



Council of  
Asian Liberals  
and Democrats



Alliance of  
**LIBERALS AND DEMOCRATS FOR EUROPE** | PARTY

6th

# CALD-ALDE MEETING

09 November 2013  
Centennial Hall A, Manila Hotel, Philippines





**6th CALD-ALDE Meeting**  
**“Global Power Shift: Implications for Asia-Europe Relations”**  
**9 November 2013 | Manila, Philippines**

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**“Global Power Shift: Implications for Asia-Europe Relations”**  
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## CONCEPT PAPER

### 6th CALD-ALDE Meeting

#### “Global Power Shift: Implications for Asia-Europe Relations”

The growing strength of Asia has undeniably provided it the capacity in rallying efforts to deal with global challenges. It is now becoming the center of economic gravity being the world's biggest market. The region, therefore, becomes a viable political, economic, and even military partner by many regions and nations all over the world including Europe. The global power shift is now leaning towards Asia but the direction and extent of this shift are yet to be determined.

Global powers are often characterized by alliance of nations that have the sphere of influence, politically and economically, extending on a global scale. But a global power has to be distinguished from a superpower. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, only the United States has the capacity of being a superpower, although a resurgent Russia and rising China, as well as European Union and other global and regional powers are insisting on their corresponding place in the global and regional seats of power.

It can be said that the global shift is from a *unipolar* world (US) to a *multipolar* world. The shift to Asia does not necessarily mean that China (or Russia as an Asian power) will replace US as superpower but it signifies that Asia is becoming a global power with its own sphere of influence. The rise of other powers to global or regional powers, without a doubt, challenges US influence at the global or regional level.

Unipolar world order recognizes US preeminence all over the globe. But it did not achieve this status even when the Soviet Union has fallen because of the rise of other global/regional powers, including the European Union and China. Now, it is more accurate to describe the world order as multipolar, with many Asian powers achieving global or regional power status.

Europe, under the European Union (EU), recognizes this new reality of a multipolar world with the gravity shifting to Asia. It is building its own influence in the continent through alliances, cooperation, and friendships with Asian countries, while maintaining its strategic alliance with the US.

But with this power shift, Asia also has to confront lingering and arising political and security concerns. The democratic transition in Burma/Myanmar, political change in Northeast Asia, continuity and change in US Asia policy, to the South China Sea disputes could define the environment of the region in terms of growth.

Political-security concerns, such as the South China Sea dispute, could impede the economic potentials of the region. There is a need to collectively address



these concerns in order to create a more stable regional environment conducive for economic growth. Asia needs to sustain its economic momentum especially in light of the still fragile global economy.

Asia remains to be an economic bright spot despite the slowdown in the growth of the so-called BRICS economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). As a matter of fact, the tempering of growth in these emerging economies just led analysts and observers to refocus their attention on the "breakout nations" of Turkey, Indonesia, and the Philippines (TIP), and even Mongolia.

The rise of Indonesia and the Philippines is particularly significant, especially as they are main members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Greater economic confidence in these two countries can be a boon to the regional integration project dubbed as the "ASEAN Community". It has to be noted, however, that questions remain on Southeast Asia's preparedness and on the possible impact of ASEAN Community. How ASEAN responds to these concerns remains to be seen.

Recognizing the salience of these issues, the 6<sup>th</sup> CALD-ALDE meeting will focus on the increasing shift on global power to Asia and how countries in Asia and external actors are responding to this development. More specifically, the one-day meeting will discuss how Asia's political-security environment, economic clout, and regional integration impact on strategic relations between Asia and Europe.

The objectives of the meeting are as follows:

- To discuss the nature and dynamics of global and regional power relations and their implications for policy-making and inter-regional cooperation;
- To achieve a common understanding between Asia (CALD) and Europe (ALDE) of the global power shift and how to deal with it; and
- To come up with a set of policy recommendations on how CALD and ALDE, in their respective spheres of influence, can influence regional response to the global power shift.

