MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CPA ASIA REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

7th CPA Asia Regional Conference / 2nd Joint CPA Asia & South-East Regional Conference, 2026

Held on: Wednesday, 4 February 2026
Time: 1000 hrs
Venue: Committee Room–02, Ground Floor,
Old Sindh Assembly Building, Karachi,

1. Call to Order

The meeting commenced with the recitation from the Holy Quran. The Representative of CPA Asia Regional Headquarters called the meeting to order and informed the participants that the Chairperson of the CPA Asia Regional Executive Committee, **Hon. Mr. Abdul Raheem Abdulla, Speaker of the People's Majlis of the Maldives** was unable to attend the meeting.

Hence, **Article 5(i) of the CPA Asia Region Constitution**, was invoked, which provides that in the absence of the Chairperson, Members present may elect one of them as an Acting Chair to preside over the meeting.

2. Election of Acting Chairperson

In pursuance of **Article 5(i),** Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, was unanimously elected as the Acting Chair of the meeting.

Upon assuming the Chair, he expressed his gratitude to the distinguished members for their confidence in entrusting him with presiding over the Meeting of the CPA Asia Regional Executive Committee and formally called the meeting to order.

He extended a warm welcome to all Honourable participants and invited Honourable Syed Awais Qadir Shah, Speaker of the Provincial Assembly of Sindh and the President of the Conference to deliver his welcome remarks.

3. Welcome Remarks by the President of the Conference

Hon. Syed Awais Qadir Shah, Speaker of the Provincial Assembly of Sindh, and the President of the Conference, delivered welcome remarks.

He emphasized:

- The importance of CPA Asia as a platform for provincial and state legislatures;

- The value of collaboration, innovation, and experience-sharing among Member Branches;
- His appreciation for active participation of delegates from Asia and South-East Asia; and
- His sincere gratitude to CPA Headquarters and partner branches for their continued support and cooperation.

4. Apologies for Absence

The Chair noted the Apologies for absence from:

- Hon. Mr. Abdul Raheem Abdulla, Speaker, People's Majlis of Maldives; **Chairperson of the CPA Asia Region Ex-Co;**
- Hon. Dr. Jagath Wickramaratne, Speaker, Parliament of Sri Lanka
- CPA Bangladesh Branch

Apologies were formally recorded; while members expressed hope for active participation from the Parliament of Bangladesh in the period following future elections.

5. Vote of Congratulations to the People's Majlis of the Maldives

The Chair extended vote of congratulations to the People's Majlis of the Maldives upon its assumption as the Chair of the CPA Asia Regional Executive Committee (68th–71st CPCs) as per Article 6(a) of the CPA Asia Constitution.

The committee formally recorded congratulations and looked forward to leadership from the Maldives.

6. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Chair presented the minutes of the previous meeting of the Regional Executive Committee, held on 9 October 2025, on the sidelines of the 68th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) in Bridgetown, Barbados. He informed the Committee that the minutes had already been circulated to all members and were therefore placed before the Committee for consideration.

Decision: There being no comments or proposed amendments, the minutes were duly approved by the Committee without modification

7. Approval of the Conference Programme

The Chair placed the Conference Programme before the Committee for consideration. He informed the meeting that the programme, carefully curated by the CPA Asia Regional Headquarters, the National Assembly of Pakistan and the CPA Sindh Branch,

reflected a balanced and forward-looking agenda and placed emphasis on Parliamentary diplomacy, democratic resilience, innovation, inclusion, and peace, under the theme:

"Parliaments of the Future: Redefining Democracy through Trust, Inclusion, Innovation and Peace."

Speaker Sindh Assembly informed that the programme had been thoroughly chalked out and its thematic sessions balanced, with particular focus on:

- Parliamentary innovation and capacity-building;
- Democratic resilience;
- Climate change and governance challenges;
- Best practices in Parliamentary administration.

Decision: Programme approved unanimously.

8. Approval of the Draft Karachi Declaration

The Draft Karachi Declaration was presented and discussed. Members welcomed its forward-looking language and alignment with regional parliamentary priorities.

Decision: The Declaration was approved.

9. Regional Institutional Strengthening

a) CPA Asia Region Website

The Chair informed the Committee that the National Assembly of Pakistan / CPA Asia Regional Headquarters, had successfully operationalised the long-awaited CPA Asia Regional Website. The platform was functioning smoothly and provided a consolidated space for regional and international events, key updates, and institutional information.

