



**Statement by Dr. M. Reza Majidi**  
**Secretary General of Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA)**  
**At 7<sup>th</sup> Executive Board online Meeting on**  
**Urban Health and Economy in Post Coronavirus Pandemic**  
June 22, 2020, Terhan-11:30, local time (+4:30GMT)

**Mr. President,**  
**Distinguished Mayors,**  
**Honorable Guests**

I am pleased to have been invited to this online meeting in my capacity as Secretary General of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA). At the same time, I deem it necessary to express my deep appreciation to the organizers of such an important event at this critical juncture when the health and economy of cities and citizen are severely threatened as the aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic

There would no need to remind you that our Organization as a regional parliamentary body together with the **Asian Mayors Forum (AMF)** as two highly importance regional bodies with their great potential can play a leading role in the solidarity of the countries of the region..The roots of the fruitfulties between the two organizations dates back to 2007, when the 2<sup>nd</sup>APA Plenary in Tehran proposed the initiative for the establishment of Asian Mayors Forum through unanimous adoption of a declaration, thanks to its proponents who sagaciously supported creation of such a Forum.

The main purposes behind creation of such a Forum as envisaged in Article 63 of the APA Declaration were:

- Establishment of sustainable peace,
- Promotion of constructive co-operation among Asian cities and people,
- Enhancing friendly relations among Asian cities ,
- Providing required grounds for sustainable development of all Asian cities in different economic, social, scientific and technological fields,
- Strengthening further cooperation and networking among mayors and municipalities throughout Asia

Following adoption of this Declaration the proposal by the then Mayor of Tehran, H.E **Mr. Mohammad Bagher Qalibaft** to host the first Meeting of the Mayors of the Capital cities of APA Member Parliaments in 2008, was approved as a welcome initiative to explore the idea of public contribution in promoting the vision of greater integration in Asia.

The meeting urged local governments, city councils and mayors from APA Member Parliaments to find ways to exchange information and experience on their activities in support of the work of the APA. In fact the first Meeting of AMF set up a milestone for future cooperation between the two Organizations in various field, most particularly in disaster control management.

**Dear Mayors,  
Honorable Guests**

As you may recall over 100 years ago the world faced with the deadliest Spanish flu in 1918, which claimed millions of lives. However, there are large differences between this dreadful flu with COVID-19 pandemic, however it teaches us a valuable lesson about the effectiveness of quickly implementing measures to ease its immense devastating health and economic repercussions.

In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic is a **wake-up call** and maybe also an opportunity to build **better and more sustainable societies and cities**. Currently it may give us time to reflect and think about long-term solutions while tackling the short-term problem. Can we effect a permanent paradigm shift? Is it possible to **prevent a return to the bad old habits**?

You are well aware that cities have mostly been the target of pandemic in the span of history. This time is not an exception. Outbreak of this viral disaster has claimed thousands of lives and an alarming economic devastation in the cities. The aftermath of job losses threatens the cities as a result of gloomy economic outlook. This viral crisis is now sweeping across countries and cities, driving global mobility and supply chains to a standstill with ripple effects that few would have predicted just 4 months ago

We may ask ourselves “can COVID-19 provide a unique window for a step change in the way we think about cities? Can it be a turning point for urban development worldwide? Under such circumstances, it is necessary to take lessons from coronavirus Pandemic as an integral part of our efforts for creation of a new kind of urban planning if we are to get rid of this critical situation.

This global crisis necessitates a joint effort both at national and international level at this challenging moment in our history. In fact, humanity is going through one of the most turbulent periods in recent memory as a result of the emergence and the rapid spread of

COVID-19 which has brought the world to a standstill. Our economies suffered greatly from the outbreak. Millions of people lost their jobs and the long term economic impact of the viral outbreak is yet to be seen. No doubt domestic and international solidarity in the fight against this dreadful disease is essential.

To this end, it is imperative that the two Organizations with an extensive number of members should make use of all their available resources to jointly work for introducing the best mechanisms and good practices that can mitigate dire effects of this viral disaster, as otherwise the regular structures of health and economy of the citizens may be disintegrated. The post pandemic era and the essence of urban and regional planning is an important issue that should be precisely elaborated in order to be able to reach the right approach, as the viral outbreak may linger on our cities for years.

As correctly the UN Secretary General said ” Recovery from the coronavirus crisis must lead to a better world. To this must be added a plea for a just and devoid of greed and war across the world. In this regard, there is a need to not only” rewrite local regulations to promote sustainability and equity”, but also there is a need to radically change the political economy of societies to embrace an adapted urban and regional planning system.

In the course of its internationalization of parliamentary mandate and entrenchment of international relations in legislative functions, APA has steadily played its part to pave the grounds for exerting best parliamentary practices and to uphold parliamentary diplomacy as an instrument to improve the implementation of SDG and to take follow-up actions’ for environmental protection and poverty eradication.

In conclusion, I would like to add, in my capacity as Secretary General of Asian Parliamentary Assembly, a regional Parliamentary Body with over 44 Member Parliaments that we look forward to working with the Asian Mayors Forum to further advance the common objectives of building a united and prosperous Asia.

Thank you for your attention