The 6<sup>th</sup> CALD-ALDE meeting is divided into three sessions with the first session analyzing the political and security environment in Asia given the global power shift. This session also identifies avenues for inter-regional cooperation to ensure a stable environment that can promote and sustain growth. The second session looks at the development of the "breakout nations" from Asia and its implications for the economic policies of other regions. The third and last session focuses on ASEAN Community as a regional integration project and tackle the issues and problems that accompany Southeast Asia's integration and how it can affect relations with Europe and other regions.

*Session I. Asia's Political and Security Environment: Avenues for Inter-Regional Cooperation*

What are the most important issues and concerns defining the political and security environment in Asia? What are the threats and opportunities in such environment? What can be done to minimize threats and maximize opportunities? How should Asia and Europe respond to this political-security terrain?

*Session II. From BRICs to TIP: Implications for Trade and Investment Policies*

What are the implications of the global power shift on trade and investment in Asia? What are the implications for the economic policies of other regions or countries? What are the policy recommendations to maintain growth and encourage investment?

*Session III. ASEAN Community by 2015: Impact on Asia-Europe Relations*

Is ASEAN ready for a regional integration? What are the issues and problems accompanying Southeast Asia's integration? And how does the regional project affect relations with Europe and other regions?

## PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

### November 9 – Saturday

8:30 Registration

9:00 **Opening Plenary Session**

#### ***Session Chairs***

##### **Hon. Hedina “Dina” Abad, MP**

Deputy Speaker, Philippine House of Representatives  
Vice President for Policy, Programs and Advocacy  
Liberal Party Philippines  
Former Chairperson, CALD Women’s Caucus

##### **Hon. Isra Sunthornyut, MP**

Member of Parliament, Thailand  
Democrat Party of Thailand

#### **Welcoming Remarks**

##### **Hon. Joseph Emilio “Jun” Abaya**

Secretary (Minister) of Transportation and Communication,  
Republic of the Philippines  
Executive Vice President for Policy, Programs and Acting  
President, Liberal Party of the Philippines

##### **Hon. Sam Rainsy**

Leader of the Cambodian Opposition  
Chairperson, Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats

##### **Hon. Graham Watson, WEP**

Member of European Parliament, UK  
President, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe  
Party

##### **Dr. Rainer Adam**

Regional Director, Southeast and East Asia Office  
Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom

## **Keynote Address**

### **Hon. Franklin “Frank” Drilon, MP**

Senate President, Senate of the Philippines

Former Chairperson, Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats

10:30      Group Photo & Coffee/Tea Break

11:00      Continuation of Opening Plenary Session

## ***Session Chair***

### **Hon. Antonia Paryanoya, MEP**

Member of European Parliament Bulgaria

Vice-President, Alliance of Liberals and

Democrats for Europe Group

## **Keynote Speeches**

### **Prof. Dr. Jürgen Morlok**

Chairman of the Board of Trustees

Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom

### **Hon. Su Tseng-chang**

Chairperson, Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan

Former Premier, Executive Yuan, Taiwan

### **Hon. Hans van Baalen, MEP**

Member of European Parliament, the Netherlands

President, Liberal International

### **Hon. Kasit Piromya, MP**

Member of Parliament, Thailand

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Thailand

Democrat Party of Thailand

12:30      Lunch

14:00      Parallel Sessions

*Session I: Asia’s Political and Security Environment:  
Avenue for Intern-Regional Cooperation*

### ***Session Chair***

#### **Hon. Jose Luis Martin “Chito” Gascon**

Undersecretary (Deputy Minister) for Political Affairs,  
Office of the President, Philippines

### ***Speakers***

#### **Hon. Hans van Baalen, MEEP**

Member of European Parliament, the Netherlands  
President, Liberal International

#### **Mr. MC “Jun” Abad, Jr.**

Chair of the Board of Directors  
Institute for Strategic and Development Studies,  
Philippines

#### **Mr. Shih-chung Liu**

Director, Department of International Affairs  
Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan

