



ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

**Remarks of Secretary General Antonio Cuenco
at the Opening Ceremony of the AIPA Executive Committee
and AIPA Fact-finding Committee to Combat the Drug Menace
July 9, 2012, Yogyakarta, Indonesia**

Mr. President Marzuki Alie,
Yogyakarta Governor Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono X,
Honorable Members of the Executive Committee
Delegates to the AIPA Fact-finding Committee to Combat the Drug Menace,
Distinguished guests....

Since AIPA was formed 30 years ago, this is the very first time that the Executive Committee (ExCom) is holding a meeting way ahead of our General Assembly, which will be held in September this year.

I would like to salute our President, Speaker Marzuki Alie of Indonesia, for this historic and laudable initiative. Indeed, the many important, urgent and substantial items in the agenda for consideration and action by our General Assembly in September need to be discussed, analyzed and passed upon.

Simply stated, our AIPA ExCom will have to decide whether or not to include, modify, exclude or add some other items in the agenda of the General Assembly. This process will need our collective wisdom to tackle a formidable task.

I am certain, however, that with Your Excellencies' excellent skill and foresight in considering the merits of these issues our job will meet with great success.

Regarding the 9th AIFOCOM, it is my fervent wish that we come up with a decisive action by agreeing to form a well-funded Technical Working Group that meets once a month to consistently dwell on the drug situation in our region.

According to official reports from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the dangerous drugs problem in our region has gone from bad to worse.

Indeed, illegal drugs are a common pestilence trafficked across our borders. Illegal-drug dealing, therefore, is a transnational crime which we all must collectively pursue relentlessly and resolutely.

Perhaps a Regional Task Force, in cooperation with the ASOD, or the ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters, should be formed to dismantle, neutralize and bring to justice these drug syndicates who are merchants of death.

Several other challenges confront us, and we are called upon to address them. Foremost among those is the raging conflict among our ASEAN countries against China and Taiwan. Tension is rising day by day and the AIPA, together with the ASEAN, must act swiftly to avoid a disastrous outcome.

We must not fail our people who look forward for a peaceful solution to the conflict at hand.

Have a great day, everyone!!!