



**Message of the President of 44th ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly
ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface at the 42nd ASEAN Summit**

10th May 2023

Labuan Bajo - Nusa Tenggara Timur, Indonesia

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- **Your Excellency Joko Widodo, the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Chairman of the 42nd ASEAN Summit,**
 - **Your Majesty, Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government of the ASEAN Member States, Speakers and Presidents of AIPA Member Parliaments,**
 - **Your Excellencies Secretaries General of AIPA and ASEAN,**
 - **Ladies and Gentlemen:**

(1) As the President of the 44th ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, I am honored to extend my warmest congratulations to President Joko Widodo as Chair of ASEAN.

(2) I believe that under President Joko Widodo's leadership, ASEAN has the distinct opportunity to demonstrate its relevance.

(3) In view of the optimistic economic outlook and projected moderate growth rate of 4.8% for ASEAN in 2023, compared to the world's predicted economic growth rate of only 2.8%, we have good reason to be confident that ASEAN will be the epicentrum of growth.

(4) However, with the current unprecedented global challenges and regional dynamics that looms the region, we are also aware that there are still much needs to be done in terms of maintaining the region's stability as a pre-condition for development.

(5) While still recovering our economies from pandemic, we are also facing unpredictable weather due to climate change, energy and food crisis caused by wars, as well as heightening geopolitical tensions sparked by conflicting interests. All of which will have an impact on our economies and societies.

(6) To that, not only do we need a leader who can steer ASEAN toward a peaceful and stable region while promoting economic growth,

(7) But more than ever, we are required to work closely together, governments and parliaments, the executives and legislatures, to strengthen our position as we move forward to ensure prosperity for our people.

(8) It is indeed a defining moment in our shared history as a region.

(9) Hence, as parliamentarians, we stand ready to provide political support and work with our ASEAN counterparts to navigate these challenging times and build a more agile ASEAN.

Distinguished Delegates,

(10) This year's theme of "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth," reflects the shared commitment of ASEAN Member States to continue the economic recovery, enhancing connectivity, promoting and strengthen regional economic integration and promoting inclusive growth.

(11) It is also a demonstration of ASEAN's collective commitment to enhance its capacity in responding to various regional and global challenges, as well as reaffirming its position, as the epicenter of regional economic growth for the prosperity of its people.

(12) As the key institutions of our region, ASEAN and the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), have a crucial role to play and is one of the key stakeholders in this process.

(13) After more than 45 years of establishment and development, AIPA has not only grown in terms of organization but also made positive contributions to building Southeast Asia into a region of peace, stability, cooperation and development, and resolve global issues such as: conflict, terrorism, power imposition; ensure that international relations are built on the basic principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

(14) It serves as a platform for us, AIPA Member Parliaments, to exercise our parliamentary diplomacy functions, including exchange our views and opinions on regional and international issues, exploring new ways to strengthen cooperation in various areas, particularly in political-security, economic, and socio-cultural issues, and to promote harmonization of laws, thereby enhancing mutual understanding and trust between the legislative bodies and people of ASEAN countries, and between ASEAN and the international community.

(15) AIPA's recommendations in various fields have been a valuable contribution to policy making process, development and monitoring of law enforcement by ASEAN member countries.

(16) In particular, AIPA can raise a strong voice to ensure that reflect the needs, aspirations and interests of the people in ASEAN, including those who live in vulnerable situations are reflected in regional initiatives, and, more importantly, are realized.

Distinguished Delegates,

(17) May I recall the outcomes of the 43rd General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) and the ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface Meeting held in Cambodia during the Cambodia's ASEAN Chairmanship 2022.

(18) To highlight just a few, AIPA committed to establishing AIPA Digital Law Library and adopted AIPA Young Parliamentarians into a Standing Committee. We also adopted new observers of AIPA, as well as promoted interparliamentary dialogues with the European Parliament and AIPA Dialogue Partners.

(19) Furthermore, AIPA has facilitated the Non-Aligned Movement Parliamentary Network (NAM-PN) to partner with AIPA Member Parliaments. These demonstrate the increasingly important and constructive role of AIPA in enhancing parliamentary diplomacy and in supporting ASEAN to become a more robust epicenter of growth and resilience.

(20) Our ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface today is special as we welcome Timor Leste.

(21) This year, we are hopeful that ASEAN, under Indonesia's presidency, could strengthen the existing efforts to ensure a more stable and prosperous region. In line with this understanding and theme of this year's ASEAN Summit, the proposed theme of Indonesia in AIPA for 2023 is: **“Responsive Parliaments for a Stable and Prosperous ASEAN”**.