#### **Hon. Rajiva Wijesinha, MP**

Presidential Adviser on Reconciliation, Sri Lanka  
Leader, Liberal Party of Sri Lanka  
Former Chairperson, Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats

### ***Session: II From BRICS to Tip: Implications for Trade and Investment Policies***

### ***Session Chair***

#### **Hon. Saumura Tioulong, MP**

Member of Parliament – Elect, Cambodia  
Sam Rainsy Party of Cambodia/Cambodia National Rescue Party

### ***Speakers***

#### **Hon. Niccolo Rinaldi, MEP**

Member of European Parliament, Italy  
Vice President, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe  
Group

#### **Hon. Jerry Trenas, MP**

Member of House Representatives, Philippines  
Liberal Party of the Philippines

Session III: ASEAN Community by 2015:  
Impact on Asia-Europe Relations

***Session Chair***

**Hon. Buranaj Smutharaks**

Member of Parliament  
Democrat Party of Thailand

***Speakers***

**Dr. Wilfrido Villacorta**

Former Permanent Representative of the Philippines to ASEAN  
Former Deputy Secretary General, ASEAN  
Former Chair of the National Institute for Policy Studies, Philippines

**Hon. Sir Graham Watson, MEP**

Member of European Parliament, UK  
President, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party

**Ms. Kem Monovithya**

Member of Permanent Bureau and Deputy Director,  
Public Affairs Department, Cambodia National Rescue Party

16:00 Coffee/Tea Break

16:30 Presentation of Results of Parallel Sessions of the Plenary

***Session Chair***

**Mr. Willem Vanden Broucke**

Head of Unit, Inter-institutional Relations and Networking  
Alliance of Liberals and Democrats Group

***Presenters***

**Hon. Jose Luis Martin “Chito” Gascon**

Undersecretary (Deputy Minister) for Political Affairs,  
Office of the President, Philippines

**Hon. Saumura Tiolung, MP**

Member of Parliament – Elect, Cambodia  
Cambodia National Rescue Party

**Hon. Buranaj Smutharaks**

Member of Parliament  
Democrat Party of Thailand

17:00 Closing Plenary Session

***Session Chair***

**Hon. Bi-khim Hsiao, MP**

Member of Legislative Yuan, Taiwan Former Secretary General,  
Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats  
Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan

***Closing Keynote Speeches:***

**Hon. Sir Graham Watson, MEP**

Member of European Parliament, UK  
President, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for  
Europe Party

***Closing Remarks***

**Hon. Mel Sarmiento, MP**

Member, Philippine House of Representatives  
Secretary General, Liberal Party of the Philippines

**Hon. Niccolo Rinaldi, MEP**

Member of European Parliament, Italy  
Vice President, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe  
Group

**Dr. Chee Soon Juan**

Secretary General, Singapore Democratic Party  
Former Chairperson, Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats

## PROFILES OF SPEAKERS AND SESSION CHAIRS

### Opening Plenary Session

#### *Session Chairs*



**Hon. Henedina "Dina" Razon-Abad, MP**

Deputy Speaker, Philippine House of Representatives  
Vice President for Policy, Programs and Advocacy  
Liberal Party of the Philippines  
Former Chairperson, CALD Women's Caucus

Hon. Dina Abad is the Deputy Speaker of the Philippine House of Representatives. She is also Vice President for Policy, Programs and Advocacy of the Liberal Party of the Philippines. Hon. Abad was the former Chairperson of the CALD Women's Caucus and served as Vice President of the International Network of Liberal Women. Prior to her entry to government, she served as professor and dean of the Ateneo School of Government. At the Ateneo, she held various senior administrative and teaching posts. She served many local NGOs in various capacities such as Chairperson of the Transparency and Accountability Network, Executive Director of the Philippines-Canada Human Resource Development Committee, Inc. and Coordinator of the Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform.

She finished her Economics degree from the Ateneo de Manila University and her Master of Public Administration degree from the Harvard School of Government. She also participated in various courses focusing on participatory development and leadership in transition economies of the Harvard Institute for International Development.



