

# HISTORY

## History of AIPA

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Ten years after the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) ASEAN Declaration adopted on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand. Parliamentarians realized that the ASEAN emanates from the roots of its societies. Following the initial contacts, the visit to Indonesia by Malaysian parliamentary delegation in August 1973 and by Singapore parliamentary delegation in November of the same year gave impetus to the idea of establishing parliamentary cooperation among the ASEAN parliaments. The following year, the Indonesian House of Representatives sent a special mission to Thailand and the Philippines in May as well as to Malaysia and Singapore in September to seek support for the establishment of an ASEAN inter-parliamentary forum, and received a positive response.

Parliaments of the first ASEAN Member States agreed to hold the first meeting in Jakarta to further discuss the realization of the idea to form a parliamentary cooperation forum, the Indonesian House of Representatives initiated idea of setting up an organization composed of parliaments of ASEAN member countries of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Indonesia was chosen as the host of the First ASEAN Parliamentary Meeting (APM) from 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> January, 1975.

The objective is to build closer cooperation among the five respective legislatures and their member of parliaments and to capitalize greater participation by the peoples of ASEAN in the effort to achieve ASEAN's three main original objectives: to promote economic, social and cultural development in the region; to safeguard the political and economic stability of the region; and to serve as a forum for the resolution of intra-regional differences.

The objective is to significantly contribute through inter-parliamentary cooperation in the attainment of the goals and aspirations of ASEAN.

Entering new decades, the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO) took form at the 3<sup>rd</sup> APM Meeting held in Manila, the Philippines. The Statutes of the AIPO was agreed and signed at the closure of the APM meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1977. This date marked the birth of this regional parliamentary forum that belong to the ASEAN member states, and celebrated as the birth date of AIPO which shall be evolved into AIPA (the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly) in the 90's.

Membership of AIPA grew along the line with the growing number of state membership of ASEAN, throughout the 90's to early 2000 adding to the AIPA membership are parliaments of VietNam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Brunei Darussalam and Myanmar. At the 33<sup>rd</sup> AIPA General

Assembly held in Lombok, Indonesia, all ten (10) parliaments of the ASEAN Member States are full fledged members of AIPA.

Dialogue with Observer Member Parliaments began in the early years of AIPO, in 1979 AIPO set dialogue with parliaments from Australia, Japan and the Republic of Korea. Dialogue with Observer Member Parliaments is convened at every General Assembly, and to date AIPA held annual dialogue with 16 (Sixteen) Observer Member Parliaments from Australia, Belarus, Canada, China, European Parliament, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Morocco, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Norway, Russia, Timor Leste & Ukraine.

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## **The Initial Idea for an ASEAN Parliament**

During the third AIPO General Assembly in Jakarta in 1980, the Philippines initially endorsed the establishment of an ASEAN Parliament. What followed was a consensus among the AIPO members that the creation of an ASEAN Parliament would be a long-term AIPO goal.

A resolution on the creation of a Study Group that will look into the possibility of establishing an ASEAN Parliament was adopted at this General Assembly. Although member parliaments agreed in principle to the idea, which the Philippine delegation proposed, however, all felt it was not time yet to establish an ASEAN Parliament due to different historical backgrounds and separate parliamentary systems of the ASEAN Member States.

Instead a Study Committee was formed to conduct a preliminary study and entrusted to also conduct a parallel study on the formation of an AIPO Permanent Secretariat. It was the general sentiment, though, that the plan of establishing an ASEAN Parliament be kept alive, because the objective is desirable and it would, at the same time, project the image of ASEAN cohesiveness.

In 1982, the General Assembly in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia adopted the Resolution on the Proposal to Study the Establishment of an ASEAN Parliament. It resolved that the Committee was of the view that the establishment of an ASEAN Parliament was a long-term objective and that a thorough study had to be made towards the attainment of this objective.

The resolution adopted at the AIPO General Assembly in Thailand in 1991 resolved to accept with gratitude the offer by the Thai AIPO National Group to host another AIPO Study Committee Meeting in Bangkok the following year. The meeting was to re-discuss the Thai Study Report in detail and the various steps and measures that must be taken to achieve the ultimate goal of creating an ASEAN Parliament or any other body with similar functions.

From 1991 until 1993 discussion on the possibility to establish an ASEAN Parliament remained in the agenda of the AIPO General Assemblies, and the study of Merit and Demerit of the Establishment of an ASEAN Parliament continued for several years, however it is worth noting that between 1994 to 2002, discussions on the forming of an ASEAN Parliament were not tabled in AIPO meetings and General Assemblies.

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## From AIPO to AIPA

The Gradual Process in the Changing of AIPO to AIPA and the consensus to transform and rename AIPO to AIPA came after AIPO had been exist for 30 years. The change started with the forming of an Ad-Hoc Committee on the Transformation of AIPO into a More Effective and Closely Integrated Institution (*Resolution No.26GA/2005/Org/05*) adopted at the General Assembly in Vientiane, Lao PDR in 2005.

As mandated by the 26<sup>th</sup> AIPO General Assembly in Vientiane, Laos in September 2005, the AIPO Ad-Hoc Committee undertook the task to develop a transformation process for AIPO towards ensuring its effectiveness and relevance. Such transformation was deemed a prerequisite for AIPO to better perform as an organization that could address opportunities and challenges in the region, particularly on the establishment of an ASEAN Community.

In the resolution, AIPO recognized the significance of ASEAN integration to cope with the challenges and uncertainties in the globalized era and to empower ASEAN to remain competitive in the globalized world, AIPO was mindful of the increasing role of national parliaments of ASEAN member states as a catalyst to ASEAN Integration, and reaffirmed the collective action of AIPO Member Parliaments to strengthen AIPO and steering AIPO towards a more closely integrated parliamentary institution.

Pursuant to this, the Ad-Hoc Committee met March that year in Bali, Indonesia and in July 2006 in Jakarta, Indonesia. Within the period between these two meetings, a Technical Working Group also convened and met to undertake specific tasks given by the Committee.

27<sup>th</sup> AIPA General Assembly in Cebu, the Philippines adopted *Resolution No.27GA/06/O-10* on Approving the Report of the Ad-Hoc Committee on the Transformation of AIPO into a more Effective and Closely Integrated Institution.

The resolution took cognizance of the report of the AIPO Study Committee meeting in Chiang Mai, Thailand, which was adopted at the 26<sup>th</sup> AIPO General Assembly in Vientiane, Lao PDR in September 2005, that **decided to change** the Study Committee on the Possibility of Establishing an ASEAN Parliament into the AIPO Ad-Hoc Committee on the Transformation of AIPO into a More Effective and Closely Integrated Institution.

By the approval of a resolution emanated from the study outcomes, it resulted in the following;

Amendments to the Statutes of AIPO.

Approved the Guidelines for the Establishment of Regular Reciprocal Attendance in AIPA General Assemblies and ASEAN Summits by AIPA and ASEAN Leaders.

Approved the Guidelines and Criteria for the Appointment of the Secretary General of AIPA.

The Amendment of the Statute officially changed AIPO into AIPO, and the first General Assembly to use the new name as the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), was the 28<sup>th</sup> General Assembly held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in August 19 to 24, 2007.