



ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

**REPORT OF SECRETARY GENERAL OF AIPA
ON THE ACTIVITIES OF AIPA SECRETARIAT****a. The Signing of the Joint Declaration of Intent (MoU) by the AIPA and the Government of Federal Republic of Germany (March 1, 2012 at DPR RI Building, Jakarta)**

AIPA Secretary General Antonio Cuenco signed an agreement for a capacity development program granted by the German Federal Foreign Office (FFO) with H.E. Dr. Norbert Baas, German Ambassador to Indonesia, representing the Federal Republic of Germany during the signing ceremony.

The signing was in accordance with AIPA Resolution No. Res.32GA/2011/Org/07 on the Joint Program between AIPA and the German FFO through the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH (GIZ) and the Hanns-Seidel Foundation (HSF) approved by the 32nd AIPA General Assembly in Phnom Penh in September 2011.

The objective of the project is to support AIPA in establishing cooperation and integration within ASEAN and to assist the organization in strengthening and securing for the longer term ASEAN countries' parliamentary policy-making and control functions.

The agreement would pave the way for technical assistance programs; trainings; and advisory services for selected employees and leaders of AIPA committees, the AIPA Secretariat in Member Parliaments, the AIPA women's association (WAIPA) and the AIPA Secretariat in Jakarta.

Signing of the Implementation Agreement between AIPA and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH (GIZ) and Hanns-Seidel Foundation (HSF) at the AIPA Secretariat in Jakarta on 8 March 2012

After the signing of the capacity building program joint agreement, Secretary General Antonio Cuenco, representing the AIPA, signed the Implementation Agreement between the

organization and project implementers Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and Hanns-Seidel Foundation.

The Implementation Agreement underlines the project objectives and indicators; contributions to the project by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany through GIZ and HSF; and other provisions related to logistic, management and administration, evaluation, term, amendment and termination of agreement, governing laws and dispute settlement.

The provisions stipulated in the agreement takes effect upon the commencement of the work plan and the implementation of the joint project with the placement of an “integrated expert” at the AIPA Secretariat.

The work plan for the joint project consists of modules designated for the implementation of the projects from 2012 to 2013.

Mr. Lars Weddeler, a German national, was assigned as project coordinator and is stationed at the AIPA Secretariat. Progress reports on the joint project will be submitted to the Federal Foreign Office of Germany and the AIPA General Assembly.

b. Other Activities of AIPA Secretariat

1) Technical and Administrative Matters

Instrument of Ratification from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia

The Government of the Republic of Indonesia has signed an Agreement with the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) on the “Privileges and Immunities of the AIPA Secretariat” on 15 September 2010 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

In accordance with Article 10 of the Agreement, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia, having examined and considered the Agreement, decided to ratify it and to perform and carry out all the stipulations therein contained. The Instrument of Ratification of the Agreement was signed by the Foreign Affairs Ministry of the Republic of Indonesia on December 27, 2011.

On behalf of the AIPA Secretariat, the Secretary General of AIPA conveyed his deep appreciation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, as well as to the Government of the Republic of Indonesia, for the ratification of the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the AIPA Secretariat in Jakarta.

Follow up on 32nd AIPA General Assembly Resolutions on the Establishment of a Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Task Force and the Establishment of an Information Center on Migrant Workers

On the Establishment of MDGs Task Force

Pursuant to the Provisions of Res32GA/2011/Soc/02 approved by the 32nd AIPA General Assembly in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in 2011, the AIPA Secretariat sent a letter on 26 January 2012 reminding each Member Parliament on the creation of a Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Task Force within their respective parliaments. We received responses from some member countries on this matter. Others, though, have yet to communicate back.

On the Establishment of an Information Center on Migrant Workers

Pursuant to the provisions of Res32GA/2011/Soc/03 approved by the 32nd AIPA General Assembly in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in 2011, which entrusted the AIPA Secretariat the responsibility of establishing an information center on migrant workers that would function as source of information on legal situation or policies on migrant workers of each country in the region, the AIPA Secretariat sent a letter on 26 January 2012 requesting copies of their migrant workers laws. The AIPA Secretariat would collate the laws of the respective parliaments of the ASEAN Countries and make them available online through our website (www.aipasecretariat.org), as an initial step in fulfilling the task.

