asia-Pacific.

Plenary Sessions

23. The First Plenary Session on Political and Security Matters focused on two topics: (a) Strengthening the Capacity of Parliaments to Promote Peace and Stability, and (b) Combatting Transnational Crimes. The Session was chaired by Senator Ronald Dela Rosa and co-chaired by Representative Maria Rachel Arenas.

24. The APPF Member Parliaments emphasized the importance of bilateral and multilateral collaboration as well as parliamentary diplomacy to promote stronger institutions, resolve regional conflict, and overcome contemporary challenges.

25. The APPF Member Parliaments resolved to strengthen the capacity of parliaments in promoting regional peace and stability by, among others, supporting their Government's efforts to meet Goal 16 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda; enhancing cooperation in addressing terrorism, nuclear proliferation, information and communication technology (ICT) threats, transnational crimes, climate change, emerging diseases and public health emergencies; promoting confidence-building measures; and supporting continued adherence to the 1982 Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes.

26. The APPF Member Parliaments further committed to increase their efforts in promoting and maintaining peace, security, stability, safety, and freedom of the high seas, consistent with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The APPF Member Parliaments also resolved to protect the marine environment and biodiversity and promote a safe and sustainable blue economy that will benefit all nations.

27. The APPF Member Parliaments resolved to combat transnational crimes by, among others, passing pieces of legislation that consider existing international legal conventions on terrorism and transnational organized crimes; adopting efficient and effective mechanisms for seizure and confiscation of income from criminal activity within the framework of their national legislation systems.

28. The Second Plenary Session on Economic and Trade Matters focused on two topics: (a) Rethinking Critical Infrastructure, and (b) Human Capital Development and Inclusive Growth. The Session was chaired by Representative Stella Luz Quimbo.

29. The APPF Member Countries espoused a shared commitment towards building community resilience in the face of disasters and climate change and achieving low carbon and sustainable growth in accordance with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

30. The APPF Member Parliaments raised the need to facilitate the development of policies, programs, and other measures designed to strengthen the resilience of critical infrastructure, to adopt the 'build

right at first sight' approach in preventing disaster loss, and to invest in emergency preparedness relating to critical infrastructure.

31. The APPF Member Parliaments resolved to empower all APPF Member Countries to advance blue and green economies, promote natural capital accounting, and integrate circular economy and nature-based solutions, including ecosystem-based adaptation into national and local climate adaptation, mitigation, and disaster risk reduction policies and plans, and further promote sharing of best practices—nationally, regionally and internationally.

32. The APPF Member Parliaments reaffirmed commitment to ambitious climate action and resilience through mutual cooperation and partnerships, and continued provision of finance, technology development and transfer, and capacity building, anchored on climate justice and equity, best available science, national circumstances, consistent with relevant international instruments.

33. The APPF Member Parliaments also resolved to further strengthen international cooperation to achieve global climate ambitions and targets, including averting, minimizing, and addressing loss and damage associated with climate change, in view of the specific vulnerabilities of Asia-Pacific region.

34. The APPF Member Parliaments agreed to implement measures that address free and compulsory education, learning of basic skills, increase in the number of teachers, improvement of basic school infrastructure, digital transformation, and improvement of levels of competence in ICTs that require universal and meaningful connectivity. They also agreed to formulate actions focused on adapted training, labor intermediation, entrepreneurship programs, and other initiatives.

35. The Third Plenary Session on Regional Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region covered two topics: (a) Regional Cooperation through Education and Culture, and (b) Universal Health Care in the Asia-Pacific. The Session was chaired by Senator Francis Tolentino and co-chaired by Deputy Speaker Raymond Democrito Mendoza.

36. The APPF Member Parliaments resolved to empower parliamentarians to protect, preserve, and promote cultural heritage, pursue inclusive educational systems and address disparities in education in the Asia-Pacific region, prioritizing the education of illiterate children and adolescents.

37. The APPF Member Parliaments were called upon to establish a legal framework for Universal Health Care (UHC) to guarantee the right to public health and medical care, without discrimination, and to establish parliamentary mechanisms to promote UHC, including the provision of adequate funding, research and development, expanded services, and reduced out-of-pocket costs.

Final Plenary

38. In the Final Plenary Session, Senator Pia S. Cayetano, Chair of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, presented the Report of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and Senate President Pro Tempore Loren B. Legarda, Chair of the Drafting Committee, reported on the accomplishments of the Drafting Committee.