The Provincial ExCo Member, Speaker Punjab Assembly, Hon. Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan appreciated the operationalisation of the Asia Region Website and expressed support for its continued strengthening.

He further informed the Committee that the Punjab Assembly had the honour of being the first provincial Member Assembly to establish a comprehensive CPA section on its own website, reflecting its commitment to institutional visibility and information-sharing.
Decision: The Committee welcomed progress on the website and encouraged continued enhancement of digital visibility across member branches.

b) Strengthening communication among Regional Executive Committee Members;
The Chair apprised the meeting that an official regional email account had been established to facilitate timely and coordinated communication among member branches. He further invited members to propose additional initiatives to further strengthen inter-branch communication and engagement.

A Member of the Executive Committee from the Pakistan Branch suggested the creation of a dedicated WhatsApp group to enable more immediate and effective communication among the ExCo members.

Member of the Executive Committee from the CPA Balochistan Branch, Ms. Farah Azeem Shah informed the Committee that she had proposed the establishment of a CPA Peace Committee during her address at the 68th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) General Assembly. She further apprised the Committee that the proposal was presently under consideration by the CPA Headquarters.

Speaker, CPA Punjab Branch, Hon. Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan further proposed the development of a structured digital communication mechanism, which could take the form of a monthly regional e-circular issued by the CPA Asia Headquarters to keep member legislatures informed of regional activities and developments.

Decision: The Committee welcomed the progress achieved in strengthening digital communication, including the development of the website, and encouraged sustained efforts to enhance digital visibility and outreach across all Member Branches. The proposal for the issuance and circulation of a monthly regional e-circular was approved.

c) Annual Workshop for Provincial and State Legislatures

The proposal for institutionalising an annual workshop for subnational legislatures was discussed.

The Chair informed the Committee that, as recorded in the Minutes of the previous Executive Committee Meeting of the CPA Asia Region held in Barbados in October 2025, a proposal had been introduced to organise annual workshops for Provincial and State Legislatures, to be convened separately as well as on the sidelines of the annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC).

The Chair invited Members to offer their views and suggestions on the proposed initiative.

The President of the Conference, Speaker Sindh Assembly Hon. Syed Awais Qadir Shah observed that the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) served as the sole platform representing Provincial and State Legislatures. In this context, he proposed the establishment of a dedicated forum for Provincial Legislatures to enhance their exposure, promote the exchange of best practices, and strengthen institutional connectivity and collaboration among member legislatures.

The Hon. Speaker, Punjab Assembly, Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan, supported formal institutionalisation of the annual workshop, noting strong endorsement during earlier meetings and its importance for subnational capacity-building. He further highlighted the strong potential to extend such engagement to the South-East Asia

Region, given its significant number of sub-national legislatures. He further emphasised the importance of strengthening connectivity and collaboration among sub-national branches to foster greater coordination, mutual support, and the effective exchange of knowledge and best practices.

Decision: The Committee supported continued efforts toward institutionalising annual capacity-building platforms for subnational legislatures. The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Headquarters, committed to carry the proposal forward for consideration by CPA Headquarters.

10. Establishment of the CPA Asia Regional Fund

It was unanimously agreed that the operationalization of the CPA Asia Regional Fund was dependent on the confirmation from the CPA Bangladesh Branch (currently pending due to Parliamentary dissolution).

Decision: The establishment of the fund was supported in principle; however, modalities including the quantum of contributions and any interim or phased arrangements, shall remain pending and may be explored till confirmation was received from all branches.

11. Calendar of Activities (2026–2027)

The Chair informed the Committee Members that, in accordance with the constitutional alphabetical order, the next CPA Asia Regional Conference was due to be hosted by the CPA Sri Lanka Branch.

With regard to the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Asia Regional Seminar, the Committee considered whether the hosting arrangement should follow the established alphabetical order or be open to voluntary expressions of interest from member branches.

The Committee was further informed that the National Assembly of Pakistan had, for the first time in the Asia Region, successfully secured the Regional Strengthening Fund (RSF) in 2024 and subsequently organized the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Seminar in December 2024 in Islamabad.

It was also noted that the CPA Regional Strengthening Fund (RSF), now renamed the Gender Strengthening Fund (GSF), may be accessed through the submission of a well-prepared proposal, thereby enabling branches to obtain financial support for similar initiatives in the future.

Decision:

- **Next Regional Conference:** The Deputy Speaker of Sri Lanka conveyed the acceptance of the proposal and informed the Committee that the CPA SriLanka Branch would host the forthcoming CPA Asia Regional Conference in accordance with the established alphabetical rotation.
- **CWP Asia Regional Seminar**: CPA KPK branch to host Regional Seminar (to be confirmed)
- **Next EXCO Meeting**: Proposed alongside 69th CPC, Sep 2026, Cape Town, South Africa.