End of Term of the Second Secretary General of AIPA, Hon. Antonio V. Cuenco

After the passing away in 2009 of the first Secretary General of AIPA, Hon. Dato' Md. Yusoff bin Md. Zain, the President of AIPA appointed Hon. Antonio V. Cuenco of the Philippines to lead the AIPA Secretariat for a three-year term. According to Hon. Cuenco's Working Agreement, his term of office will end on February 4, 2013. The AIPA Secretariat is accordingly requesting for the President of AIPA to appoint the third Secretary General, who should come from Singapore.

In accordance with the Working Agreement of the Secretary General, "AIPA shall pay the Secretary General gratuity of 17.5% of annual basic salary for every year of completed service and prorated for periods of less than a year."

"The gratuity will not be payable if service is terminated on disciplinary grounds. The gratuity will be paid only after the completion of service at the AIPA Secretariat and not at the end of each contractual period subject to the approval of the AIPA General Assembly."

Implemented the Adopted Revisions to the Statute and Updated AIPA's Brochures, Fact Sheet and Other Documents to Reflect the Changes

With the acceptance of Myanmar as a full-fledged member from being a special observer by the AIPA General Assembly in September 2011, the AIPA Secretariat implemented the revisions to the Statute approved by the body and printed hard copies of the revised Statute. It also updated its brochures, fact sheet, pamphlets and other documents to reflect Myanmar's new

status as a member, as well as the inclusion of Belarus as AIPA's newest "observer country," which was approved in the above GA.

2) Meetings, Seminars and Conferences attended by the AIPA Secretariat

Opening Ceremony of the 19th ASEAN Summit and Related Meetings on 16-19 November 2011 in Bali, Indonesia

The AIPA Secretariat joined the opening ceremony of the 19th ASEAN Summit as well as the launching of the ASEAN Supreme Audit Institutions (ASEAN-SAI), both in Bali, Indonesia.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, as 2011 ASEAN Chairman, said the ASEAN Secretariat was "tasked" to improve relations with the AIPA in helping establish an ASEAN Community by 2015. In a statement, he said the ASEAN Secretariat reaffirms its commitment to building a people-oriented and people-centered ASEAN and to increase the people's sense of involvement in the works of ASEAN through their greater participation in the community-building process.

Both ASEAN and AIPA had acknowledged that closer cooperation between the two regional institutions is crucial in realizing the goal of an ASEAN Community three years from now.

In particular, the Indonesian House of Representatives, which AIPA President Marzuki Alie leads, expects that Indonesia "could not only initiate but also make sure that the foundation it established as ASEAN chairman will stabilize political, security, social and cultural conditions in the region, in addition to moving forward towards balancing the dynamics of global changes."

During the 19th ASEAN Summit, Member Countries ratified the Bali Concord III, which mapped out how ASEAN would interact with the global community. Five new agreements were also made at the Summit and the ASEAN roadmap was prepared, considering that the target year of 2015 in achieving the eight Millennium Development Goals is already drawing close. An accord among ASEAN Member Countries on climate change issues was likewise signed.

Also, as a related meeting, state auditors from the 10 ASEAN Member Countries launched during the Summit the establishment of the ASEAN Supreme Audit Institutions (ASEAN-SAI) and held their first assembly. With Indonesia spearheading the creation of the body, Mr. Hadi Poernomo (Chairman of the Indonesian Supreme Audit Board) said they envisioned it for closer coordination. He also said ASEAN-SAI would be an independent institution similar to the AIPA, which is separate from the ASEAN and has its own Secretariat.

The President of AIPA Attended the 6th Ordinary Session of the Pan African Parliamentary Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 16-17 January 2012

Responding to an invitation by the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) President, H.E. Dr. Moussa Idriss Ndele, AIPA President Dr. Marzuki Alie attended the Sixth Ordinary Session of the Second Parliament of PAP in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 16-17 January 2012.

