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Speech by Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

Asian Parliamentary Assembly
The 12th Plenary Session

“The role of multilateral cooperation among Asian parliaments”

Antalya, 14 December 2019

Dear Hon. Mustafa ŞENTOP, Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and President of APA;

Dear Dr. Mohammad Reza MAJIDI, Secretary-General of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly;

Dear Mr. Yavuz Selim KIRAN, Deputy Minister of Ministry of Foreign Affairs;

Dear colleagues, dear friends,

First of all, I would like to sincerely thank the Asian Parliamentary Assembly for the invitation and the warm welcome here in Antalya.

Multilateralism is and has always been at the heart of the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Before the United Nations, before the League of Nations, before current regional organizations, there was the IPU. In a context of growing tension between States at the end of the 19th century, visionary parliamentarians came together to seek peaceful solutions to issues of international security, promoting political dialogue to build confidence and mutual understanding among peoples and nations.

I am extremely pleased to see that during this 12th Plenary session of APA you will be discussing the role of multilateral cooperation among Asian parliaments. As IPU President, I cannot but applaud this initiative and invite you to take this opportunity to devise concrete avenues for parliamentary action in this relevant domain.

As acknowledged by the global parliamentary community during the most recent IPU Assembly, held in Belgrade in October 2019, today, it is our duty, as parliamentarians, to continue strengthening international law, multilateralism and regional cooperation.

As parliamentarians, we are guarantors of peace and harmony. We have the mandate, and the huge responsibility, of promoting multilateralism and friendship instead of hate.

It is our responsibility to do our utmost to promote dialogue, to build understanding.

Dear colleagues,

I sincerely hope that during this plenary session, we will be able to learn more about existing good practices of co-operation and identify better ways to translate our international and regional commitments into national realities.

I hope that our debates will help Asian parliaments, individually, and also as a regional bloc, to better deliver on priority areas such as:

- Robustly tackling the climate emergency, ratifying and implementing the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Redoubling efforts to achieve gender equality and the political empowerment of women.
- Respecting our commitments in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, and securing the abolition of weapons of mass destruction.
- Ensuring the ratification and effective implementation at national level of international humanitarian law and human rights instruments as a critical step in ensuring that those entitled to protection actually benefit from it.
- Establishing an effective institutional infrastructure to ensure compliance with international human rights standards, including by setting up national human rights institutions and strengthening cooperation between those institutions and our respective parliaments.
- Making sure that the voice of young people is heard in decision-making, including by creating the necessary platforms and adopting concrete measure for youth participation.
- Combating impunity for international crimes, including through cooperation with international tribunals and the International Criminal Court, in keeping with national law.

Regional cooperation is without a doubt an essential component of multilateralism and contributes to strengthening the international legal order and advancing sustainable peace. APA has a key role to play in this region, including by:

- Actively supporting regional initiatives that aim to promote political dialogue.
- Making use of the tools provided by parliamentary diplomacy to tackle unresolved issues and help build bridges in times of crisis.
- Identifying and disseminating good practices for regional cooperation and formulating proposals for concrete joint action.
- Putting in place mechanisms to help monitor implementation of regional and international commitments.
- Reviewing and strengthening transparency and accountability mechanisms at the regional level.

- Building strategic partnerships at the regional and sub-regional levels to enhance the observance of universal values and norms, while also taking into consideration regional specificities.
- Sharing good practices and enhancing dialogue and cooperation with other regional parliamentary organizations and with the world organization of national parliaments, the IPU.
- Supporting the IPU as the global umbrella of parliamentary organizations in its efforts to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of inter-parliamentary cooperation, including in the context of preparations for the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in 2020.

Dear colleagues,

Let's work together and assume our responsibilities. Our duty is to deliver, to achieve concrete results, to turn words into action and definitely to respond to the needs and aspirations of the people. By working together we become stronger.

Thank you.