



OPENING ADDRESS

**HIS EXCELLENCY DATO' MOHAMAD ARIFF BIN MD YUSOF
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
PARLIAMENT OF MALAYSIA**

10th ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (AIPA) CAUCUS MEETING

**MONDAY, 17 JUNE 2019 @ 9.50AM
BANQUET HALL, PARLIAMENT OF MALAYSIA**

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and Good Morning

(Salutations)

Mr. Mario Pandu Dewono,
AIPA Deputy Secretary-General;

His Excellencies Head of Delegations;

Honourable Delegates;

Distinguished Guest, Ladies and Gentlemen.

A very good morning to all of you present here today. It is a pleasure to extend a very warm welcome to all of you to the Parliament of Malaysia for this 10th AIPA Caucus meeting. We are indeed honoured to play host to this important meeting in the ASEAN region. Undoubtedly, over the past 10 years, AIPA has played and continues to play an influential role in this region. The AIPA Caucus is an excellent platform for the exchange of thought and for recommending possible broad and specific solutions to some of the pressing and challenging issues pertaining to the region.

2. There are three items on our agenda this time around: namely, the *Rise of Terrorism, Extremism, Radicalisation: A Parliamentary Perspective; Enhancing Co-operation on Climate Action in ASEAN and Strengthening Legal Frameworks to Protect Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism*. These topics have been chosen carefully and are designed to promote a singleness of purpose and a sense of urgency amongst the AIPA Caucus.

3. As Parliamentarians we are certainly at the forefront of any nation and are directly involved in the early stages of any planning of policies and play a more vital role than any other person or institution as we Parliamentarians, as immediate representatives of the citizens, are the ones in touch with the grass-roots.

**Honourable Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

4. Terrorism, extremism and radicalisation have reared their ugly heads over the decade but quite fortunately, there have been a greater degree of suppression of these disdainful activities these past couple of years.

5. Border security and special measures to curb these activities from spreading are very necessary. Despite the fact that those radicalised might only be a small percentage of the populace, they can cause damage to an entire country, and even a region. It is also a reality that terrorists and extremists come from a diverse range of ethnic, national, political and religious backgrounds.

6. Against this backdrop, Malaysia for its part adopted the deradicalization strategy that requires strategic collaboration between the Government, civil societies and private sector to inhibit extremist/radical 'activities' at home or abroad by individuals or group of individuals. Continuous engagement and counselling are conducted to deradicalize potential or prospective extremists/terrorists. In addition, Malaysia has set up Counter Messaging Centre (CMC) in order to monitor terrorist narratives through social media and all other channels closely to deny extremist proponents from the means and opportunities to pursue extremist or terrorist activities and promote their misconstrued ideologies.

7. The special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Radicalisation and Violent Extremism held in Malaysia in October 2015 had brought together around 500 participants and international security experts. This event signified the urgency of close co-operation, commitments and a sense of unity to fight radicalism, extremism and terrorism. Terrorism can be quite contagious. Legislation for curbing modern terrorism alone is insufficient. Effective enforcement of these legislations is very important, but there is also a need to balance the enforcement measures against respect for human rights and humanitarian law. This balance will undoubtedly be a very difficult exercise.

8. A belief in an absolute religious ideology with no tolerance for differing interpretations seems to be a major contributing factor to the development of religious fundamentalism, which in turn leads to radicalisation. Unfortunately, radicalisation cuts across social and demographic strata.

9. Malaysia, on its part, appreciates the need for robust and effective international action in our collective fight against terrorism. Mention must be made here of the setting up of the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism or SEARCCT in 2003 with the vision of building a robust community in countering terrorism and violent extremism. Its activities are focused on creating and implementing effective modules and programmes to develop participants' knowledge and technical know-how on terrorism and counter-terrorism efforts.

**Honourable Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

10. Out of the total of Southeast Asia's land area of 434,070,000 ha, agriculture and forestry constitute 30.08% and 48.82% respectively. However, both agriculture and forestry are among the most vulnerable sectors in terms of threats associated with climate change. It is a dismal fact that Southeast Asia is one of the most vulnerable regions in the world in terms of adverse climate change impacts that undermines food security.

11. Speaking in terms of climate change, last week the Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) had a very fruitful briefing session on the Protection of the ocean themed aptly, '*Life Below Water*'. Whilst we certainly cannot pin-point the cause for climate change to any particular reason, the indiscriminate disposal of plastic waste into the ocean does have a very damaging impact. Quite unfortunately, Malaysia seems to be the 'chosen one' as a global dumping ground for more developed countries. Tragic as it may sound, these plastic wastes, end up in our oceans, not only to be consumed by the fish that we eat, but disrupt and off-balance Mother Nature's work as well.

