



Resolution on Measures to Promote Cultural Diversity and Protect Cultural Heritage in Asia

APA/ Res/2017/15
23 November 2017

We, the Members of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly,

Recalling APA Resolutions, APA/Res/2013/05; APA/Res/2010/05; APA/Res/2009/05; APA/Res/2008/17; and APA/Res/2007/02; on Protecting and Respecting Cultural Diversity in Asia;

Considering the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, 1954, and its protocols;

Recognizing the significant role of parliaments both in safeguarding their respective national cultural heritage and in harmonizing Asian approach in respect of cultural diversity;

Emphasizing that cultural diversity is dependent on protection of cultural heritage, and the existence of common grounds among Asian ancient civilizations provide solid grounds for co-existence and co-operation among nations in the region;

Re-affirming that cultural heritage is a fundamental component of the cultural identity of a people and their social cohesion, and its disrespect, damage or destruction may have adverse consequences for human dignity and human rights; particularly the rights of marginalized communities;

Recognizing that tolerance is one of the fundamental values of humanity, which entails promotion of cultural diversity, culture of peace, and dialogue among civilizations;

Recognizing the increasing importance of culture, as an integral part of development plans of all nations in Asia and beyond;

Promoting greater understanding and respect among civilizations, cultures and religions by means of concrete projects in the priority areas of youth, education, and media, in collaboration with governments, international and regional organizations, in line with the outcome of the first World Cultural Forum, in Bali, Indonesia in November 2013 and document entitled “Bali Declaration on the Alliance of Civilizations”, held in Bali, Indonesia, in 29 and 30 August 2014;

Reiterating that multicultural dynamism in Asia provides as an indispensable asset for making a strong Asian community based on mutual respect and recognition of all Asian cultures and civilizations;

Noting the opportunities offered by globalization for greater interaction among cultures and civilizations, as well as challenges brought about by its trends to preserving and celebrating the rich intellectual and cultural diversity in Asia;

Considering the smuggling of cultural objects from Asia a threat to the richness of Asian cultural heritage, and underline the important role of parliaments to both raise public awareness about this challenge and to strengthen, where necessary;

Deploring the un-repairable damage brought to cultural and religious heritage by terrorism and organized crimes, especially damages to Muslim and Christian historical sites and holy shrines and mosques by indiscriminate bombing and shelling in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan by ISIS and other terrorist groups;

Expressing grave concerns regarding theft, damage, or destruction to any place of worship of any religion, any cultural, religious, or historical heritage in Asia;

1. **Determine** to encourage and promote further intercultural dialogue and inter-religious exchanges throughout Asia;
2. **Resolve** to appreciate and promote the benefits of diversity in Asian nations, and encourage values such as justice, human rights, non-discrimination, democracy and respect within and among communities and nations;
3. **Reject** all manifestations of discrimination that are based on racism, racial and caste discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance;
4. **Remain Committed** to the protection of the rights of indigenous and ethnic communities so as to ensure the fulfillment of indigenous community rights in line with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
5. **Urge** relevant governmental agencies to further facilitate consular services as appropriate for citizens of Asian countries to allow for greater people-to-people interaction;
6. **Acknowledge** that illegal import, export and transfer of ownership of cultural property and artifacts is responsible for the impoverishment of the cultural identity of the countries of origin of such property;
7. **Decide** to remain cognizant of damages to Muslim and Christian holy places and historical sites by ISIS terrorist organization in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan;
8. **Urge** Member Parliaments to consider ratifying the International Convention for the Safeguarding of World Natural and Cultural Heritage and the International Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage;
9. **Call Upon** APA Member Parliaments to consider drafting a model legislation to combat smuggling of cultural objects in Asia;
10. **Call Upon** all Member Parliaments to promote tolerance and empathy among Asian nations with a view to diminish distrust, misunderstanding, and conflict among religious communities;

11. **Call Upon** APA Member Parliaments to support establishing an award to be presented annually to outstanding Asian artists; authors, poets, film makers, painters, etc, who best convey the APA's commitment to cultural diversity in Asia;
12. **Condemn** all forms of contemptuous actions against religions, holy books, religious places and personalities and religious rituals;
13. **Reiterate** that during armed conflict, states should adopt measures to safeguard the cultural and historical heritage of a nation in conformity with international law and the principles and objectives of international agreements and UNESCO recommendations concerning the protection of such heritage during hostilities;
14. **Reiterate** that Member Parliaments should adopt measures to safeguard and restore the cultural and historical heritage of nations in conformity with International law and the principles of objectives of international agreements and UNESCO recommendations concerning the protection of such heritage during hostilities, including those caused by conflicts and violent extremism;
15. **Request** the APA Secretary General to uphold cooperation between APA and international and regional organizations such as UNESCO, United Nations Alliance of Civilizations(UNAOC), ISESCO and relevant Asian NGOs active in promoting cultural diversity and dialogue among civilizations;
16. **Request** the Secretary General to work with the Universities in the Asian region to do researches and studies on the identification and promotion of common cultural aspects of the Asian countries;
17. **Request** the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member Parliaments on their efforts to implement this resolution;