

ICAPP Charter and Major Understandings

ICAPP Charter

(As adopted at the 4th General Assembly on September 10, 2006 and amended at the 5th General Assembly on September 26, 2009, amended at the 7th General Assembly on November 23, 2012 and amended at the 8th General Assembly on September 19, 2014)

PREAMBLE

We, the leaders and representatives of political parties in Asia, gathered for the Fourth General Assembly of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (hereinafter referred to as the “ICAPP”) in Seoul, Republic of Korea, from September 7 to 10, 2006,

UPHOLDING the United Nations’ Charter, and the principles of mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence;

RECOGNIZING the immense potential of Asia to become the political, economic, and social center of the global stage in the twenty first century if permanent peace and shared prosperity is achieved in the region

REALIZING that challenges in Asia can be more efficiently and effectively addressed if the political leaders of the region unite through sustained dialogue by building mutual confidence and fellowship, by seeking political consensus through consultation and sharing of experiences, and by developing common political strategies

RECALLING that a regularly held gathering of political leaders in the region is an effective tool in seeing the potential of Asia become a reality since it fosters such sustained dialogue

HAVING HELD the First General Assembly of the ICAPP in September 2000 in Manila, Republic of the Philippines, followed by the Second and Third General Assemblies in Bangkok, Kingdom of Thailand in November 2002 and Beijing, People’s Republic of China in September 2004, respectively

DO HEREBY PROCLAIM that the Articles set forth in this Charter shall govern the objectives, institutional arrangements, and activities of the ICAPP.

ARTICLES

CHAPTER I. OBJECTIVES

Article 1

The objectives of the ICAPP shall be:

- a. to promote exchanges and cooperation between political parties with various ideologies in Asia;
- b. to enhance mutual understanding and trust among the peoples and countries in the region;
- c. to promote regional cooperation through the unique role and channel of political parties and
- d. to create an environment for sustained peace and shared prosperity in the region.

CHAPTER II. MEMBERSHIP

Article 2

1. The ICAPP shall be open to political parties in Asia with democratically elected members in the parliaments of their respective countries, which are Member States of the United Nations.
2. Under certain circumstances, the Standing Committee of the ICAPP (hereinafter referred to as the “Standing Committee”) may decide to extend invitations to organizations or groups, which do not fulfill the criteria above, to participate in the activities of the ICAPP, as Observers, including attending the General Assembly of the ICAPP (hereinafter referred to as the “General Assembly”), in the interests of rendering the activities of the ICAPP more inclusive and representative of the diversities existing in Asia.

Article 3

1. For the purposes of this Charter, the term “parliament” shall mean any national body performing legislative functions of that country. The term “political party” shall mean any political organization which has been legally formed and recognized in the respective countries.

CHAPTER III. GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Article 4

1. In furtherance of the objectives of the ICAPP, as prescribed in Article 1 of this Charter, a General Assembly shall be held once every two (2) years on a rotational basis among its members, unless otherwise decided by the Standing Committee. It shall be held, in principle, for three (3) working days in the latter half of the year.
2. The General Assembly shall be, in principle, composed of the following program:
 - a. Opening Ceremony;
 - b. Plenary Session and Thematic Committee meetings;
 - c. Special Workshops and other events upon the approval of the Standing Committee
 - d. Standing Committee meetings; and
 - e. Closing Ceremony

Article 5

1. All members interested in hosting the following General Assembly shall submit written notification to the Standing Committee before the conclusion of the previous General Assembly.
2. The venue and the host(s) for the following General Assembly shall be determined by consensus at the Standing Committee meeting.

Article 6

1. The main theme and up to three (3) sub themes of the General Assembly, which are consistent with the objectives of the ICAPP, shall be proposed by the host(s) and approved by the Standing Committee.

2. The main theme of the General Assembly shall be discussed at the Plenary Session. The sub themes of the General Assembly shall be discussed at the Thematic Committee meetings.
3. Any member may submit proposals for the main theme and sub themes of the General Assembly to the Standing Committee. Such proposals must be made in writing before the conclusion of the previous General Assembly.
4. In addition to the Plenary Session and the Thematic Committee meetings held during the General Assembly, special workshops on specific issues, which are relevant to the ICAPP, may be held upon the approval of the Standing Committee.

Article 7

1. The Bureau of the General Assembly (hereinafter referred to as the “Bureau”) shall be comprised of one (1) Chairperson and up to five (5) Vice Chairpersons for the Plenary Session, and (1) Chairperson and up to three (3) Vice Chairpersons for each Thematic Committee meeting. The list of candidates for the Bureau will be prepared by the Standing Committee and recommended to the General Assembly for its approval at the Opening Ceremony by consensus.
2. The Chairpersons of the Plenary Session and the Thematic Committee meetings shall prepare the list of speakers at the Plenary Sessions and Thematic Committee meetings in accordance with the order of application or request from the members.
3. In case that the General Assembly is co-hosted by two or more number of political parties of a country, the Bureau of the General Assembly may be comprised of Co-Chairpersons.

Article 8

1. The political party, or parties, hosting the General Assembly shall bear the primary expenses of the General Assembly.
2. The primary expenses include logistical arrangements for the General Assembly, i.e., conference facilities, domestic transportation, etc. The primary expenses shall not include, inter alia, international transportation to and from the location of the General Assembly.
3. For the purposes of holding the General Assembly, the political party, or parties, hosting the General Assembly may seek voluntary contributions from members of the ICAPP and other organizations.