39. Senate President Juan Miguel F. Zubiri, APPF31 Chair, delivered his statement on the work that was achieved in the APPF, congratulating the delegations for productively approaching all discussions with respect, diplomacy, and friendship. He also stressed the need to work towards an Asia-Pacific region that is connected by bridges of peace, shared seas, free and open trade, vibrant cultural exchange, and by an unwavering belief in the power of cooperation.

40. A total of ten (10) resolutions and a Joint Communiqué were adopted during this Annual Meeting.

41. Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, APPF31 Co-chair, concluded the Forum by underscoring the indispensable value of regional partnership as a cornerstone for peace and sustainable development in the Asia Pacific region. As echoed in the discussions, “Only through collaborative efforts and shared vision can we address the complex challenges of our times and pave the way towards a future marked by prosperity and stability for all.”

42. The Philippines will continue consulting with other APPF Member Countries regarding next year’s hosting of the APPF.

Signed in Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines
on 25 November 2023

Appendix D – APPF-30, Bangkok Thailand

In-person APPF Annual Meetings resumed after the COVID-19 pandemic with APPF-30, hosted by the National Assembly of Thailand from 26 to 29 October 2022. The theme for APPF-30 was ‘Parliaments and Post-COVID-19 Sustainable Development’.

With the preparations for APPF-30 and related deadlines coinciding with the 2022 federal election and the opening of the 47th Parliament, Australia was unfortunately unable to sponsor draft resolutions and advocate for them at the Drafting Committee in accordance with its usual practice.

Australia was, however, able to assemble an observer delegation immediately before APPF-30, comprising Senator Jess Walsh (Delegation Leader), Mrs Bridget Archer MP and Senator David Van.

Notwithstanding Australia’s inability to lodge and speak to draft resolutions the delegation otherwise participated fully in the Annual Meeting. Delegation members variously spoke in the Working Groups, the meeting of women parliamentarians and the three plenary sessions, on strengthening cyber-security in the Asia-Pacific region, promoting biodiversity and a green economy for inclusive development, and regional co-operation in the Asia-Pacific.

The delegation met on the sidelines with like-minded delegations from other countries, including those of New Zealand, Japan, Canada, South Korea and host nation Thailand, to discuss negotiations at the Working Groups and issues of mutual concern. The day before the opening of APPF-30 the delegation also had the opportunity to meet with representatives of civil society groups in Thailand and members of the National Assembly, in a program organised by Australia’s Embassy in Bangkok.

The program for the Annual Meeting, draft resolutions lodged by other member countries, and the merged resolutions and joint communique adopted by the Drafting Committee are all available at the APPF-30 website.⁶

⁶ <https://web.parliament.go.th/view/63/APPF30/EN-US> (accessed September 2024).

ASIA-PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

RULES OF PROCEDURE

As amended in 2022

The procedural arrangements in the APPF were set out in the 1994 Annual Meeting in the Philippines and are updated from time to time.

They are as follows:

Structure and Role

1. The APPF will be loosely structured and non-exclusive forum of national parliaments of sovereign states of the Asia-Pacific region, in which parliamentarians will participate either as delegates of their parliaments or in their personal capacities.
2. The APPF will seek to provide opportunities for national parliamentarians of sovereign states of the Asia-Pacific region:
 - a. to identify and discuss matters of common concern and interest and to highlight them in a global context;
 - b. to deepen their understanding of the policy concerns, interests and experiences of the countries of the region;
 - c. to examine the critical political, social, and cultural developments resulting from economic growth and integration;
 - d. to encourage and promote regional cooperation at all levels on matters of common concern to the region; and
 - e. to play the roles of national parliamentarians in furthering in their respective countries a sense of regional cohesion, understanding and cooperation.
3. The APPF will operate on the basis of:
 - a. commitment to frank and constructive dialogue;
 - b. equal respect for the views of all participants; and
 - c. full recognition of the roles performed by governments, business communities, labour organisations, research institutes and others.

4. The APPF will act to promote greater regional identification and cooperation with particular focus on:
 - a. cooperation for the further advancement of peace, freedom, democracy, and prosperity;
 - b. open and non-exclusive cooperation for the expansion of free trade and investment, sustainable development and sound environment practices;
 - c. non-military cooperation which gives due consideration to issues relating to regional peace and security; and
 - d. preservation and promotion of the diverse cultures of the peoples in the region.

5. The APPF will maintain the closest relations with regional institutions, particularly the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC), and the Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC), to ensure a free flow of information between the APPF and these institutions. APPF member parliaments will endeavour to have APPF views reflected in these institutions.