**Hon. Isra Sunthornvut, MP**

Member of Parliament, Thailand  
Democrat Party of Thailand

Hon. Isra Sunthornvut, a Member of Parliament from DP Thailand who also served as director of international relations of the party. He is a former Vice Minister to the Office Prime Minister, former Deputy Secretary-General to the Prime Minister for Political Affairs at the Office of the Prime Minister and former spokesman of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. Isra finished European Studies at Chulalongkorn University.



## *Welcome Remarks*



### **Hon. Joseph Emilio “Jun” Abaya**

Secretary (Minister) of Transportation and  
Communication  
Republic of the Philippines  
Executive Vice President and Acting President  
Liberal Party of the Philippines

Hon. Jun Abaya was on his third term as a Cavite representative when he was appointed DOTC Secretary and is the current Executive Vice-President and Acting President of the Liberal Party of the Philippines. In 2004 he ran for congressman and won representing the 1<sup>st</sup> District of Cavite to the 13<sup>th</sup> Congress to the Philippines. He was re-elected in 2007. During the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress he was chairman of the House Committee on Science and Technology. During the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress (2010) and his last term he served as Chairman of House Committee on Appropriations.

He began his tertiary education as an engineering student at the University of the Philippines, when he topped the entrance examinations for the Philippine Military Academy. He was sent on a government scholarship to the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, where he finished his Bachelor's degree in mathematics with distinction. He also has a Masters degree in electrical engineering from Cornell University and also a law degree from Ateneo de Manila University.



### **Hon. Sam Rainsy**

Leader of the Cambodian Opposition  
Chairperson, Council of Asian Liberals and  
Democrats

Hon. Sam Rainsy is the President of Cambodia National Rescue Party, a united front of the Sam Rainsy Party (SRP) and Human Rights Party. He is also the incumbent CALD Chairperson.

Hon. Sam's political career began with Prince Ranariddh's Funcinpec Party, becoming the Prince's European representative in 1989. He also previously served as Minister of Finance in a coalition government that emerged in Cambodia after the UN-supervised elections in 1993, and was a Member of the Supreme National Council of Cambodia from 1992 to 1993.

In 1995, he formed the Khmer Nation Party, which became the current SRP when it was forced to change its name in order to contest the 1998 elections, where he was re-elected to the Parliament.

In 2006, Liberal International awarded him with the Prize for Freedom honoring his dedication to championing human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Prior to his entry to politics, he was a financial analyst and investment manager in various banks and financial institutions. For one, he served as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of DR Gestion, a Paris-based investment company and Bank Director at Paluel-Marmont. Hon. Sam received his MBA from INSEAD, Paris.



**Hon. Sir Graham Watson, MEP**

Member of European Parliament, UK  
President, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for  
Europe Party

Sir Graham Watson was the first British Liberal Democrat ever to be elected to the European Parliament, winning the Somerset & North Devon constituency with a majority of over 22,500 votes. In June 1999, Sir Watson was elected to represent the new enlarged South West of England constituency, which covers Bristol, Gloucestershire, Somerset,

Dorset, Wiltshire, Devon and Cornwall, and has been twice elected since then. Gibraltar was added to his constituency in June 2004.

From 1994 to 1999, Sir Watson was a member of the Committee for Economic & Monetary Affairs and Industrial Policy and the Budgets Committee; while from July 1999 to 2002, he served as Chairman of the Committee on Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs. Sir Watson also served as Leader of the European Parliament's Liberal Democrat Group and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) from 2002 to 2009. Since 2009, he has been a member of the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee and Chairman of Parliament's delegation for relations with India. He is also a member of the ALDE Bureau and Delegation for relations with the People's Republic of China. He is also a member of Southeast Asia, ASEAN Delegation. His Knighthood was announced in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in June 2011. Also in 2011, Sir Watson was elected President of the European Liberal Democrat Reform Party, now the ALDE Party.