12. CPA Asia Democracy Award

The Chair informed the committee that a proposal to initiate a 'CPA Asia Democracy Award' had been moved by the Host Branch.

The President of the Conference introduced the proposal, noting that it sought to recognise exemplary democratic practices, particularly in times of democratic challenges. He invited the support and endorsement of the Committee for the proposed initiative.

Speaker, Punjab Assembly expressed support in principle for the initiation of the Award. However, he suggested that the Regional Executive Committee may wish to determine whether all six proposed categories should be adopted. He indicated that the Punjab Branch would prefer focusing on a single "Regional Democracy Champion" Award.

He further emphasized that, should multiple categories be adopted, separate and detailed eligibility criteria, participation procedures, and clear terms of reference for the selection committee would need to be finalized and approved by the Regional Executive Committee.

Decision: The Committee endorsed the establishment of a single Democracy Award for the CPA Asia Region only (instead of the proposed six categories).

13. Short-Duration Parliamentary Exchange Programme

The President of the Conference, Speaker Sindh Assembly briefed the Members on the programme, explaining that the proposal for a short-duration Parliamentary Exchange Programme highlighted its potential to facilitate effective knowledge sharing and strengthen collaboration among member branches. ***(Concept note attached at Annex-B)***

The Chair, the Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan, apprised the Members that the Parliament of Pakistan already possesses a readily available institutional avenue to advance this agenda, namely the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS), which stands as a significant example of the sharing of best practices and parliamentary capacity-building.

The Hon. Speaker, Punjab Assembly, supported the initiation of the programme and endorsed its phased implementation through pilot exchanges. He proposed that, in the initial phase, hosting be undertaken by National Parliaments of the Region in alphabetical order, followed subsequently by Provincial/State Legislatures.
It was suggested that, in line with this proposal, and in the absence of Bangladesh, the Parliament of Maldives may consider serving as the first host, subject to agreement. In response, the Honourable Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of the Maldives conveyed agreement and expressed endorsement of the proposal.

Decision: The Committee supported the introduction of the programme on pilot basis, and Maldives Parliament as the first Branch to host the programme.

14. Inclusion of South-East Asia Parliamentary Priorities

The Chair informed the Committee that the structured inclusion of South-East Asia parliamentary priorities in the Annual Regional Conference agenda was under consideration. Holding Joint Conference of this scale involved significant financial implications for the host branch, particularly as South-East Asia constituted an entire separate region. The Chair emphasised that such inclusion would be meaningful only if it resulted in active participation by all the attending branches.

The Speaker, Provincial Assembly of the Punjab expressed his Branch's support for the structured inclusion of the South-East Asia Region within the fold of the CPA Asia Annual Regional Conference, noting that the initial "observer participation" arrangement had been introduced following consultations between him and the CPA Secretary-General, and had been implemented during the CPA Lahore Conference in 2025. It was observed that this arrangement had been intended to serve as an effective confidence-building measure to invigorate CPA-related engagement within the South-East Asia Region.

As the engagement entered its second consecutive year, the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab was of the view that the Regional Executive Committee may now provide policy guidance by endorsing a more defined and outcome-oriented framework for South-East Asia participation, with clarity regarding roles, expectations, and tangible contributions.

The Provincial Assembly of the Punjab further emphasized the need for a facilitative role by CPA Headquarters in coordinating with South-East Asia legislatures to harmonize priorities and encourage consistent engagement, thereby enabling a transition from observer participation to meaningful stakeholder involvement under the guidance of the Regional Executive Committee.

A detailed note in this regard had been circulated as part of the working papers for the Committee's consideration and for inclusion in the Minutes (***Annex – C***).

The CPA Secretary-General highlighted that decisions regarding further collaboration between regions fall within the remit of the Regional Executive Committee and are not for CPA Headquarters to decide.

Input from CPA South-East Asia Representative: The Representative stated that the matter would be raised with the Federal Branch (National Parliament of Malaysia) and subsequently submitted for consideration at the National Speaker Conference.

Decision:

- Enhance coordination with CPA Headquarters to actively engage the federal branches of Singapore and Malaysia;
- Continue joint initiatives where mutually beneficial;
- Adopt a structured approach to strengthen integration and assess South-East Asia's future engagement.

