

Singapore Government **PRESS RELEASE**

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STATEMENT BY MR SIA KAH HUI, HEAD OF THE SINGAPORE
DELEGATION, AT THE FIRST SESSION OF THE THIRD
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY
ORGANIZATION ON TUESDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 1980 - JAKARTA

To begin with, may I, on behalf of the Singapore delegation, extend to you, Mr President, our hearty congratulations on your appointment as President of the Third General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization. Under your able and wise guidance, I am confident that our deliberations will be a great success.

Mr President, may I avail myself of this opportunity to offer the thanks of the Singapore delegation to His Excellency President Soeharto for declaring this Assembly open and for his speech which will serve as a guide to our deliberations.

On behalf of my delegation, I would also like to thank the Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, the Government and the people of Indonesia for the warm welcome and generous hospitality which they have accorded us and the Indonesian AIPO Secretariat for the excellent arrangements it has made for this Assembly.

Mr A. Rahim Ishak, who has been the Leader of the Singapore delegation from the First General Assembly, wishes to tender his sincere apologies and regrets for not being able to attend this General Assembly as he is accompanying our Second Deputy Prime Minister (Foreign Affairs) to Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Iraq and Pakistan. However, Mr Rahim Ishak has this Assembly in his thoughts and sends his greetings.

It was here in Jakarta, five years ago, at the invitation of the Speaker of the Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat of the Republic of Indonesia, that the First ASEAN Parliamentary meeting was held to

explore the possibility of cooperation among the Parliaments of ASEAN countries. Two years later AIPO was born. Some of the Honourable Delegates present here today were present at that auspicious meeting and I am sure they look back to that meeting with pride and joy in their hearts.

Since the establishment of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO) in Manila in 1977, the AIPO General Assembly has met in Singapore in 1978 and in Bangkok in 1979 and has got down to serious discussion on various matters affecting ASEAN in the economic and social spheres. Looking at the items on the agenda for this General Assembly, Honourable Delegates to this General Assembly are going to have equally busy sessions.

ASEAN Parliamentarians have also not ignored political events that are taking place in Indochina and Afghanistan. At the Working Committee meeting and Second General Assembly held in Thailand in 1979 and at the Working Committee meeting held in Semarang in June 1980, ASEAN Parliamentarians have expressed grave concern at the Vietnam's invasion and occupation of Kampuchea, the refugee problem and Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and their implications on the peace and stability of our region.

In external relations, AIPO has exchanged visits with the European Parliament and has visited the Australian Parliament. Next year, an AIPO delegation will be visiting the US Congress. These links will assist in building up ASEAN stature in international relations. The increase in the number of Parliamentarians present as observers at this General Assembly shows that AIPO is gradually gaining recognition in the world community.

ASEAN Parliamentarians represent the peoples of the ASEAN countries so that AIPO's voice is the voice of 250 million people of the ASEAN countries. I have no doubt that with the support of the AIPO, ASEAN solidarity will be further strengthened.
