



**THE 17<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING OF  
THE ASIA-PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM (APPF)**

**11-15 January 2009, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR**

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**Congratulatory Message on the Occasion of the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting  
of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) in Lao PDR  
APPF Honorary Chairman Yasuhiro Nakasone**

Thank you for your introduction. I am Takuji Yanagimoto, acting for the head of the delegation from the Japanese Diet and I am very pleased at the successful opening of the 17<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the APPF here in Vientiane, Lao PDR. Also, I would like to thank Lao National Assembly President Thongsing Thammavong and other members of the Assembly for kindly welcoming us to their country. Now please let me read a congratulatory message from APPF Honorary Chairman Yasuhiro Nakasone, who is the founder of the Forum.

Congratulatory Message from Yasuhiro Nakasone I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of the 17th annual meeting of the APPF in Lao PDR.

The APPF was inaugurated in Tokyo in January 1993 as an organization to foster cooperation among Pacific Rim countries. At the inaugural meeting, participants adopted the Tokyo Declaration, in which they promised to respect each other and foster cooperation between countries in the Asia-Pacific region, regardless of race, religion, tradition, custom, or difference in values. Since then, as demonstrated by the declarations made at the annual meetings held in Vancouver in 1997 and in Valparaiso in 2001, the APPF has been endeavoring to build a foundation for free and open discussions on the range of problems we are facing, reach consensus while incorporating various regional interests and opinions, and to create a desirable future for all. This year, the APPF is holding its 17th annual meeting. Witnessing the changes over time, I am convinced that the APPF will prove to be an extremely important forum of parliamentarians from a historical viewpoint.

Stronger and closer regional cooperation between APPF member countries will provide an important basis for the peace and stability of the Pacific region and will be a driving force for the prosperity and cultural development of the international community as a whole. In the progress of economic globalization and regional integration, multilayered relations built among APPF members will have global significance, and the need to further

promote mutual development and prosperity among the members from the long-term view is an important responsibility. Now we are in the 21st century and should put a true end to the 20th century plagued with difficulties. I believe that it is now time for us to begin a new history and develop a new civilized world.

The world is now reaching a turning point. The recent financial crisis triggered by the supreme loan problem in the United States is the result of the immoral worship of money, and the crisis represents the negative aspects of our computer-oriented societies where people pursue only instant convenience and efficiency, and of the world of the Internet flooded with information. Moreover, in the face of the global lack of resources including oil and food, global warming and environmental deterioration, and changes in international situations, the unipolar world led by the United States is now changing into a multipolar world led by multiple countries. Amid these surroundings, we have to meet the challenge of establishing a new world order to ensure true peace and prosperity for all people.

Under these circumstances, Japan, China, and the Republic of Korea held a trilateral leaders' meeting at the end of 2008, separately from other international meetings, which symbolized the opening of a new age. In East Asia, it is proposed to build a community led by ASEAN member states, and each of the members are now seriously researching and examining the measures necessary to implement this ideal. To this end, it is indispensable for ASEAN countries to cooperate with APPF members, and all those concerned are required to communicate with each other in a close manner and search for possible cooperative measures. I believe it necessary for government officials, politicians, businesspeople, scholars, intellectuals, media companies, and general citizens, in particular the youth, to make exchanges more actively and facilitate free flows of information. Within a large framework of comprehensive mutual exchange, we can create a significant momentum towards the future we desire, and the parliamentarians who represent their respective countries at the APPF should freely and flexibly express their opinions beyond governmental barriers, be more proactive in their discussions, and implement long-term strategies and policies that closely meet the needs of their citizens, eventually to attain the ideals that are common to all of us.

For a better future in the 21st century, APPF members should help each other through good times and bad toward the advent of a new age, show the results of their cooperation in the Pacific region to the world, and lead the international community toward strong friendship and cooperation and true prosperity. I firmly expect the APPF to achieve valuable results and make a great contribution to the world.

Lastly, I would like to express my deep gratitude to Lao National Assembly President Thongsing Thammavong and other members of the Assembly for their significant support and cooperation in organizing this annual meeting in Laos. It is my great hope that the annual meeting in Lao PDR will mark a new start for the further growth of the APPF and I also wholeheartedly wish for the health and success of all participating parliamentarians.