The PAP Conference was organized to enhance institutional building, as part of the transformative process in becoming a strong legislature capable of bringing forth all the African people's shared vision of achieving better living, peace and prosperity.

It opened on 16 January 2012 at the premises of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA) and was attended by delegations from African member parliaments.

The forum was significant in the light of developments in Northern Africa and the Middle East, particularly Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, which are countries striving to build democracy in the region. During the conference, parliamentarians exchanged ideas and shared experiences on the democratic goals of fairness and justice for the people, which manifest on the system of governance and the legislature.

The transformation towards democracy is also taking place in Southeast Asia. It is expected that with the presence of AIPA President Marzuki Alie at the the Sixth Ordinary Session of the Second PAP conference, better relation and cooperation between PAP and AIPA would flourish.

After attending the conference, AIPA President Marzuki Alie also invited H.E. Ndele to join the 33rd AIPA General Assembly (GA) in Mataram, Lombok, Indonesia in September 2012. The PAP President welcomed the ideas and thoughts the AIPA President conveyed.

Meeting between AIPA Leaders and ASEAN Heads of Government/State During the 20th ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh, Cambodia from 1-4 April 2012

Prior to the ASEAN Summit and the actual meeting between AIPA Delegates and the ASEAN Heads of State/Government, an AIPA Preparatory Meeting was held at Cambodiana Hotel in Phnom Penh on April 2, 2012. AIPA President Marzuki Alie led the meeting, which was meant to prepare the AIPA Statement he delivered during the AIPA-ASEAN Meeting on the sidelines of the 20th ASEAN Summit

The Statement highlighted the need to improve cooperation and coordination between the executive and legislative institutions of ASEAN, and to seek new avenues on how to involve AIPA and enhance its contribution to the works of ASEAN. AIPA supports all decisions and instruments that have been established by ASEAN. In this light, AIPA and ASEAN need an effective communication and cooperation mechanism.

The Statement added that parliamentarians who are members of AIPA are also representing constituencies/people, whose sense of belonging and ownership towards ASEAN need to be enhanced, as they can contribute significantly to achieve the target of having a “people-centered” and “people-oriented” ASEAN.

In the same Statement, AIPA enthusiastically welcomed the positive development in Myanmar and hoped that the momentum it showed can be maintained and continued in line with the interests of the people of Myanmar, the ASEAN and the international community.

It acknowledged the importance of periodic annual meeting between ASEAN and AIPA leaders to enhance the two institutions’ contribution in the promotion of cooperation and regional integration, as well as jointly addressing all challenges in building an ASEAN Community, where all peoples of ASEAN live in peace, prosperity and harmony.

The Statement added that AIPA’s assistance to the enhancement of ASEAN is essential. A more efficient mechanism between ASEAN and AIPA must therefore be built, including a communication line between the ASEAN Chairman and the AIPA President. It is likewise important to have better coordination between the Secretariats of ASEAN and AIPA.

Fourth Meeting of the AIPA Caucus in Bangkok, Thailand from 30 April to 3 May 2012

On Disaster Management

The meeting discussed problems on natural disasters, particularly flooding that occurred in Cambodia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam in recent years that resulted to great loss of lives and to economic disruption. In those calamities, social mobilization and financial support were provided by the affected countries’ own governments, by donor countries, by non-government organizations and by international organizations.

The possibility of creating a standby disaster fund in ASEAN, as proposed by the AIPA Secretary General, for a prompt response to natural disasters was also deliberated upon. However, the meeting recognized that details on its implementation need to be worked out.

The meeting requested the AIPA Secretariat to undertake further studies and submit its output to the next AIPA Executive Committee Meeting and the General Assembly to get the consensus of members before consulting with the ASEAN leaders at the next ASEAN Summit.

Also, Honorable Bagas Hapsoro, who represented the ASEAN Secretariat during the Caucus, noted that disasters in the ASEAN region are a threat to efforts to improve the livelihoods of its peoples.

