

ASIA-EUROPE PEOPLE'S FORUM (AEPF)  
**Re-Imagining Democracy and  
People's Agency in a Time of  
Populist Authoritarianism  
and Neoliberalism**

24-26 JULY 2019 | PETALING JAYA, MALAYSIA



The Asia Europe Peoples Forum, supported by a number of civil society organizations from Asia and Europe, will be hosting a Conference on one of the most challenging issues of our times, **“Re-imagining Democracy and Peoples’ Agency in a Time of Populist Authoritarianism and Neoliberalism”**, on July 25<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

This conference will be attended by 50 delegates, including parliamentarians from seven countries, civil society activists, independent experts and public figures from several Asian and European countries.

On 24<sup>th</sup> July, there will be a strategic interface between Asian and European Parliamentarians and AEPF, where parliamentarians will share experiences of their region, their strategic tactics, parliamentary processes and ways of working in the very difficult situations that mark current times.

## Interface with Asian and European Parliamentarians

Kuala Lumpur, 24 July 2019

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### Aims of the Meeting

- Facilitate a strategic interface between Asian and European Parliamentarians and AEPF.
- Share experiences of Parliamentarians from each region on the current situation.
- Enable involvement of Parliamentarians in some key aspects of the AEPF Peoples Agenda and the Ghent spirit.
- Learn how Parliamentarians are using strategic tactics and parliamentary processes to work in the current very difficult situations.
- Prepare and release a Common Statement with the key goal on rights and participatory democracy, as well as continuing interface between civil society and parliamentarians.

# PROGRAMME

**9.30 - 9.50 Welcome, purpose of meeting and introduction of participants**

Moderator: Tur-Od Lkhagvajav (Mongolia)

**9.50 - 10.10 Keynote Message – Charles Santiago (Malaysia)**

**10:10 - 11.00 Regional and Sub-Regional Contexts**

(a free-wheeling panel discussion on the state of democracy and human rights)

## **Panel of Parliamentarians:**

Mercy Barends (Indonesia)

Deepak Bhatt (Nepal)

Coining Dorji (Bhutan)

Aida Kasymalieva (Kyrgyzstan)

Hassan Murtaza (Pakistan)

Mylvaganam Thilakarajah (Sri Lanka)

Eulàlia Reguant (Spain)

## **Resource Persons:**

Brid Brennan (Ireland/Netherlands)

Kamal Chenoy (India)

Geo-Sung Kim (South Korea)

Achin Vanaik (India)

**14.30 - 14.50 Summing up of morning session – Charles Santiago (Malaysia)**

**14.50 - 16.00 Strategising Meeting**

- Moderation – Farooq Tariq (Pakistan )
- Fighting Strategies for Freedom: the Malaysian Experience – Tian Chua (Malaysia)
- Sharing of APHR Strategies and Campaigns – Leong Tsu Quin (Malaysia)
- Overview of AEPF Priority Demands and Advocacies – Tina Ebro (Philippines)

## 16.15 - 17.30 Continuation: Plenary Discussion and Adoption of Resolution and Plan

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in this publication lies entirely with the authors.



AEPF has received support from the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR). It is a membership-based organization of parliamentarians and other influential individuals working to strengthen human rights and democracy in Southeast Asia. APHR uses its unique position to highlight human rights concerns and strengthen the voices of civil society actors around ASEAN.

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On 25-26<sup>th</sup> July there will be in-depth discussions on issues around the current state of democracy and human rights in Asia and Europe, and the impact of populist authoritarianism on civil society, gender and marginalised communities. Issues of corporate control, migration and the consequences of climate change will also be analysed.

Dates: 25-26 July 2019

### **Objectives**

1. Analyse and understand political trends in Asia and Europe over the past year -- especially in light of 2018-2019 elections -- and their implications for building/strengthening democratic and civic spaces, resistance to social and political oppression, and neoliberalism, and realising people's rights.
2. Analyse and understand the nexus between political, economic and social trends, with particular attention to the concurrent deepening of political authoritarianism, increasing social-cultural instability, and expanding corporate power.
3. Learn about and understand sources, spaces, forces and visions of resistances to political authoritarianism, social-cultural insecurity, neoliberalism and corporate

power; these include progressive forces in civil society, peoples/social movements and political parties.