Membership and Observership

6. Membership of the APPF will in principle be open to all national parliaments of sovereign states in the Asia-Pacific region (in particular those of the member nations of ASEAN, APEC, and the PIF) which:
 - a. have an active interest in promoting dialogue among parliamentarians in the region; and
 - b. accept the objectives and principles of the APPF as reflected in the 1993 Tokyo Declaration and subsequent declarations and the Rules of Procedure.

7. Membership of the APPF will be reviewed from time to time.

8. National parliamentarians of sovereign states of the Asia-Pacific region and others invited as observers or in any other appropriate status may attend the APPF Annual Meeting.

9. Parliamentarians from member parliament delegations (hereinafter referred to as "participating delegates") will attend the Annual Meeting. In cases where a national parliament is represented by an official delegation, the attendance of other parliamentarians from that parliament in a personal capacity is allowed only with the advice and consent of that parliament.

Chair of the Annual Meeting

10. The host country shall appoint a Chair of the meeting from the host parliament who shall serve as Chair from the conclusion of the previous meeting to the conclusion of the hosted meeting.
11. The Chair of the meeting shall serve as Chair of the Executive Committee.
12. The Chair of the Annual Meeting shall direct the work of the meeting and see that the rules are observed. The Chair shall also open, suspend, and close the sessions, make known the results, and declare the meeting closed.
13. The Chair of the Annual Meeting may, with the approval of the Executive Committee, appoint deputies from among participating delegates to direct the meeting in place of the Chair, as necessary.

Annual Meeting

14. The APPF will meet annually.
15. The host, date and venue of each Annual Meeting will be determined by the plenary at the preceding meeting.
16. The host country will be proposed on the basis of discussion among those countries wishing to host the Annual Meeting. Priority will be given to those countries which have not previously hosted an Annual Meeting. Where no country wishes to host the meeting, the host will be proposed with reference to the order of hosting previous Annual Meetings.
17. The host of the Annual Meeting will make the necessary arrangements for the meeting including coordination of the provisional agenda of the meeting in consultation with the Executive Committee and for the provision of a secretariat for the Annual Meeting.

18. The host parliament will bear the cost of organizing the meeting and the participants will cover their expenses for attending the meeting. Membership of a delegation will be limited to a maximum of ten parliamentarians. This limitation shall not apply to the host parliament.
19. The host country will determine the provisional agenda in principle no later than four months prior to the opening date of the Annual Meeting and notify member parliaments.
20. The agenda shall be approved by the Annual Meeting on the advice of the Executive Committee.
21. Requests for supplementary items may be considered by the Executive Committee for inclusion on the agenda.
22. Member parliaments must submit draft resolutions to the host country in principle no later than two months prior to the opening date of the Annual Meeting. This time limit, however, will not apply to draft resolutions relating to supplementary items included in accordance with Article 25.
23. Draft resolutions must be relevant to the agenda items.
24. A proposed resolution must be made available for circulation to all participating delegates before it is moved.
25. All decisions of the APPF will be made by consensus at the Annual Meeting. When decisions are required on substantive matters, the principle of unanimity shall be observed.
26. While draft resolutions will be adopted on a consensus basis, the Chair of the Annual Meeting may allow mention to be made of partial reservations in the resolution document, and thereby permit minority opinions to be reflected.
27. Draft resolutions shall be discussed at the plenary session before examination by the Drafting Committee.
28. Where a resolution is adopted by the Annual Meeting, the country tabling that resolution shall provide the next host country with a written report on how that resolution has been put into effect no later than two months prior to the opening date of the next Annual Meeting. The next host country shall

endeavour to gather information and report at the next Annual Meeting on the status of action in each country in relation to resolutions.

29. After the Annual Meeting, the host country shall send the adopted resolutions out to the relevant countries and international institutions for reference purposes.
30. Parliamentary delegations will be requested by the host parliament to submit motions for discussion at the next Annual Meeting by a specified date.
31. A participating delegate may, when called by the Chair, speak freely on any matter included in the agenda.
32. As a general rule, only current members of parliaments may voice opinions.
33. In inviting participating delegates to speak, the Chair of the Annual Meeting will be guided by the following two principles:
 - a. commitment to frank and constructive dialogue; and
 - b. equal respect for the views of all participants.
34. Priority to speak will be given to participating delegates. The representatives of the parliaments attending as observers and other official participants may also speak with agreement of the Annual Meeting, when called by the Chair.