The ASEAN countries, he said, need to work together to deal with disasters swiftly to contain the damage. He mentioned the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency

Response (AADMER) and the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) as examples of regional cooperation on the issue of disaster management. He also said the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) gathers detailed information from hazard monitoring and disaster warning agencies in all ten ASEAN Member Countries.

Prior to and following its launching last year, the AHA Centre has already responded to natural disasters in ASEAN countries; for example, the flood in Thailand, tropical storms in the Philippines, and earthquakes in Indonesia.

Honorable Bagas called for cooperation from AIPA members as partners of the government in encouraging more support.

The Creation of an AIPA Core Group of Parliamentarians

The meeting deliberated on and agreed that the creation of an AIPA Core Group of Parliamentarians as a separate, stand-alone entity is not necessary as it creates more administrative and financial constraints on Member Parliaments.

It was decided, however, that the idea of an AIPA Core Group could be leveraged on the AIPA Caucus framework. The AIPA Caucus should instead strengthen its functions, as stipulated in its Terms of Reference, particularly on monitoring the implementation of approved resolutions, as well as providing a platform for an AIPA-ASEAN interaction.

A task force was duly formed and it proposed that the AIPA Caucus review and report the status of implementation of AIPA resolutions in each member parliament.

Meeting with Representatives of ARREST/ASEAN-WEN on 3 May 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand during the 4th AIPA Caucus

At the conclusion of the AIPA Caucus in Bangkok, Thailand, AIPA Secretary General Antonio Cuenco met with representatives of Asia's Regional Response to Endangered Species Trafficking (ARREST)/ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) at Imperial Queen's Park Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand on 3 May 2012.

The ARREST/ASEAN-WEN-AIPA meeting was made to update AIPA on upcoming activities and to ensure ARREST's continued engagement with the ASEAN's top policy-makers to enhance legislation on the environment and to combat wildlife crime.

General Chanvut Vajrabukka, ASEAN-WEN Law Enforcement Extension Office (LEEO) Chief Adviser, requested that AIPA member parliaments upgrade wildlife crime as a serious crime through national legislation, and to consider exploring harmonization of laws in preparation for the ASEAN integration process.

AIPA Secretary General Antonio Cuenco confirmed AIPA's and his personal interest with worthy causes, such as the work of ASEAN-WEN and ARREST. He said the AIPA GA in Lombok, Indonesia in September 2012 is confirmed to discuss ASEAN-WEN/ARREST's proposal. A draft resolution was already endorsed by the AIPA Secretariat for consideration by the 33rd AIPA GA Executive Committee (Execom) meeting in July 2012 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

In the same meeting, two WildAid video commercials on the campaign featuring Asian basketball star Yao Ming and action star Jackie Chan on tigers and elephant trafficking/poaching were shown to give Secretary General Cuenco an idea on what ASEAN-WEN/ARREST can offer to AIPA leaders. It was noted that ARREST would provide the technical resources and celebrities, while AIPA can explore on political leadership endorsement on upcoming efforts.

Attended the Global Policy Address by H.E. DR. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of the Republic of Indonesia, On the Role of Indonesia's Forests in a Green Economy and a Sustainable World at the CIFOR Headquarters in Bogor, Indonesia on 13 June 2012

On the eve of the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and in celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), His Excellency Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of Indonesia, delivered a global policy address on the role of Indonesia's forests in a green economy and a sustainable world. The theme of the event was "Forests in the Future We Want."

CIFOR and the Ministry of Forestry of Indonesia cordially invited the AIPA Secretariat to the event, which was lunch at 12:30 p.m. followed by the President's address at 14:00 at the CIFOR campus on Jl. CIFOR, Situ Gede, Bogor Barat. The AIPA Secretariat was represented by Assistant to AIPA Secretary General I Mrs. I Gusti Ayu Darsini.