15. Any Other Business

The Chair placed the following proposals from the CPA Asia Regional Headquarters, the National Assembly of Pakistan:

- CPA Asia branches to collectively submit themes for 69th CPC;
- Submission of themes prior to each Asia Regional Conference for inclusive regional representation.

Remarks by Hon. Dr. Christopher Kalila, MP, Zambia: The Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee thanked the Chair for the meeting invitation, congratulated all Members, and commended the Asia Region for bringing both regions together at the Annual Conference. He also highlighted the innovation of the meeting, the importance of introducing the Democracy Award and the Short-Term Parliamentary Exchange Programme. He also noted the suggestion for the consideration of the CPA Exco Committee for the subnational Branches, a platform.

16. Conclusion

The Acting Chairperson thanked all Members for their constructive participation and declared the meeting closed.

The complete list of participants of the meeting is attached at ***(Annex-A)***

******

(Annex-A)

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS OF THE MEETING OF THE REGIONAL EX-CO

CPA Headquarters:

1. **Dr. Christopher Kalila,** Chairperson, CPA Executive Committee
2. **Mr. Stephen Twigg**, Secretary General, CPA

Asia Region:

3. **Hon. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq,** Speaker, National Assembly of Pakistan **(Acting Chair of the Meeting)**
4. **Hon. Syed Awais Qadir Shah,** Speaker, Provincial Assembly of Sindh **(President/ Host of Conference)**
5. **Capt. (R) Abdul Khaliq Khan Achakzai,** Speaker, Provincial Assembly of Balochistan
6. **Hon. Nazir Ahmad,** Speaker, GB Assembly
7. **Hon. Babar Saleem Swati,** Speaker, KP Assembly
8. **Hon. Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan**, Speaker, Provincial Assembly of the Punjab
9. **Hon. Ahmed Nazim,** Deputy Speaker, People's Majlis Maldives, Member CPA Executive Committee
10. **Hon. (Dr.) Rizvie Salih**, Deputy Speaker, Parliament of Sri Lanka
11. **Hon. Syed Naveed Qamar**, MNA, Member CPA Executive Committee
12. **Ms. Farah Azeem Shah,** MPA Balochistan Assembly, Member CPA Executive Committee
13. **Mr. Tahir Shah,** Secretary, Balochistan Assembly
14. **Mr. Abdul Razaq**, Secretary, GB Assembly
15. **Syed Wiqar Shah**, Secretary, KP Assembly
16. **Syed Shamoon Ashraf Hashmi,** Special Secretary, National Assembly of Pakistan
17. **Ch. Amer Habib,** Secretary-General, Provincial Assembly of the Punjab
18. **Mr. G. M. Umar Farooq,** Secretary, Provincial Assembly of Sindh

South-East Asia Region:

19. **Datuk Dr Haji Mohd Puad Bin Zarkashi**, Speaker, Johor Assembly
20. **Hon. Dato Sri Amar D'raja Dr Haji Mohd Amar Bin Abdullah,** Speaker, Kelantan Assembly
21. **Hon. Dato' Sri Haji Mohd Sharkar Bin Haji Shamsudin,** Speaker, Pahang Assembly
22. **Dato' Seri Mohammad Zahir Bin Abdul Khalid**, Speaker, Perak Assembly
23. **Hon. Lau Weng San,** Speaker, Selangor Assembly
24. **Hon. Haji Khazan Bin Che Mat,** Deputy Speaker, Terengganu Assembly

****

(Annex -B)

Draft Concept Note

CPA Asia Parliamentary Exchange Programme

Background and Rationale

Across the Commonwealth, parliaments are navigating shared democratic challenges—ranging from declining public trust and executive dominance to digital disruption, climate vulnerability, and gaps in inclusive representation. While conferences and plenary dialogues provide valuable platforms for collective reflection, direct, immersive parliamentary exposure remains one of the most effective tools for institutional learning and democratic capacity-building.

The proposed CPA Asia Parliamentary Exchange Programme is envisioned as a short-duration, structured exchange mechanism under the auspices of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Asia Region. The Programme aims to facilitate hands-on learning through peer-to-peer engagement, enabling parliamentarians to observe legislative practices, committee systems, oversight mechanisms, and constituency engagement models across the region.

By institutionalising parliamentary exchanges, CPA Asia will strengthen regional solidarity, promote democratic innovation, and translate shared values into practical parliamentary improvements.