Sir Watson has numerous publications which include: 'The Liberals in the North-South Dialogue' (1980), 'To the Power of Ten: UK Liberal Democrats in the European Parliament' (2000), '2020 Vision: Liberalisation and Globalisation' (2001), 'Liberal Language' (2003), 'EU've got mail!' (2004), 'Liberal Democracy & Globalisation' (2006), 'Liberalism - something to shout about' (2006) and 'The Power of Speech' (2006).



**Dr. Rainer Adam**

Regional Director for Southeast and East Asia  
Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom

Dr. Rainer Adam has been, since 2008, Regional Director for Southeast and East Asia of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, based in Bangkok, Thailand. Having more than 25 years of practical experience in Asia, Dr. Adam held various positions with the Foundation in China, Singapore, India, Indonesia and Thailand. His expertise includes democracy promotion, political

party development, good governance, citizens' participation, economic institutions and legal reform.

His professional career also includes research and teaching experience at Bonn University on Agricultural Economics. Additionally, he held a three-year appointment at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome, Italy. He holds a Ph.D Degree from Bonn University, Germany in Agricultural Economics.

*Keynote Address*



**Hon. Franklin "Frank" Drilon, MP**

Senate President, Senate of the Philippines  
Vice Chairperson, Liberal Party of the Philippines  
Former Chairperson, Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats

Hon. Frank Drilon is currently the Senate President of the Senate of the Philippines, a post that he also previously held for the periods 2000 and 2001-2006. He was also CALD Chairperson from 2004 to 2006. Senate President Drilon started his professional career in 1974 with one of the

premiere law firms of the country – Angara, Abello, Concepcion, Regala and Cruz Law Offices where he was Senior Associate and eventually elected as its Managing Partner in 1986.

In 1986, Senate President Drilon commenced his career in government. He was appointed Deputy Minister for Industrial Relations of the then Ministry of Labour from 1986 to 1987. Thereafter, he assumed the post as Secretary of Labour until January of 1990. In 1990, he was appointed Secretary of Justice and subsequently, Executive Secretary of the Cabinet of President Corazon "Cory" Aquino in 1991. In July 1992, he was again appointed as Secretary of Justice.

The dynamism of Senate President Drilon continues as he contributes this time to the Legislature, with his well-honed skills from the Judiciary and the Executive Department, as well as the private sector.

Senate President Drilon studied at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1965. He later went on to attain his Bachelor of Laws degree in 1969 from the same university.

## **Continuation of Opening Plenary Session**

### *Session Chair*



#### **Hon. Antonia Parvanova, MEP**

Member of European Parliament, Bulgaria  
Vice-President, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats  
for Europe Group

Dr. Antonia Parvanova was elected as a member of the Bulgarian Parliament from the National Movement for Stability and Prosperity in 2001 and again in 2005. She is Vice-Chairman of the Committee on public health and is actively working on public health issues and health legislation at the national level. Dr. Parvanova launched the initiative

of creating a fund for assisted reproduction. This fund has been instrumental in the delivery of more than 1500 newly born children each year.

In 2005, Dr. Parvanova was designated as a euro observer in the European Parliament and in 2009 she was elected as a regular member of the European Parliament and as ALDE Vice-President. She is an ALDE coordinator in the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and Vice-President of the Committee on Energy, Environment and Water to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean. She is a member of: the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, the Delegation for Relations with Canada, and the Delegation to the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly. She is also member for the Delegation for Relations with the Mashreq countries, as well as the Delegation for Relations with Iran.

In October 2013, Dr. Parvanova was elected as the new leader of the National Movement for Stability and Progress Party.

Dr. Parvanova studied Medicine and Health Management in Varna, Public Health at Maastricht (the Netherlands) and Health Policy in England. She started her political career after working as a doctor and researcher in the UK.