H.E. Dr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono expressed his appreciation and congratulated the CIFOR for organizing the event and for its significant contributions to Indonesia for the past twenty years in the field of forestry research, education and development training. He praised CIFOR for becoming into an organization of a global scale in the field of forestry.

The President said the global landscape is changing due to rapid urbanization, which would rise parallel to the proliferation of mega-cities. Four years ago, he said, Indonesia already reached the 50 percent mark of an urbanized population. He predicted that by 2025, 65 percent of Indonesians would live in cities.

The problem, he said, is that the natural ecosystem and bio-capacity regeneration are being severely degraded, compromising the ability of the planet to sustain life. Natural resources are depleting, some rapidly; and water, land and air are getting increasingly polluted; the level of water reserves are falling; and soil erosion is leading to desertification.

H.E. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono said Global warming is already happening and species are dying out faster than their innate rate of extinction.

AIPA Seminar on Enhancing the ASEAN Transformation into a Solid Community Held at the Operation Room of the Indonesian Parliament, Jakarta, Indonesia on Thursday, 21 June 2012

Referring to the position of its Speaker as President of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), the Indonesian House of Representatives held a seminar themed "AIPA: Enhancing the ASEAN Transformation into Solid Community" on 21 June 2012.

Aware that the AIPA seeks to enhance its contribution in building an ASEAN Community 2015; to foster a visionary, intensive, cooperative, and effective engagement between AIPA and ASEAN; and to strengthen AIPA's relationship with the peoples of ASEAN, Speaker Marzuki Alie decided on holding the seminar.

In his opening remarks, H.E DR. Marzuki Alie said the aim of the seminar was to "socialize" AIPA as a regional parliamentary organization that intends to achieve the aim of an ASEAN Community that consists of the ASEAN Economic Community, the ASEAN Social Cultural Community, and the ASEAN Political-Security Community. To provide information related to AIPA meetings and to "socialize" AIPA to the public, the AIPA President launched in the same event the official website of the 9th AIFOCOM Meeting and the 33rd General Assembly of AIPA (www.ksap.dpr.gov.id/aipa2012).

Keynote speakers during the seminar were Hon. Bagas Hapsoro (ASEAN Deputy Secretary-General), Foster Gultom (Secretary, Directorate General on ASEAN Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia), and Professor Hikmahanto Juwana (University of Indonesia). Dr. Surahman Hidayat, Chairman of Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation, served as moderator.

Speaking on ASEAN's efforts "Towards an ASEAN Community 2015," Hon. Bagas Hapsoro explained on ASEAN's modalities and instruments meant to achieve the said target. He also briefed the audience on current challenges confronting the region, particularly those on each of the three pillars of the ASEAN Community, and how these challenges could be addressed.

He also highlighted the active role of all ASEAN stakeholders, particularly AIPA as parliamentary organization and partner of the government, in ensuring the successful realization of the aims and purposes of the ASEAN Charter and the ASEAN Community 2015 as a people-centered community.

Mr. Foster Gultom, meanwhile, outlined policies which the Indonesian Government implemented to realize the goal of an ASEAN Community by 2015. He also detailed the history of ASEAN's transformation and acknowledged the role of member countries in building a strong foundation for ASEAN today. He said the ASEAN is strongly committed at promoting good

governance, as shown by the establishment of the ASEAN Supreme Audit Institutions (ASEAN-SAI). He, however, also expressed concern over the lack of regional trade between ASEAN member countries.

For his part, Professor Hikmahanto Juwana gave a critical academic perspective on how the ASEAN Community could be implemented to reach the grassroots in terms of policy and implementation. He emphasized the importance of readiness of human resources, on whether or not the people are more competitive when having an ASEAN Community.

Members of the Indonesian House of Representatives; ambassadors of ASEAN Member Countries to the Republic of Indonesia; Permanent Representatives to ASEAN; and lecturers and students of the University of Indonesia, Gadjah Mada University, Prof. Dr. Moestopo University, and Institute of Social and Political Sciences, attended the event.