12. Indiscriminate illegal logging and illegal mining, without a thought for the people living around these areas are other issues to be addressed as well. The most affected are of course the vulnerable people, the aboriginal peoples and natives in this ASEAN region like the Orang Asli of Peninsular Malaysia, and the native populations of Sabah and Sarawak. In Malaysia, we had the disposal of industrial waste in the Kim Kim River in Johor which was so close to a school and caused much harm to school children. We therefore have every reason to be despondent and disheartened. The environment is in rude health and we can be rather exasperated at the irresponsibility of some quarters.

13. The challenge of course, lies not merely in verbal discussions and fora alone but also in an effective and comprehensive system of monitoring, control and surveillance.

14. Turning to the seas and oceans, continuous deterioration of coastal waters and the ocean will destabilise our eco-system. There should be cross-sectoral, collaborative, inclusive approaches and mechanisms addressing climate-related challenges and opportunities in not only national and local policies, but regional policies and programmes as well. In relation to this, there is the need to strengthen the legal basis and regulatory framework of climate change initiatives by creating effective enabling laws and policies.

15. In addition, mechanisms for stakeholder engagement and participatory, inclusive processes including active participation of the private sector and recruiting of climate change experts and champions at different levels to mobilize and facilitate successful implementation, are necessary.

**Honourable Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

16. I take this opportunity to commend the framework of Project Childhood (Protection Pillar), a \$7.5 million Australian Government initiative, which brought together the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), INTERPOL and World Vision to address the serious issue of sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism covering the project's work in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam. The project took a dual prevention and protection approach which could be extended to other AIPA Caucus as well. Most ASEAN countries have in place a National Council for Children which lead the way in their respective countries.

17. Almost all ASEAN countries have ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the two Optional Protocols on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. Ratification of these instruments is necessary as it will send a clear signal that the respective country has a high commitment dedicated to children's rights and the measures necessary to implement the true meaning of the Convention.

18. The CRC is but one international treaty. The Trafficking in Persons Protocol and the ILO Convention 182 on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour are others which need serious and urgent attention. We know with certainty that the ASEAN region is a lucrative one for the tourism industry and it provides domestic revenue and creates job opportunities for many, but

children are enticed, forced and lured and become victims of travelling child sex offenders. It might not seem so obvious in some countries in our region, but there remain areas which are a haven for the flesh trade and for child brides.

19. We have to rope in all the relevant authorities from the Law Ministry to the Customs and Immigration authorities or border controls, to study, identify and address the gaps in the existing legal frameworks and provide recommendations for reform and outline an implementation programme. Regional cross-border law enforcement co-operation is urged. Profile of offenders, for instance, should not be limited to respective countries alone, but should include and extend to all ASEAN countries, across borders.

20. In Malaysia, Parliament has recently passed the Sexual Offences Against Children Act 2017, which came into force in July 2017. This Act criminalises grooming, child molestation and child pornography, but there is still no specific legislative mention of sexual exploitation of children through travel and tourism.

21. I firmly believe that the discussions over the next two days and our working groups will provide recommendations for relevant ministries, institutions and NGOs to effectively meet the goals of addressing and developing, focused legal reform efforts related to child protection, child prostitution, child trafficking and child sexual exploitation.

**Honourable Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

22. Suppression of these problems, both at the domestic level and the regional level, should be the main focus in our discussions. The four key areas of focus would be:

- Strengthening legislative and policy frameworks;
- Enhancing staff knowledge and skills;
- Enhancing bilateral, regional and international co-operation mechanisms;
- Enhancing information exchange, mechanisms and networks.

23. AIPA Caucus is well placed as a platform to share information and experience on best practices in order to develop reforms that are current, practical and harmonised. AIPA Caucus is the best platform to develop targeted programmes of reform and change that can bolster the region's safety in terms of addressing the pressing issues around the topics of *Rise of Terrorism, Extremism, Radicalisation: A Parliamentary Perspective; Enhancing Co-operation on Climate Action*

in ASEAN and Strengthening Legal Frameworks to Protect Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism. There is definitely a need for strong legal and policy frameworks and essential tools, and a robust criminal justice framework which should reflect key international standards.

24. To all the distinguished delegates gathered here in Kuala Lumpur for 10th AIPA Caucus I am confident that you would all be having a very successful and fruitful inaugural meeting.

25. On that positive note, it is now my great honour to officially open the 10th AIPA Caucus Meeting.

Thank you.

Wabailahi taufik walhidayah wasalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.