

# ASIA-PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM (APPF) 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

## RESOLUTION APPF25/RES.04

### ROLE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS IN CIVIL ENGAGEMENT

*(Sponsored by Chile)*

#### **The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum;**

**Reasserting** the current international treaties, specially what is stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights where everyone has the right to take part in the government of his/her country, as well as the right to privacy, freedom of expression, and freedom of association and of assembly;

**Ratifying** the principles of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum aimed at consolidating peace, freedom, democracy and respect for human rights contained in the 1993 Declaration of Tokyo, the 1997 Vancouver Declaration, the 2001 Declaration of Valparaiso and the 2012 New Declaration of Tokyo;

**Noting** that promoting civic engagement is key to strengthening democracy and that the 2015 APEC Leaders' Declaration recognised the fact that in order to reach inclusive growth it is necessary to count on the participation of all sectors and segments of the society, including women, youth, disabled people, indigenous peoples, low income groups of people, among others;

**Recalling** that the New Declaration of Tokyo acknowledges all transformations in the region and in the world concerning the progress of globalisation and the information revolution;

**Recognising** that innovation can help to face challenges and to create progress towards sustainable development as mentioned in the Work Group 2016-2025 Strategic Plan – APEC's Policy Partnership on Science, Technology and Innovation and the No. 10 Resolution on Fostering Innovation and Connectivity passed during the 24th Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum;

**Considering** that even though Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) have great potential to foster civic engagement and to move forward into the strengthening of democracy, they are vulnerable to surveillance, interception and improper collection of personal data by States, companies and other non-governmental sectors;

**Recalling** Resolution A/RES/68/167 adopted in 2013 by the United Nations General Assembly where apart from recognising the global and open nature of the internet and the advancement of ICTs as a tool that is able to speed up development in many areas, the right of every person to privacy was reaffirmed and States are urged to guarantee the protection of such rights and review their procedures, practices and legislation in relation to information surveillance, interception and improper collection of personal data;

**Stressing** the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda adopted in September 2015, whose Goal 16 has the aim of promoting peace, justice and the construction of efficient, inclusive and transparent institutions, which involves the obligation to guarantee access to public information;

**Acknowledging** the World e-Parliament Report 2016 created by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which states that ICTs are able to transform parliaments, that parliaments must be committed to digital transformation and that social networks are important tools that allow citizens to easily connect with their elected representatives; and

**Recognising** that the Asia-Pacific region is a geographical area subjected to high scale natural disasters and that ICTs, especially social networks, are invaluable tools to reinforce education and to make communities aware of disaster risk reduction, as reflected in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030;

## **RESOLVES TO:**

1. **Establish** that all progress in relation to ICTs has the potential to promote citizens' participation with easy access to public information, to create opportunities to foster democratic discussions and favour civic organisations reaching in this way more participative, democratic and transparent societies;
2. **Urge** the APPF Member States to take measures to progressively move forward to universal access to the internet, stressing access to those citizens who are experiencing poverty to avoid their exclusion from the network community and guaranteeing their right to have access to public information digitally;
3. **Acknowledge** that in order to continue building a community in the Asia-Pacific region based on tolerance and mutual understanding, it is necessary to encourage exchanges between societies by using the new ICTs, particularly social networks;
4. **Encourage** the APPF Member States to adopt the new technologies and to use social networks to inform the community of legislative activities, create increased closeness between parliament and citizens and promote an open, honest and inclusive discussion through the networks;
5. **Urge** the parliamentary libraries of the APPF Member States to create digital content to promote democracy and improve access to and quality of education, and make progress towards a mutual understanding and encourage cultural exchange oriented to the people, especially to young people and children who constitute the future of the Asia-Pacific region; and
6. **Call on** the APPF Member States to promote public policies oriented to prevention of disasters and rehabilitation and reconstruction. These initiatives can empower people through the use of ICTs such as social networks, as key tools to transfer knowledge on disaster risk management to communities and make citizens' communication and organisation easier in the event of a disaster.