Attended a Public Lecture by the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq at the Head Office of PT Pertamina in Jakarta, Indonesia on 26 June 2012

Upon the invitation by the Indonesian Council on World Affairs (ICWA) and the Embassy of the Republic of Iraq, the AIPA Secretariat attended the lecture by Dr. Hussain Al-Shahristani, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, at the head office of Pt Pertamina (Persero) in Jakarta, Indonesia on June 26, 2012.

Dr. Al-Shahristani talked about “Iraq’s Contribution to the World Facing the Global Energy Challenges and Crisis” to an audience that included ambassadors to Indonesia.

He said that with his country now under a democracy and with nine of 25 new oil fields identified as “super giants,” it can offer a “dependable, long-term supply for the world” for the next 20 years.

He also said that while before oil production in his country was “severely compromised due to three decades of geo-political turbulence,” it can now supply oil to the world market to “drive down prices.”

Dr. Al-Shahristani likewise answered questions fielded by those in attendance.

3) Visits and Courtesy Calls

Visit at the AIPA Secretariat in Jakarta on 24 October 2011 by the United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide

HE. Dr. Francis M. Deng, the United Nations Undersecretary and Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and Responsibility to Protect, visited the AIPA Secretariat for the second time. He was accompanied by Political Affairs Officer Mr. Mario Buil-Merce and Ms. Norul Mohamed Rashid, both from the UN Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and Responsibility to Protect.

They were received by Secretary General Hon. Antonio V. Cuenco and his staff.

Like his first visit, Dr. Deng emphasized the crucial roles of ASEAN countries, their legislatures, and the AIPA in the campaign to build awareness on the prevention of genocide. He said genocide, in many cases, is rooted in identity differences that lead to mass hatred that at some point escalate to conflict and war.

The visit highlighted the crucial role of regional organizations, particularly the AIPA and the ASEAN, in the campaign, where the involvement of legislators in awareness building against genocide is equally important.

The UN Special Adviser's Office and the AIPA Secretariat agreed to develop relations and cooperation and in the future organize activities, such as seminars and/or workshops, involving parliamentarians on the issue.

Study Visit by the ASEAN National Secretary of Timor Leste to the AIPA Secretariat on 25 October 2011

Democratic Republic of Timor Leste officials, accompanied by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Senior Advisor to the Director General Takeshi Watanabe, visited the AIPA Secretariat in Jakarta to know more about the organization. They expressed their desire for Timor Leste/East Timor to join AIPA.

Secretary General Antonio Cuenco said to them that Timor Leste can become an AIPA "observer" while waiting for the ASEAN to accept its bid for membership.

Courtesy Call on the President of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam on 23 February 2012

His Excellency (H.E.) Nguyen Sinh Hung, President of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, welcomed AIPA Secretary General Antonio Cuenco on his visit to drum up support for wildlife protection. Mr. Steven R. Galster, Director of Freeland Foundation and Chief

of Party of Asia's Regional Response to Endangered Species Trafficking (ARREST), was with Secretary General Cuenco during the courtesy call.

H.E. Nguyen Sinh Hung said Vietnam's National Assembly is ready to partner with the AIPA Secretariat in preparation for the AIPA GA in September. He hoped that the Secretariat would strive ceaselessly to improve its operations to meet heightened demand in the context where both AIPA and ASEAN are making efforts to build the ASEAN Community by 2015. He also wished that the AIPA Secretary General will continue to act as a conduit between the Vietnam NA and AIPA members and the AIPA observers as well.

Secretary General Cuenco suggested that the Vietnam NA actively engage in placing cooperation in preventing wild animal trafficking onto the agenda of the upcoming AIPA GA. He believed that with Vietnam's support, the cooperation will reap more effective results in the region.

Secretary General Cuenco also wished for Vietnam and the other ASEAN members to come up with stronger actions in establishing agencies that oversee and prevent wild animal trafficking, thereby contributing to protecting nature.

Also, H.E. Nguyen Sinh Hung applauded the Freeland Foundation's proposals in drafting a joint ASEAN regulation on the prevention of wild animal trafficking. Vietnam, he said, has already put in place concrete and strict regulations and has taken part in related international conventions, affirming Vietnam's support for the effort.