Objectives

The Parliamentary Exchange Programme aims to:

- Strengthen parliamentary capacity through experiential learning and peer engagement;
- Promote sharing of best practices in legislation, oversight, representation, and parliamentary administration;
- Enhance understanding of diverse constitutional and political systems within the CPA Asia Region;
- Foster cross-party, cross-national trust and professional networks among parliamentarians;
- Support inclusive leadership by encouraging participation of women, youth, and underrepresented groups;
- Translate learning into tangible parliamentary reforms and innovations.

Programme Design and Structure

Duration

- Short-term exchanges of 5–7 days, ensuring feasibility and minimal disruption to parliamentary schedules.

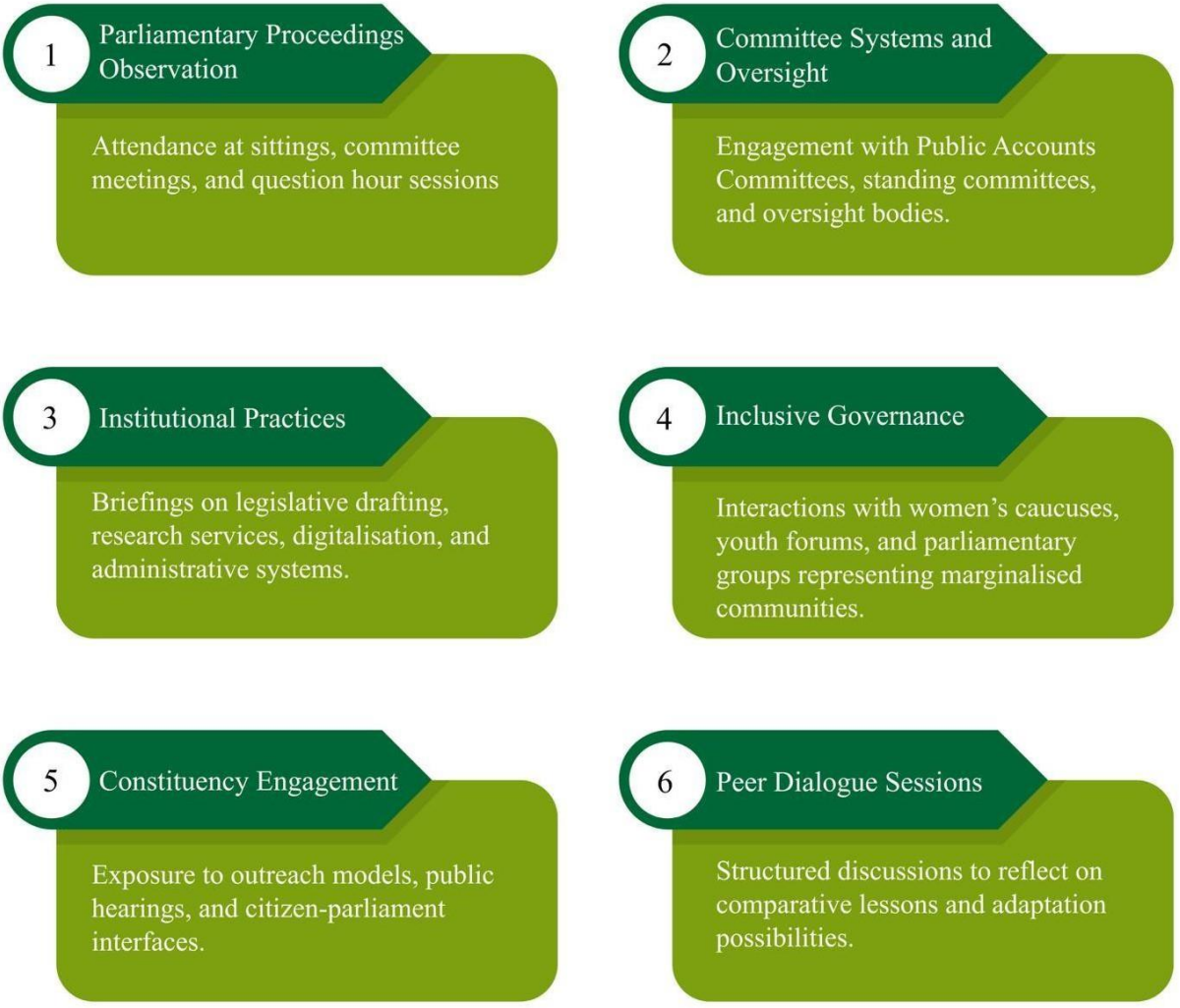
Participants

- Parliamentarians from national and provincial/state legislatures of CPA Asia branches;
- Priority may be given to committee chairs, caucus members (e.g. women, youth, disabilities), and emerging parliamentary leaders.

