

Aide-Memoire

Introduction

The International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP) was launched in September 2000 to promote communication and cooperation among political parties with various ideologies in Asia, to enhance mutual understanding and trust among Asian countries, and to foster regional cooperation through the unique role of political parties. Since its inception, the ICAPP has grown steadily in both membership and influence, and now represents more than 370 political parties in 53 countries in the region with diverse political ideologies.

With bi-annual General Assemblies and annual Special Conferences on various global issues as well as regular meetings of its Standing Committee, which is comprised of 35 leading political parties of 23 countries, the ICAPP has become a successful and important platform for visionary, cordial, and constructive dialogue among political leaders in the region.

General Assemblies of the ICAPP have brought together political leaders throughout the region to engage with one another in a mutual dialogue. Meanwhile, the ICAPP Special Conferences have tackled global and regional challenges such as poverty alleviation, environmental protection, green development, human trafficking and women's empowerment, all of which are closely linked to the U.N. Millennium Development Goals.

In recent years, the ICAPP has reached out to other regions in the world. It has been convening annual joint sessions with the COPPPAL, the Permanent Conference of Political Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean, since 2009. The ICAPP has also successfully helped political parties in Africa establish the Council of African Political Parties (CAPP) in April 2013. Now, the ICAPP plans to convene the first trilateral meeting of political parties from Asia, Africa and Latin America in October 2015. With the cooperation of other regional organizations, the ICAPP hopes to eventually bring about a global institution encompassing all political parties in the world, regardless of differences in ideological orientations.

In recognition of the ICAPP's contributions to regional stability, the inter-governmental "MOU on Cooperation to Support the Activities of the ICAPP" was signed in July 2013. So far, the respective governments of Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Iran, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, have signed the MOU. Many more governments, including those of Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, and Turkey are in the process of completing their domestic procedures to sign the MOU.

ICAPP's bid for observer status in the U.N. General Assembly

The ICAPP has been a staunch supporter of the United Nations and its activities. The ICAPP Charter declares unequivocal commitment to the principles and objectives of the U.N. Charter. Furthermore, the U.N. Secretary General has showed strong support for the ICAPP activities by sending congratulatory messages to all major meetings of the ICAPP, including the General Assemblies and Special Conferences.

Against a backdrop of such developments, the ICAPP applied for observer status in the

UNGA in 2011. The draft resolution (A/C.6/68/L.3) to invite the ICAPP to the work of the UNGA in the capacity of observer was co-sponsored by Cambodia, Japan, Nepal, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Vietnam and introduced at the 66th session in August 2011.

The consensus, however, was not reached on the resolution due to reservations expressed by the representatives of Argentina, Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela. These representatives argued that the ICAPP did not meet the first of the two following requirements for UNGA's observers, as laid out in the UNGA's Decision 49/426 of December 9, 1994 and the UNGA's Resolution 54/195 of December 17, 1999:

- *Granting observer status will be confined to States and the Inter-governmental Organizations.*
- *And the work of the organizations should be in the interest of the U.N. General Assembly in nature.*

The item was re-considered at the meeting of the 68th session of the UNGA on October 16, 2013. The representatives of the Latin American countries expressed their appreciation of the ICAPP's contributions to the work of the U.N., but repeated their reservations. Among ICAPP member countries, only the Russian Federation expressed its reservation on two grounds: (1) strong reservations expressed by some Latin American Member States and (2) legal status of the ICAPP. The Russian representative, however, agreed not to block the consensus if the Latin American countries all join the consensus.

In the absence of consensus, the Chairman of the Sixth Committee concluded that consultations should continue and that the Committee should revert to the issue at a later stage. Under such circumstances, the representatives of the co-sponsors submitted on November 13, the following statement to the Chairman of the Sixth Committee:

- *"the co-sponsors of the draft resolution decided not to pursue the request for GA Observer status for ICAAP at this session, while reserving the right to present it at a future session."*

Since then, the ICAPP has sent its missions to the Latin American countries for extensive meetings with leaders of governing political parties, parliaments and governments. The leaders all agreed to ensure that their respective governments would make positive decisions in time for consensus at the next deliberations of the item in the UNGA.

In view of such developments, the ICAPP Standing Committee decided at its 24th Meeting in March 2015 to recommend all the governments in the region to include the item of granting observer status to the ICAPP in the provisional agenda for the 70th session of the UNGA.

Conclusions

The ICAPP will continue to play a key role not only in Asia's movement to build an Asian community, but also in the global quest for a more peaceful and prosperous world. Once granted observer status in the works of the UNGA, the ICAPP will forge closer cooperation between the U.N. and the political parties in Asia by

- a) aggregating and channeling to the U.N. system the views of our peoples in all their diversity, as expressed in political debates and discussions at all dimensions, local, national and continental;

- b) promoting ordinary people's awareness, approval and support of international agreements reached at the United Nations and through U.N. programs;
- c) building international consensus on U.N. action to meet key global challenges; and
- d) providing support for political parties in the emerging democracies—to increase their capacity to carry out at local and national level their lawmaking and oversight functions on matters subject to international cooperation at the U.N.

Moscow, April 20th, 2015