(22) In our perspective as parliament, this theme will not only serve the main guide in discussing various issues that are currently surfacing in the region, but furthermore, the results of discussions are expected to become strategic inputs in strengthening government's efforts to create an ASEAN that continues to be relevant, while reaping various benefits from its potential economic growth.

(23) Allow me to briefly elaborate more on this theme.

(24) First, **“Responsive”** refers to the ability of parliaments to be more adaptive in addressing the dynamics that affect the region.

(25) A more responsive parliaments are expected to be able to provide legislative support in encouraging governments to make appropriate and quick decisions in response to the developments and challenges facing the region.

(26) We must intensify regionalization to overcome any possible threat of economic slowdowns, address supply chain disruption, and attend to the needs of the poor and marginalized and achieving Sustainable Development Goals, including the complexity of the issue of climate change, for the interest of ASEAN peoples. While doing so, keeping the rule of law, and accountability, at bay.

(27) To support this, we must also cooperate and coordinate with each other to promote and strengthen our respective nation's democratic processes such as sending delegation to observe national election upon invitation of the host country.

(28) Second, "Stable" refers to the importance of maintaining stability and security in the region, as envisaged by the ASEAN Political-Security Blueprint 2025 and the ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific, which is crucial in the midst of various political-security challenges.

(29) "Stable" reflects ASEAN and AIPA's strong commitment towards promoting a rules-based international order in the current geo-political dynamics, through facilitating dialogue and cooperation in the region.

(30) As the President of AIPA this year, I wish to see the ASEAN Community building process takes full charge and allow ASEAN centrality and neutrality be the only guiding principle for the promotion of regional harmony, peaceful co-existence and shared prosperity.

(31) In tandem, ASEAN shall need to keep its ASEAN mechanisms for peacebuilding and conflict prevention open and inclusive and ensure that it remain a reliable and potent force to solve the peace and security challenges in the region and beyond, including humanitarian and security crisis in Myanmar.

(32) In this regard, we, the AIPA Member Parliaments, are committed to work collectively with the executive branch of ASEAN to restore peace and democracy in Myanmar.

(33) Finally, "Prosper" touches on ASEAN's aspirations to create prosperity for all people in the region, without discrimination of any kind.

(34) As ASEAN member states have been collectively working towards realising an ASEAN Economic Community, AIPA Member Parliaments can help to advocate-for policies that promote narrowing the development gap, inclusive growth, regional resilience and sustainable development, thereby creating a more prosperous and equitable Southeast Asia.

(35) It is imperative to achieve an inclusive socio-economic growth, so that we can make ASEAN the Epicentrum of Growth that leaves no one behind.

(36) In view of achieving these three pillars of responsive, stable and prosper, we, AIPA Member Parliaments, must also build synergies and work hand-in-hand with our respective governments. The governments cannot and should not work by themselves in responding to the complex challenges facing the nations and the people.

(37) Furthermore, AIPA Member Parliaments need to strengthen partnerships and collaboration with each other, including through capacity building and exchanging information and sharing experiences. We must remember that every parliament has different resources and capabilities, building such collaboration is therefore crucial.

(38) Subsequently, AIPA Member Parliaments must increase the participation of the people, including those who are vulnerable, in the policy formulation and implementation process on issues that affect them. People have the right to take part and participate in public affairs, so as to ensure our accountability and also transparency.

Distinguished delegates

(39) The ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface provides an excellent opportunity for leaders to exchange views and ideas on issues that affect the region.

(40) One of the main objectives of the meeting is to discuss ways in which ASEAN can enhance its role and strengthen cooperation with its partners, while solidifying its position as key player in the regional and global community.

(41) The interface will also provide an opportunity for leaders to discuss ongoing efforts to enhance regional integration, including the implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

(42) With a focus on cooperation, innovation, and sustainable development, ASEAN can continue to play a leading role in shaping the future of the Southeast Asia region.

(43) On this occasion, I would like to propose to the leaders of ASEAN some recommendations as following:

(i) Continue to maintain peace, unity, centrality and vitality of ASEAN as a factor ensuring peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

(ii) Promote strong and sustainable economic growth in the region, enhance responsive capability ASEAN's resilience, focus on energy and food security in the volatile context of the region and global.

(iv) Continue promote green investment and encourage green, equitable and sustainable finance; develop a roadmap, legal framework and policy to achieve the green initiatives and agreement in ASEAN.

(iii) Improve the operational efficiency of ASEAN mechanisms and between ASEAN and its partners, including AIPA.

(v) Promote innovation, transfer, application and development of science and technology for growth and sustainable development.

(44) To conclude, I extend my best wishes for a successful ASEAN and related Summit.

(45) May all delegates always be in good health and may this forum promote peace, happiness, harmony, and prosperity in the region.

Thank you.