Meeting with Dr. Peter Witterauf, Chief Executive Officer of the Hanns-Seidel Foundation (HSF), and Mr. Hanns Buhler, HSF Head of Division of South/Southeast Asia, on Tuesday, 24 April 2012, at the AIPA Secretariat

Visiting Secretary General Antonio Cuenco at the AIPA Secretariat, Dr. Peter Witterauf, Chief Executive Officer of the Hanns-Seidel Foundation (HSF), and Mr. Hanns Buhler, HSF Head of Division of South/Southeast Asia, discussed with him the joint projects between AIPA and the German FFO, of which an implementation agreement was already signed. HSF would coordinate with GIZ in the implementation of the project.

Secretary General Cuenco, on the other hand, informed the guests about AIPA, its historical background, vision, objectives and goals and its past and coming activities.

He, however, said that although AIPA has achieved some of its objectives, it is handicapped and has limited resources, which tend to hamper its involvement in the transformation process the ASEAN is undertaking, especially that on having an ASEAN Community by 2015, which is just a few years away.

Dr. Witterauf, Mr. Buhler, and Secretary General Cuenco agreed to enhance cooperation and expressed confidence on the success of the joint projects between the German FFO (through GIZ and HSF) and AIPA.

Meeting with the Ambassador of Belarus, H.E. Vladimir Lopato-Zagorsky at the AIPA Secretariat on Thursday, 26 April 2012

Ambassador Vladimir Lopato-Zagorsky presented Secretary General Cuenco with original copies of an invitation from the National Assembly of Belarus for him to visit his country at a convenient time.

Ambassador Zagorsky mentioned the important developing relations and future cooperation between AIPA and the National Assembly of Belarus (the International Committee of the Parliament).

(A delegation from Belarus had attended the 32nd AIPA General Assembly in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in September 2011 and returned with a positive report of its attendance at the GA. Viet Nam endorsed the entry of Belarus as AIPA's newest dialogue partner, in part due to their strong relations.)

Ambassador Zagorsky said the National Assembly of Belarus is keen at working with AIPA in various fronts, including security and human trafficking. Belarus has long been dealing with these matters it could provide legal frameworks and policies, education facilities and even experts on security and human trafficking.

He also said the legislative election of Belarus will be held in September 2012, with the elected members of the National Assembly starting their session in November.

In the same meeting, Ambassador Zagorsky suggested for AIPA to develop relations with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (11-member grouping of former Soviet Union countries).

As proposed by the AIPA Secretariat, a new invitation from the National Assembly of Belarus addressed to the President of AIPA, Indonesian Speaker Marzuki Alie, will be conveyed soon to the Office of the Speaker of the Indonesian Parliament, for a possible visit by both the President and the Secretary General of AIPA.

Secretary General Cuenco suggested that the visit be made prior to the 33rd General Assembly in Lombok, Indonesia in September, to which the Belarus National Assembly, being a dialogue partner, would also be invited.

Concluding their meeting, both Ambassador Zagorsky and Secretary General Cuenco agreed to foster close relation and active cooperation between the National Assembly of Belarus and AIPA.

Visit by Secretary General Antonio Cuenco and AIPA Secretariat Staff to the Parliament of Myanmar from 3 to 5 May 2012

Meeting with Hon.U Khin Aung Myint, Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) and the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Joint Legislature)

Hon. U Khin Aung Myint proposed changes to the AIPA Statute, particularly on the definition of "parliament" that he said should be improved. He cited as example Indonesia, wherein one House is not included as AIPA member parliament.

