



**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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**Address by Honourable Mr Lindsay Tisch,  
Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of New Zealand**

**Opening Ceremony**

**Your Excellency, Mr Thongsing Thammavong, President of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum and President of the National Assembly of the Lao People's Democratic Republic,**

**The Honourable Mr Yanagimoto, on behalf of the Honourable Mr Nakasone, Honorary President of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum,**

**Mr Anders Johnsson, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,**

**Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,**

Thank you Mr President for the warm welcome and the wonderful hospitality extended to us here in your country and the beautiful city, Vientiane.

Twelve months ago we met for the 16<sup>th</sup> APPF annual meeting in Auckland, New Zealand and many of you came "down under" to visit us. It is again a pleasure to renew so many friendships and acquaintances.

Much has changed since then. In New Zealand, we have had a general election and a change of government. The past president of APPF, the Honourable Margaret Wilson retired from Parliament and has resumed a career in law. She sends her best wishes for a successful conference.

Mr President, this is a period of change for the regional architecture of the Asia Pacific region, with the emergence and growth of a number of new processes for regional integration such as the East Asia Summit (EAS), and debate within established forums such as APEC and the ASEAN Regional Forum about their future shape and direction.

The recent decision by the United States to engage with P4 (the trans-Pacific strategic economic partnership, currently made up of Brunei, Chile, Singapore

and New Zealand) has rekindled interest in P4's potential as a building block to a broader regional agreement.

APEC also remains important to New Zealand with the aim to liberalise and facilitate trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific region.

We have a particular interest in APEC's "structural reform" work stream addressing "behind the border" barriers to trade, investment, and human security issues including counter-terrorism, disaster preparedness/management, infectious diseases, and food safety/security. Some of these issues are on our conference agenda.

At the APEC meeting in Peru last November, New Zealand's Prime Minister the Honourable John Key stressed the need to conclude the WTO Doha trade negotiations by year end.

Mr President, the East Asia Summit (EAS) reflects the strengthening of ASEAN-centred processes for regional integration and implementing a range of initiatives in areas such energy, environment and financial co-operation and New Zealand has been active in these areas. Mr President, our relationship with your country is modest but friendly. Your membership of ASEAN has brought a new dimension in our bilateral relationship. New Zealand is a strong proponent of a cohesive ASEAN community and the development of outward looking structures. The recent substantive conclusion of the ASEAN/Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (AANZFTA) represents an important milestone for us; it is a key piece of the emerging East Asian Regional Economic Architecture and is the first time that ASEAN has negotiated a comprehensive single agreement as part of the a single undertaking, meaning the agreement simultaneously spans goods, services and investment, as well as the other areas covered in a modern FTA such as intellectual property.

Mr President, the new agreement should facilitate more opportunities between our two countries.

New Zealand also supports Laos' pursuit World Trade Organisation (WTO) membership and has provided support to help Laos with its agricultural interests and accession to the WTO rules-based global trading system.

New Zealand has been funding the English Language Training for Officials (ECTO) Programme for 12 years and while there has been a break for one year in the programme, this year, from July 2009, eighteen awards will be offered to Lao Government Officials. NZAID also offers up to ten New Zealand

Development Scholarships to Lao candidates to undertake post-graduate study in New Zealand.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the subjects for debate in the Plenary Sessions and the resolutions before the Drafting Committee allow us a valuable opportunity to establish mutual understanding among parliamentarians and explore issues of concern that will lead to regional cooperation.

Thank you for the opportunity to share some of New Zealand's views.