



ICAPP/3AEPF/003

### **Colombo Statement**

1. We, the leaders and representatives of over 25 political parties and political groups from Asia and Europe, following our Second Meeting in London on 18 May 2018, gathered here in Colombo, the capital city of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, for the Third Meeting of the Asia-Europe Political Forum (AEPF). The Forum was hosted by the Government of Sri Lanka on April 5-7, 2019 and actively participated in by the United National Party, Sri Lanka Freedom Party and Sri Lanka People's Front, to discuss relevant political, environmental and security issues with a focus on the main theme: "How political parties can handle the challenges of social security and employment of the increasing aged population as well as items of current urgency in the Asian region".
2. We addressed issues such as the impact of Brexit and the situation on the Korean Peninsula. We expressed continuing concern, and noted the need for more concerted action, following the discussions at our last meeting, in addressing the pollution of our oceans as a result of human activities and its impact on humankind and marine life.
3. We recalled the Resolution A/RES/73/143 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 17 December 2018, in which it endorsed the Political Declaration and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002, and the road map for the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action in 2005, which recognize the importance of placing ageing on development agendas, stressing the need to promote policies to address the challenges of an ageing population and for greater international cooperation.

#### *(Current Situation)*

4. We took note of the fact that there are 901 million people aged 60 or over, comprising 12.3 percent of the global population, mainly in the Asia-Pacific region (508 million), while the largest percentage of population of this age (24 percent, or 177 million) is in Europe. These percentages will increase.
5. In addition to social pressures, we also recognized the underutilized potential of older persons whose skills, experience and wisdom could provide a powerful basis for future development, particularly as these older generations become healthier.

#### *(Relevance to the UN Sustainable Development Goals)*

6. We agreed that ageing is likely to have far-reaching implications for all sectors of society, including labor markets, financial and health systems; political participation; demand for goods and services; urban planning and infrastructure development; as well as family structures and intergenerational relations.
7. We shared a common understanding that there is an urgent need to bolster the collection, analysis and use of good quality data on age and ageing to effectively evidence the equitable delivery of the SDGs.

*(Challenges)*

8. We acknowledged that in many national settings, as traditional family bonds and responsibilities weaken, population ageing has raised concerns about the provision of adequate social protection for older persons, with pressure on public health and care systems and the need for improved technologies for prevention, detection and treatment of diseases related to ageing populations.
9. We also noted problems of age discrimination, where abuse of older women and men - physical, emotional or financial - has been acknowledged as a growing concern for many countries, as well as gaps in relevant data and statistics.
10. With concern, we acknowledged that considerable obstacles to further integration and full participation in the global economy remain for developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, as well as for some countries with economies in transition.

*(Policy Implications)*

11. We emphasized the importance of international cooperation to conduct research on ageing and age-related issues as an important instrument for the formulation of policies on ageing.
12. We stressed the responsibility of Governments as well as the role of families and society more widely, in promoting and providing basic care and social services, bearing in mind specific needs of older persons.
13. We called upon Members to promote, in accordance with their national priorities, equitable and affordable access to sustainable basic physical and social infrastructure for all, without discrimination, including appropriate affordable housing; modern and renewable energy; safe drinking water and sanitation; safe, nutritious and adequate food; waste disposal; sustainable mobility; healthcare services and family planning; education, culture and information and communications technologies, and to ensure that these services are responsive to the rights and needs of older persons.
14. We encouraged Members to adopt social policies that promote the development of community services for older persons, taking into account the psychological and physical aspects of ageing and the special needs of older women and older persons with disabilities.
15. We recommended that Members increase efforts to raise awareness of the Madrid Plan of Action and identify key priority areas for its implementation, bearing in mind the crucial importance of intergenerational family interdependence; solidarity and reciprocity for social development; raising awareness of ageing issues and building national capacities; as well as promoting and supporting initiatives to advance a positive public image of older persons and their multiple contributions.
16. We highlighted the importance of enhancing coordination and cooperation with global and regional governmental and non-governmental organizations. We encouraged age-sensitive and all-age-inclusive national and local policy development and

implementation, with measurable indicators to track progress on the situation facing older persons.

17. We regarded development as an effective avenue for addressing the social security and employment challenges concomitant with the advent of an ageing society. We acknowledged the Belt and Road Initiative as an important opportunity for many participating countries to achieve accelerated development. We welcomed the Chinese government's hosting of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation and encouraged members of the ICAPP to continue to hold Silk Road related activities.
18. We welcomed and appreciated the views of the experts of Asia and Europe on effectively addressing the current situation relating to ageing population, presenting future strategies to alleviate the challenges we face.
19. We agreed that, with collective efforts, UN agencies, policymakers, civil society, families and responsible individuals, can support the setting of a new agenda for active and healthy ageing that reduces the vulnerabilities and enhances the capabilities and resilience of older persons, thus fulfilling the pledge of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind.
20. We took note that, as one of the matters of urgency in Asia, continued endeavors to enhance mutual understanding and build trust between countries concerned need to promote peace and cooperation on the Korean Peninsula and in Asia.
21. Recalling, with deep sorrow, the terrible terrorist attack in New Zealand in March 2019, we all joined in condemnation on of such heinous acts of terrorism. We shared a common understanding that wherever it takes place, terrorism is never justified under any circumstance.
22. We expressed our profound gratitude to the people and the Government of the Republic of Sri Lanka, for their excellent arrangements to ensure the resounding success of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Asia-Europe Political Forum. Our special thanks went to H.E. Maithripala Sirisena, President of Sri Lanka, and H.E. Ranil Wickremesinghe, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, for their full support for this historic gathering. We also reaffirmed our deep appreciation for the ICAPP Secretariat's invaluable role and efficient preparations in organizing the meeting and the importance of our continued beneficial cooperation with political parties and groups from Europe.
23. The Forum thanked Hon. Geoffrey Van Orden and Hon. Khuon Sudary for their tremendous contribution as the Co-Chairpersons of the AEPF, and elected Hon. Daya Gamage and Hon. Jan Zahradil as the new Co-Chairpersons of the AEPF for the coming two years. The members decided to welcome Hon. Geoffrey Van Orden as the Honorary Advisor to the AEPF. Hon. Jan Zahradil proposed to host the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the AEPF in Prague, Czech Republic in 2020.

Adopted unanimously on this 6<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2019 in Colombo, Sri Lanka