He also suggested the following:

- There is a need to clarify the status of AIPA in the ASEAN Charter as partner to the ASEAN. For this purpose, AIPA should propose an amendment to the ASEAN Charter;
- Better and closer relation and cooperation between AIPA and ASEAN. The involvement of AIPA at the ASEAN Summit needs enhancement. He said it should be more than just a mere meeting and that more AIPA parliamentarians should attend the ASEAN Summit.
- Emphasize the urgency for AIPA and ASEAN to strengthen cooperation and joint efforts to expedite the accomplishment of ASEAN's goals, including the establishment of an ASEAN Community by 2015. He specifically referred to Chapter V Article 13 verse 4 points B, C, D, and F of the AIPA Statute, where the AIPA Secretary General is tasked to serve as a "channel" of formal communication between AIPA and ASEAN and other international and regional organizations, governments and parliaments.

AIPA Secretary General Cuenco supported the proposal for closer relation between AIPA and ASEAN and mentioned the strengthened role of the AIPA Caucus as oversight body in the implementation of adopted resolutions, which include that on fostering closer ties with ASEAN.

Meeting with Deputy Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives) Hon. U Nanda Kyau Swar

Deputy Speaker Hon. U Nanda Kyaw Swar welcomed AIPA Secretary General Cuenco and his staff to Myanmar and expressed appreciation for the visit. He hoped for closer and stronger ties among all AIPA members and looked forward for more consultations and meetings under AIPA.

For his part, Secretary General Cuenco thanked Myanmar for the "superb and warm hospitality," adding that he was overwhelmed by the grandiose structure of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw building. On behalf of the AIPA members, he extended his warm greetings to the Myanmar Parliament.

The Secretary General also gave an update on the 4th AIPA Caucus in Bangkok, Thailand. Hon. U Nanda Kyau Swar said Myanmar did not send a delegation to the meeting because their parliament was preoccupied with many activities that members were duty-bound to attend to.

Hon. U Nanda Kyau Swar likewise said he hoped AIPA would be there to assist Myanmar's parliament, adding that they are open to suggestions and proposals for improved and better performance. He said Myanmar is proud of its membership with AIPA.

He also underlined the issues the parliament need to address such as poverty reduction, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, job creation, and economic development. He acknowledged that poverty reduction lies with the country's ability to create job opportunities.

Secretary General Cuenco, on the other hand, said prosperity for all people depends on the leadership and on people participation/cooperation. He believed that prosperity is the result of democracy, and expressed confidence that the new open political system Myanmar now espouses would bring so and happiness to all its citizens.

He added that it is also possible for amendments to the constitution to better accommodate the people's needs and aspirations. He cited as example the Thai Parliament, which introduced changes to the country's constitution to make the government more responsible to the people.

Secretary General Cuenco likewise took the opportunity to invite Myanmar to attend the AIPA Execom and the AIFOCOM meetings in Yogyakarta, Indonesia on July 8-12, 2012.

Welcomed Brunei Darussalam Legislative Council Members who Visited the AIPA Secretariat on June 25, 2012 in Jakarta, Indonesia

Aside from consulting with counterparts at the Indonesian House of Representatives, members of Brunei Darussalam's Legislative Council visited the AIPA Secretariat on June 25, 2012 for assistance on hosting a General Assembly and other AIPA meetings.

The 15-person delegation was led by Honorable Pehin Orang Kaya Maharaja Kerna Dato Paduka Seri Awang Haji Yaakub bin Pehin Orang Kaya Mahajara Dirata Dato Paduka Awang Haji Zainal, head of Brunei's 34th AIPA Organizing Committee.

Brunei will take over the presidency from Indonesia in September this year and will host the 34th GA in September 2013, which is the first time for the country.

The AIPA Secretariat handed to the delegation pertinent documents, including a “Guide on Preparations for the General Assembly” that the Secretariat culled based on practice and past experiences of the organization.

The Guide basically tells what must be done and should be taken into consideration to successfully host the GA and other meetings. Matters such as what committees to form and who should compose them, what each are expected to do and what items to prepare, are mentioned in the Guide.

The visitors also posed questions dutifully answered by the AIPA Secretariat, including clarifications on committee memberships, drafting of agenda items and resolutions, and items to prepare for the meetings.

The guests were treated by the AIPA Secretariat to a sumptuous lunch at a popular Indonesian restaurant after the two-hour interaction.