Host Parliaments

- Rotational hosting by willing CPA Branches, aligned with the CPA Asia calendar of activities;
- Host parliaments will facilitate structured exposure to their legislative and institutional practices.

Key Components of the Exchange



Thematic Focus Areas (Indicative)

The Programme may focus on one or more priority themes, including:

- Parliamentary accountability and executive oversight;
- Digital transformation, AI, and combating misinformation;
- Gender-responsive and inclusive parliamentary practices;
- Climate legislation and representation of vulnerable communities;
- Parliamentary education and civic engagement;
- Peace-building, dialogue, and conflict prevention.

Governance and Coordination

- The Programme shall be coordinated through the CPAAsia Regional Secretariat in collaboration with host parliaments;

- A standardised programme framework and reporting template will be developed to ensure consistency;
- Host and participating branches will jointly agree on objectives, agenda, and expected outputs.

Expected Outcomes

- Enhanced skills and practical knowledge of participating parliamentarians;
- Strengthened regional networks and professional trust among legislators;
- Replication and adaptation of best practices across CPA Asia parliaments;
- Increased participation of women and youth in parliamentary leadership pathways;
- Development of short knowledge briefs or reports to be shared within the CPA Asia Region.

Integration with CPA Asia Activities

The Parliamentary Exchange Programme is designed to complement existing CPA mechanisms, including regional conferences, workshops, and thematic networks. Outcomes of exchange visits may be showcased during CPA Asia Regional Conferences, contributing to institutional memory and collective learning.

Conclusion

The CPA Asia Parliamentary Exchange Programme represents a strategic investment in democratic resilience through practical engagement. By moving beyond dialogue to direct institutional exposure, the Programme will strengthen parliamentary effectiveness, deepen regional cooperation, and reaffirm the CPA Asia Region's commitment to trust-based, inclusive, innovative, and peace-oriented democratic governance.

****

Annex – C

*Agenda Item 14

Discussion on South-East Asia parliamentary priorities and their structured inclusion in the Annual Regional Conference agenda

* **Detailed Remarks by Punjab Assembly:**

Punjab Assembly reaffirms its support for the continued engagement of South-East Asia legislatures within the framework of CPA Asia and recognizes the value of inclusive regional dialogue in strengthening parliamentary cooperation across Asia and South-East Asia.

Punjab Assembly recalls that the initial inclusion of South-East Asia legislatures as observers during the 6th CPA Asia Regional Conference held in Lahore in 2025 was a considered and deliberate initiative, arising from high-level consultations between the Hon'ble Speaker, Punjab Assembly and the CPA Secretary-General in October 2024. The underlying objective of this initiative was to reinvigorate parliamentary participation from the South-East Asia region and to create a gradual, confidence-building pathway towards deeper institutional engagement within CPA processes.

Now entering the second consecutive year of such participation, Punjab Assembly is of the view that the engagement with South-East Asia should transition from an ad-hoc or observer-based arrangement towards a more structured, predictable, and outcome-oriented modality. In this regard, Punjab Assembly respectfully underscores that clarity of roles, expectations, and contributions is essential to ensure that the collaboration yields tangible value for both CPA Asia and South-East Asia participants.

Punjab Assembly notes with some concern that the absence of key South-East Asia federal parliaments, as well as the non-participation of South-East Asia representatives serving on the CPA International Executive Committee, in the current conference proceedings does not fully align with the spirit of deeper regional integration that this initiative seeks to promote. This observation is shared in a constructive spirit, with the aim of strengthening, not diluting, the collaborative trajectory.

In this context, Punjab Assembly emphasizes that CPA Headquarters has a pivotal facilitative role to play. It is respectfully suggested that CPA Headquarters, through its coordination mechanisms, may actively engage with South-East Asia member

legislatures to harmonize priorities, encourage consistent participation, and define a clear roadmap for progressive engagement. Such facilitation would help elevate South-East Asia's role from that of observers to that of meaningful stakeholders within CPA Asia's institutional architecture.

Punjab Assembly submits that a structured approach, potentially through defined agenda segments, thematic contributions, or agreed participation benchmarks would enable CPA Asia to assess, over time, the readiness and interest of South-East Asia legislatures to assume a more integrated role. This, in turn, would allow the CPA Asia Region to move forward with clarity, predictability, and mutual respect, while safeguarding the coherence and effectiveness of its regional processes.

****