

**Statement by the Deputy Speaker of the Federation Council  
of the Russian Federation Mr. Konstantin Kosachev  
at the First Plenary Session of the 42<sup>nd</sup> AIPA General Assembly  
(August 23, 2021, on-line)**

Dear colleagues, good afternoon!

On behalf of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation I'm honored to address the 42nd General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-parliamentary Assembly. I am also pleased to take this opportunity to convey our gratitude to His Excellency, Mr. Abdul Rahman Taib, for the warm welcome and productive meeting during the official visit of Madame Valentina Matviyenko, Speaker of the Federation Council, to the State of Brunei Darussalam in 2019.

The development of relations with the ASEAN is a priority of the Russian foreign policy.

The year 2021 is marked by a double anniversary – the 30th anniversary of Russian-ASEAN relations and the 25th anniversary of the full-scale Russia-ASEAN dialogue. The special meeting of foreign ministers of our countries, held in July on this occasion, defined the list of tasks that we have to solve, first of all, at the highest level, including the adoption of a comprehensive action plan to enhance cooperation in 2021-2025.

We continue to concentrate on stepping up cooperative efforts to combat the coronavirus pandemic, in particular making vaccines universally available. Russia provides the ASEAN with the necessary advisory and practical assistance; we send epidemiologists, test systems and medicines to the region. At the moment an agreement has been reached or negotiations are underway to supply Sputnik V vaccine to Vietnam, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, and the Philippines. Steps are being taken to establish overseas licensed production of this vaccine in South-East Asia. A trial batch of the vaccine was already produced in Vietnam in July.

The use of information and communication technology has become especially important under the pandemic. It was the video format that allowed maintaining the usual rhythm of the dialogue mechanisms - meetings of foreign and economic ministers, of senior officials on political issues, the economy, on fighting transnational crime, on agriculture and energy. We, the parliamentarians, are keeping up with this trend, as evidenced by our on-line meeting today.

However, it is regrettable that, for the second year in a row, the AIPA General Assemblies have not included dialogue meetings with observers. Direct dialogue between parliamentarians gives us the opportunity to keep in tune and discuss the main areas of cooperation, both in bilateral and multilateral formats.

Therefore, if restrictions remain in force, we suggest continuing also the practice of organizing on-line dialogue meetings with observers.

New mechanisms of cooperation are being launched in video mode - in June, the first Consultations of high-level representatives of Russia and the countries of the "Ten" in charge of security issues took place. We attach great importance to the early launch of the Russian-Asian Dialogue on Security in the Use of ICT.

According to expert estimates, by 2030 these technologies will accumulate up to 8% of the region's GDP. Our country is rightly considered one of the global leaders in this field. To date, 3.7% of Russian GDP is allocated for the development of the digital economy, and Russia is in 9th place in the world for the availability of the Internet. On average, 80% of the country's population and 70% of entrepreneurs receive state and municipal services in electronic form. By 2025, we plan to create a digital Russia with a single digital environment and ecosystem of services. We calculate that this will increase national GDP by more than 30%.

We are ready to share our experience in area of digital transformation, including the implementation of digital solutions tested within the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), including the mobile application "Travel without COVID-19" and the unified search system "Work without borders" (launched on July 1 through the UN European Economic Commission). We are also ready to borrow the experience of our ASEAN colleagues.

We are aiming at the establishment of a dialogue platform with the "ten" on the digitalization of the urban economy. Russian representatives actively participate in conferences of the ASEAN Smart Cities Network. Currently, a number of joint projects are underway or in preparation to promote e-commerce, create a professional network for women entrepreneurs, apply innovation in the agricultural sector, and digitalize small and medium-sized businesses as part of the ASEAN Integration Initiative. We think it will be a real contribution of Russia to the ASEAN Digital Community.

In conclusion - we in Russia look forward to the active participation of charming female representatives of ASEAN countries in the Third Eurasian Women's Forum, which will be held on October 13-15 in St. Petersburg.

You are also welcome at the World Conference on inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue in St-Petersburg on 16-18 May, 2022. The event is held by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and co-organized by the UN and Russian Federation as the host country. Heads of state, parliamentarians, and representatives of world religions are expected to attend.

I wish all the participants of the 42nd AIPA General Assembly constructive and interesting discussions and well-balanced decisions. Thank you.