Executive Committee*

35. Membership of the Executive Committee shall be open to all member countries of the APPF and shall comprise representatives of the following:
 - a. The current Annual Meeting host country
 - b. The next Annual Meeting host country
 - c. The previous Annual Meeting host country
 - d. Countries elected from sub-regions.
36. Qualification for Executive Committee Members
 - a. Executive Committee members must be current members of parliaments.
 - b. The countries of Executive Committee members may be re-elected.

37. In the election of representative countries from sub-regions as stipulated in Article 39, with due regard to balance in regional representation, the Asia-Pacific shall be divided into the following four sub-regions with two countries being elected from each sub-region.
- a. Northeast Asia (5 countries): People's Republic of China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mongolia and Russian Federation.
 - b. Southeast Asia (9 countries): Brunei Darussalam, Kingdom of Cambodia, Republic of Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Republic of the Philippines, Republic of Singapore, Kingdom of Thailand and Socialist Republic of Vietnam.
 - c. Oceania (6 countries): Australia, Republic of Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Republic of the Marshall Islands.
 - d. The Americas (8 countries): Canada, Republic of Chile, Republic of Colombia, United Mexican States, Republic of Peru, United States of America, Ecuador and Costa Rica.
38. Duties of the Executive Committee
- a. The Executive Committee may submit recommendations to the Annual Meeting with regard to policy issues which the APPF wishes to address or APPF's management policy.
 - b. The Executive Committee shall engage in coordination with the host country of the Annual Meeting concerning the draft agenda and schedule of the Annual Meeting.
 - c. The Executive Committee shall advise the host country of the Annual Meeting concerning the matters deemed necessary for the Annual Meeting.
 - d. The Executive Committee shall receive applications for membership in the Forum from each parliament, and submit the recommendations to the next Annual Meeting for determination.
39. The term of office for an Executive Committee member representing a sub-region shall be four years, from the conclusion of an Annual Meeting until the conclusion of the Annual Meeting four years later, subject to the following conditions.
- a. Half of the Executive Committee members representing sub-regions shall be re-elected every two years.
 - b. The method of election of Executive Committee members representing sub-regions shall be decided by each sub-region in order to respect its voluntary will. Sub-region representatives shall

report to the Executive Committee when the Executive Committee member for their respective region has been elected.

- c. If any Executive Committee member representing a sub-region is unable to attend an Executive Committee meeting, a parliamentarian from another country in that sub-region may be designated by those sub-region representatives present at the annual meeting to serve as an alternative member.

40. The term of office for an Executive Committee member representing the host country of an Annual Meeting shall be from the conclusion of the preceding Annual Meeting until the conclusion of the next Annual Meeting.

41. Reports of the Executive Committee on its work may be made orally or in writing at the Annual Meeting.

Meeting of Women Parliamentarians

42. A Meeting of Women Parliamentarians will be held on the occasion of the APPF Annual Meeting.

43. The Meeting of Women Parliamentarians will seek to create a forum for all parliamentarians to discuss issues on women, children and to achieve gender equality.

44. The Chair of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians shall be a member of the host parliament.

45. The Meeting of Women Parliamentarians may elect Co-Chairs from among participating delegates.

46. The Meeting of the Women Parliamentarians will submit a report to the Plenary Session.

Drafting Committee

47. Drafting Committee will be established at the Annual Meeting on the advice of the Executive Committee to prepare draft resolutions and a draft joint communiqué for consideration, adoption, and release at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting.

48. The Chair of the Drafting Committee shall be designated based on approval from the Executive Committee. The provisions of Article 17 shall apply mutatis mutandis to the appointment of deputy chairs to the Drafting Committee.
49. A participating delegate from each member parliament submitting a draft resolution shall participate in the Drafting Committee examination of that resolution.
50. The Drafting Committee, when in session, shall determine its own priorities. At the conclusion of its deliberations the Drafting Committee will report to the plenary session of the Annual Meeting.
51. Reports of the Drafting Committee on its work may be made orally or in writing at the Annual Meeting.

Working Groups

52. Working Groups may be established by the Annual Meeting on the advice of the Executive Committee:
 - a. to examine specific issues referred for consideration and report on these to the Annual Meeting or to the Executive Committee; or
 - b. to create a new joint draft resolution in place of multiple existing proposals with similar content, and submit this to the Drafting Committee.
53. Working Groups examining draft resolutions will include but need not be limited to a participating delegate from each member parliament submitting a draft resolution.

Matters Not Covered by Rules

54. The Chair of the Annual Meeting shall decide on all matters not covered by these rules, on the advice of the Executive Committee.
-