CHAPTER IV. STANDING COMMITTEE

Article 9

1. A Standing Committee, composed of the representatives of political parties of not exceeding twenty-three (23) countries in the region, shall be established.
2. The Members of the Standing Committee, who will serve for two years from the end of a General Assembly until the end of the following General Assembly, shall be nominated at the Standing Committee held on the margins of the General Assembly and approved by the General Assembly.

3. Members of the Standing Committee shall actively participate in all ICAPP activities and programs. If a member, or his or her designated representative from the same political party, fails to attend the Standing Committee meetings for more than two (2) consecutive times, without providing reasonable cause of absence, the membership of the party in the Standing Committee may be revoked by the decision of the Standing Committee.
4. The membership in the Standing Committee may be shared by up to two (2) principal political parties from each country, which is invited to the Standing Committee, with equal status and responsibility.

Article 10

1. The Standing Committee will make decisions on the venue, main theme, and sub themes of the General Assembly as provided in Article 6. Additionally, it shall lay out the procedures of the Plenary Session and Thematic Committee meetings and any other matters as outlined in this Charter.
2. For the purposes of performing its duties, as prescribed in the foregoing, the Standing Committee meeting shall be held at least once a year, including its meetings during the General Assembly.

Article 11

1. One (1) Chairperson and one (1) Vice Chairperson of the Standing Committee shall be elected by consensus of the members of the Standing Committee during the General Assembly. The Chairperson shall serve for two (2) years or until the next General Assembly is held.
2. The Chairperson shall preside over the Standing Committee meetings, held pursuant to Article 10 of this Charter, and represent the ICAPP during the period between the General Assemblies.
3. In the event that the Chairperson is no longer able to serve his or her term before its completion, the Vice Chairperson will assume the position until the following Standing Committee meeting is held.

CHAPTER V. SECRETARIAT

Article 12

The Secretariat of the ICAPP shall be established to execute the following functions, among others:

1. to maintain and update the list of the political parties in the region, a database for the ICAPP activities and the official website(www.theicapp.org);
2. to provide necessary information and assistance to the members of the ICAPP, in particular the members of the Standing Committee and the host of the General Assembly in assuming their roles in the ICAPP activities; and
3. to establish contacts and promote cooperation with other international or regional organizations of political parties, and other international or regional parliamentary organizations.

Article 13

1. The Secretariat shall comprise a Secretary General and such staff as the ICAPP activities may require. The Secretary General shall be appointed by the Standing Committee. The appointment shall be subject to confirmation at the General Assembly.
2. The Secretary General shall act in that capacity in all ICAPP meetings and perform such other functions as are entrusted by the General Assembly and/or the Standing Committee.

CHAPTER VI: AMENDMENTS

Article 14

1. Proposals to amend this Charter shall be made in writing and submitted to the Chairperson of the Standing Committee at least three (3) months in advance prior to the commencement of the General Assembly.
2. The Chairperson of the Standing Committee shall, without delay, communicate such proposal(s) to the members of the Standing Committee who shall then review the proposals and present a joint report with recommendation(s) to the following General Assembly.
3. The proposal(s) shall be reviewed and adopted as amendment(s) to the Charter by the consensus of the General Assembly.

CHAPTER VII: WORKING LANGUAGE

Article 15

1. The working language of the ICAPP shall be English.
2. During the General Assembly, however, if any member provides his or her own simultaneous interpreter(s) from his or her native language to English, the host(s) of the meeting will provide facilities for simultaneous interpretation.

Major Understandings

A. Understanding reached at the 5th SC Meeting in Seoul (June 1-3, 2006)

- The Members agreed to extend invitations to political parties in the Palestinian National Authority in an effort to render the ICAPP activities more inclusive and representative of the diversities existing in the region.

B. Understanding reached at the 8th SC Meeting in Tehran (November 22-23, 2008)

- The Members agreed that the following two criteria would be applied to the political parties in Asia to be eligible for invitation to the future ICAPP activities, including the General Assemblies; (1) Political parties which have more than one percent of elected seats in their national parliaments; or (2) Political parties which have won more than one percent of popular votes in their latest national parliamentary elections, as certified and recognized by their national election commissions.

C. Understandings reached at the 10th SC Meeting in Astana (March 27-28, 2009)

- The budget and personnel to implement the functions of the ICAPP Secretariat shall be initially provided by the host country. Issues relating to the further budget and personnel of the Secretariat will continue to be discussed in the Standing Committee.
- The ICAPP Secretariat shall be established in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

D. Understanding reached at the 11th SC Meeting in Astana (September 24-28, 2009)

- The Members agreed that the decision not to invite certain eligible political parties to the ICAPP General Assembly can be made only by the consensus of the Standing Committee.

E. Understandings reached at the 13th SC Meeting in Kunming (July 16, 2010)

- The Members agreed that all representatives of the political parties at ICAPP Meetings should refrain from raising any issues directly related to bilateral conflicts or disputes among the countries in the region. It was highly recommended, however, to seek direct dialogue among political parties in the concerned countries to promote understanding and prevent such conflicts or disputes from getting further aggravated.
- The Members agreed to recommend to all members of the Standing committee to adopt the similar arrangement reached between the two main political parties in Japan and Korea that as long as they retain membership in the ICAPP SC, the representative of the political party with the largest number of seats in their respective Parliament at the time would represent Japan or Korea at the SC as its member, while the representative of the political party with second largest number of seats in the Parliament would attend the SC meetings as observers. They agreed that such formula in the SC membership will make the ICAPP activities more inclusive and credible.