## *Keynote Speeches*



### **Prof. Dr. Jürgen Morlok**

Chairman of the Board of Trustees  
Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom

Prof. Dr. Jürgen Morlok began his political career in 1964 through his membership in the Free Democrat Party (FDP) of Germany. His involvement with the FDP gained further recognition with his Chairmanship of the FDP/DVP Parliamentary Group. In 1978, he was member of the Federal Executive Board of the FDP and also member of the FDP's Federal Executive Committee. Since 1996, he has been the honorary chairman of the FDP in the German state of Baden-Württemberg.

His involvement with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation started in 1981 when he became a member of the Board of Trustees. Since 1996, he has been the Chairman of the Board. Prof. Dr. Morlok studied Political Science and Economics at FU Berlin and Karlsruhe University in Germany, graduating as an Economist. Later, he completed his Ph.D in Political Science.



### **Hon. Su Tseng-chang**

Chairperson  
Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan  
Former Premier, Executive Yuan, Taiwan

Hon. Su Tseng-chang is the 14<sup>th</sup> Chair of the Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan. He served as Premier in the Executive Yuan from 2006 to 2007 and Secretary-General in the Office of the President from 2004-2005. He was elected Taipei County Governor for two terms from 1997 to 2004 and Pingtung County Governor from 1989 to 1993.

Hon. Su is a founding member of DPP and served as the defense lawyer for the opposition leaders of Kaohsiung Incident, also known as the Formosa Incident of 1979.





**Hon. Hans van Baalen, MEP**

Member of European Parliament, the Netherlands  
President, Liberal International

Hon. Hans van Baalen's political career started when he joined the Dutch Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) in 1986. In 1988, he became a member and subsequently Chairman of the Dutch Group of Liberal International (LI). From 1993 until 1998, he was International Secretary on the National Executive Committee of VVD and was the VVD National Campaign Manager for the 1998 and the 2003 general elections. In May 1998, he was presented with the VVD Thorbecke Award. In September of 1999, Hon. van Baalen succeeded Frits Bolkestein as a Member of the House of Representatives of the States General, the Lower House of Dutch Parliament. After the May 2002 general elections where he lost his parliamentary seat, Hon. van Baalen went on a tour of duty to Bosnia for humanitarian relief work. However, in January 2003 general elections, he recaptured his seat in Dutch Parliament.

Hon. van Baalen is also Member of the ALDE Bureau and member of various committees such as the Foreign Affairs and Security and Defence to which he is also the Coordinator. He is also a member of the Industry, Research and Energy Committee. Additionally, he is member of the Afghanistan United States Delegation, and Chair of the Japan Delegation. At the 56th LI Congress in Cairo, Egypt he was elected President of Liberal International, a post that he holds to this day. Hon. van Baalen received the Friedrich Naumann Medal for Freedom in 2011 for his fight for human rights and civil liberties and his firm leadership of LI.

Hon. van Baalen studied International Law and International Relations at Leyden University.



**Hon. Kasit Piromya, MP**

Member of Parliament, Thailand  
Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Thailand  
Democrat Party of Thailand

Hon. Kasit Piromya began his political career as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1968 and later in 1979 went on to become the 1<sup>st</sup> Secretary in the Office of the Director-General of the Economic Affairs Department. Before becoming the Ambassador of Thailand to Mongolia in 1991, he was the Ambassador attached to the Ministry of European Affairs in 1988. Khun Kasit was also ambassador to the Russian Federation in 1992-1993, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia in 1994-1996 and to

Germany in 1997-2001. More recently, he was Ambassador of Thailand to Japan in 2001 and also the United States of America from 2004-2005.

Other positions he held were advisor to the Senate Committee, and advisor to the Democracy Party and *PAD* Movement from 2006-2008. He was a Democrat Party-List Candidate in 2006, and Democrat Shadow Deputy Prime Minister in 2008.

Khun Kasit completed his tertiary education at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand as a member of the faculty of Political Science. Later, he went to study International Affairs at Georgetown School of Foreign Service in the U.S., and also International Relations at the Institute of Social Studies in the Netherlands.