4. Contribute to forging alliances/partnerships among progressive forces across Asia and Europe -- including civil society, people's movements, parliamentarians and political parties — to resist and stop authoritarianism and oppression, and build/strengthen participatory democracy, peoples' rights and non-capitalism economies.

## **Programme**

### **Day One: 25 July, Thursday**

Emphasis: build a comprehensive picture of the nexus between political forces, capital and neoliberalism, and their social-economic impacts; expected/unexpected political outcomes and forces from recent elections; the elements that have enabled the rise and expansion of extreme authoritarianism, majoritarian rule, narrow nationalism, and the move away from secular democracy)

MCs for the day: *Raquel Castillo and Tur-Od*

**9:00-9:15: Welcome and presentation: Why we are meeting and what is the AEPF?** *Charles Santiago and Brid Brennan*

**9:15-9:45:** Introduction of participants.

**9:45-12:00: Session 1: The Global Scenario: Context and Recent Political, Economic, Social Trends**

Facilitators: *Farooq Tariq and Tina Ebro*

Methodology: plenary presentations and buzz-group discussions and synthesizing by resource persons.

9:45 – 10:30: Short inputs from *Walden Bello, Pamela Philipose, and Christophe Aguiton* on

Significant changes in global political, economic and social scenarios

10:30-11:00: Buzz-group discussions

11:20 – 12:00: "summing up" by two resource persons: *Achin Vanaik and Eulalia Reguant-Cura*

**12:00 -1:00: Session 2: Scenario and contexts in Asia and Europe:**

Facilitators: *Shalmali Guttal and Kris Vanslambrouck*

Methodology: plenary presentations (10 minutes) on the following points:

1. What happened in the recent elections—expected and unexpected?

2. Who are the new power elites and supporters? What are their impacts on state policies?
3. Who are the old and new forces in politics, the economy, and policy and law making national and regionally? What are their ideologies and agendas?
4. What is the situation of left forces and what challenges do they face?

Speakers: *Charles Santiago (Malaysia); Sunai Phasuk (Thailand); Eduardo Tadem (Philippines); Kamal Chenoy (India); Rachmi Hertanti (Indonesia); (Europe general); Eulalia Reguant-Cura (Spain & Europe); Jille Belisario (Transnational Migrant Platform-Europe (TMP-E), Yassar Louati (France)*

**1:00-2:00 pm: Lunch** (participants will continue regional/sub-regional discussions during lunch in their lunch tables)

**2:00- 3:00 pm:** Presentations and discussions of regional situations

**3:00-5:00 pm: Session 3:  
Commonalities and Differences in Regional-Global trends**

Facilitators: *Varsha Rajan Berry and Niels Jongerius*

3:00-4:00 pm: Break-out group discussions

**Day Two: July 26, Friday**

Emphasis: different kinds/forms of resistances to authoritarianism.

MCs for the day: *Varsha Rajan Berry and Niels Jongerius*

**9:00-9:30 : Recap of Day 1, burning issues:**

**9:30-11:30- Session 4: New and Continuing Forces of Resistance**

Methodology: short inputs and discussion in plenary by resource persons involved in campaigns/struggles, to address one or both of the questions below

Facilitators: *Raquel Castillo and Tur-Od*

Resource persons:

*Danny Carranza (Philippines/peasant sector) Karamat Ali (Pakistan)*

*Anon Chawalawan (Thailand) Nisha Shiurkar (India)*

*Kyaw Thu (Myanmar) Jille Belisario (Europe)*

*Ros Sokunthy (Cambodia) Christophe Aguiton (France)*

**11:30-11:50: Break**

**11:50-3:00 pm: Session 5 : Building Resistances, Solidarity and Coordinated Actions**

Methodology: group discussions followed by plenary presentations and synthesis ;

Facilitators: *Amitabh Behar and Brid Brennan*

2:00- 3:00 pm: presentations from break-out groups and discussion in plenary

**3:20-4:30 pm: Session 6: Ways Forward**

Methodology: plenary discussion about moving forward with proposals/suggestions from Session 4 and the role of the AEPF in building solidarities.

Facilitators: *Shalmali Guttal and Niels Jongerius*

**4:30-5:00 pm: Final remarks and closing:** *mix of activists and parliamentarians*



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