ICAPP/6CON/003

Xi'an Initiative

Asia today stands at a crucial juncture of development and faces rare and unique opportunities. We, the leaders and representatives of 57 political parties from 33 countries of the Asia-Pacific, and observers from the Council of African Political Parties and the Permanent Conference of Political Parties from Latin America and the Caribbean, met at the 2013 ICAPP Special Conference hosted by the Communist Party of China (CPC) in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province of China, from May 30th to 31st, 2013, to discuss and exchange views under the main theme "Promote Green Development and Build a Beautiful Asia Together."

We extensively shared our practices and experience in protecting ecological environment and promoting equitable green development, and held in-depth discussions on the importance of further international cooperation, especially among political parties, in such endeavors. Prior to the conference, we visited ecological projects in Shaanxi Province, and witnessed the concrete steps taken in promoting green development and building a "Beautiful China", through which we also saw with admiration the efforts of the CPC and the Chinese government at all levels in simultaneously promoting development and preserving ecosystems.

While emphasizing that peace and development are the themes of our times, we are also aware that problems with development are still important. The global economic recovery remains slow and weak. The international financial crisis has adversely impacted the existing economic structures and development patterns. Asia is still confronted with many grave challenges in pursuing sustainable development.

We are aware that in the last three centuries, mankind has created huge wealth through industrialization, but at a heavy cost to the environment, with severe environmental pollution, eco-degradation, and more frequent natural disasters. Going through a critical period of industrialization, Asia enjoys strong momentum and huge potential for development, but is also witnessing a growing incompatibility between man and nature. This is manifested through severe resource and energy constraints and rapidly deteriorating environment, sharpened by the impact of the international financial crises. Whether Asia can turn the 21st century into an "Asian Century" largely depends on the proper and timely resolution of these issues.

We are convinced that structural changes in the world economy in the "Post-Crisis Era" are inevitable, and that innovation on development patterns is urgently needed. Since the second half of the 20th century, as the international community reflected on such notions as "the Limit to Growth" and "mankind has only one Earth to live on," the building of a "community of common destiny" has gradually acquired common understanding around the world. Hence green economy has boomed, with environmental protection paramount. We note that Asian countries have, in recent years, explored their own ways of green and sustainable development that suit their respective national conditions, and have contributed to the global movement on this front. We warmly welcome such endeavors, and will continue to encourage and facilitate deepened and wider exchanges in this area.

We believe that the "greening" of economy is not a burden of development, but a new engine of growth that is fast becoming a basis of convergence among interests of nations. Green development will provide increasing bonus for countries to tighten cooperation and accelerate growth. The full realization of green development is part of our eventual quest for global sustainable development and harmonious coexistence of man and nature. Green development is going to play an indispensable role in fulfilling the "Asian Dream" of revival and rejuvenation.

We call for:

1. Greater attention to green development and enhanced efforts for ecological progress;
While the negative effects of the international financial crisis still linger on, the new technological revolution is yet to make breakthroughs. Fostering green industries, developing green technologies, producing green products, utilizing green energy and advocating green consumption are measures that would not only help ease the conflict between economic development and preserving resources and defending the environment, but also create new market demands and job opportunities as well. In the concept of green development, "green" is the means, whereas "development" is the end, since ecological sustainability and development go together. We must not halt development for the sake of going green. Instead, we need to ensure a green way of development, thus creating a positive cycle of growth where development is boosted by and provides for green conservation. Asian countries, with political parties pushing governments and the private sector, should actively develop green technologies and explore new ways of technology transfer; increase the cost-effectiveness of investment to reduce the costs and risks of the "green transformation;" cultivate green modes of production and consumption and expand market for green products; and create more jobs, gear up development, and improve people's wellbeing with a view to promote green and sustainable development on a global scale.

2. Transparency and inclusiveness in pursuing common development;
In promoting green development, we need to uphold the values of equitability, openness and inclusiveness to ensure equitable development for Asian countries. We must acknowledge the fact that Asian countries are in different stages and at different levels of development. These countries must be supported to independently decide their paths of green development according to their specific conditions, compatible with the emerging realities of climate change and relevant international agreements. Concurrently, we need to emphasize the importance of mutual benefits, lest green development be used as a pretext for protectionism by becoming "green barriers" in practice.

3. Closer international cooperation and a joint effort to build a "Beautiful Asia";
Many challenges confronting Asia are trans-border issues, which entail closer international cooperation since climate change and its devastating after effects know no borders. Such cooperation would make things easier and facilitate the building of a "Beautiful Asia." Countries in our region should strengthen international cooperation in the spirit of partnership, learn from and help each other, and jointly work for a "Beautiful Asia." Participants of the Conference have put forward many new ideas in promoting green development, including (but not restricted to) an Asia Green Development Fund, a Great Green Technology Market in Asia, etc. In this context,

we endorse President Xi Jinping's clarion call for setting and strictly observing an ecological 'red line' to protect the environment. ICAPP founding chairman Jose de Venecia's proposals linking ecology with economy are also relevant, especially investment in massive tree plantation campaigns, helping both to protect the environment and to push economic growth by promoting employment.

4. An active role of political parties and innovation in development modes.

Achieving green development is not only a pressing task for all governments in Asia, but also a heavy responsibility and historic mission of Asian political parties, who must resolutely commit themselves to being leaders, promoters and practitioners in pursuing ecological progress, advocating the idea of ecological protection and improvement, urging respective governments to make policies for green development, conducting international cooperation through multilateral mechanisms such as ICAPP, and proactively seek effective models of green development. Such models must be based on the rule of law, good governance, and a culture of clean and green environment upholding the basic human right to a pollution free future.

The Xi'an Conference noted with satisfaction the recent launch of the "Global Political Parties Climate & Ecological Alliance", comprising ICAPP, CAPDI, COPPPAL and IESCO, as a broad-based "united front" aimed at galvanizing political parties and civil society in a coordinated quest to combat climate change.

We note with delight that during the 13 years since its creation, ICAPP has served as an important platform for strengthening exchanges and cooperation among Asian political parties, with increasing influence in the region and beyond, contributing to peace and development in Asia. In the context of dynamic development and cooperation in Asia, more space can be expected for party-to-party cooperation. We believe that ICAPP should carry on its tradition of building consensus and promoting cooperation, deepen relationships among Asian political parties, thereby laying the foundation for frequent party-to-party exchanges that reinforce inter-state relations. Combating climate change can be an important pillar of such Asian solidarity for a common cause, backed by effective agreements under the UN Framework Convention for Climate Change.

Finally, we sincerely thank H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his congratulatory video message. Our thanks also go to the Communist Party of China and the Chinese government for their efforts in hosting this historic event, and the province of Shaanxi for its whole-hearted support and gracious hospitality.

Xi'an, China
May 31, 2013