## **Parallel Sessions**

### *Session I: Asia's Political and Security Environment: Avenues for Inter-Regional Cooperation*

#### *Session Chair*



#### **Hon. Jose Luis Martin “Chito” Gascon**

Undersecretary (Deputy Minister) for Political Affairs,  
Office of President of the Philippines

Usec. Chito Gascon is currently Undersecretary at the Office of the Political Advisor in the Office of the President, Republic of the Philippines. He is a political activist and social reformer who has been working on democratic governance concerns for close to three decades. He became the National Chair of the Philippine Young Liberals and the first Asian Vice-President for the International Federation of Liberal and Radical Youth. He later served as Undersecretary for Legal, Legislative and Special Concerns at the Department of Education (DepEd).

Prior to returning to government after victory in 2010 general elections, he was the Liberal Party Director General from 2008 and Political Affairs Director of its 2010 campaign. He is the first Filipino recipient of both the *Democracy and Development Fellowship* at Stanford University's Centre for Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law (2005) and the *Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellowship* at the International Forum for Democratic Studies of the National Endowment for Democracy (2006). He obtained his BA (Bachelor of Arts) and LL.B (Bachelor of Laws) degrees from the University of the Philippines. He also earned a LL.M (Master of Laws) Degree, specializing in International Law, at St. Edmund's College in Cambridge University as a joint British Chevening & Cambridge Overseas Trust Scholar.

## *Speakers*

### **Hon. Hans van Baalen, MEP**

Member of European Parliament, the Netherlands  
President, Liberal International



### **Mr. MC "Jun" Abad, Jr.**

Chair of the Board of Directors  
Institute for Strategic and Development Studies,  
Philippines

Mr. Jun Abad, Jr. is the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Institute for Strategic and Development Studies (ISDS) in the Philippines. ISDS is a founding member of the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS) and the Council for Security Cooperation in Asia Pacific (CSCAP). Before assuming this position, Mr.

Abad worked for 15 years at the ASEAN Headquarters based in Jakarta, Indonesia, where he served in various capacities, including as founding Director of the ASEAN Regional Forum Unit and Spokesperson and Special Assistant to the ASEAN Secretary-General.

Mr. Abad received Public Administration and International Studies degrees from the University the Philippines and University of Sydney, respectively. He completed the Program on National and International Security at the Harvard Kennedy School.



### **Mr. Shih-Chung Liu**

Director, Department of International Affairs  
Democratic Progressive Party, Taiwan

Before joining Taiwan's main opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) as Director of International Affairs Department in June 2012, Mr. Shih-Chung Liu was director of the Research Center at the Taiwan Brain Trust, a Taipei-based think tank from 2010. From September 2008 to December 2009, Mr. Liu was a visiting fellow at the Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies of the Washington-

based Brookings Institution. Starting July 2012, Mr. Liu is also an advisor to the Mainland Affairs Council.

Mr. Liu also spent eight years in the DPP government as a Senior Foreign Policy Adviser to former President Chen Shui-bian in the Presidential Office from 2000 to



2006. He then joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the Vice Chairman of Research and Planning Committee.

Mr. Liu has been a frequent editorial contributor and political columnist for the *Taipei Times* and the *Taiwan News* in the past decade. His research covers the fields of Taiwan's domestic politics and foreign policy, cross-strait relations and US-Taiwan relations.

Mr. Liu earned his M.A. from the Department of Political Science at Columbia University where he is also a Ph.D candidate.



**Hon. Rajiva Wijesinha, MP**

Presidential Adviser on Reconciliation, Sri Lanka  
Leader, Liberal Party of Sri Lanka  
Former Chairperson, Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats

Hon. Rajiva Wijesinha is a Member of Parliament, Sri Lankan Presidential Adviser on Reconciliation, and Leader of the Liberal Party of Sri Lanka. He previously served as Secretary General of the Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process in Sri Lanka and as Secretary of the Ministry of

Disaster Management and Human Rights. He was CALD Chairperson in 2000 and in 2010-2012.

Hon. Wijesinha is a leading liberal theoretician in South Asia, and had conducted workshops on liberalism in India, Pakistan, Nepal, Afghanistan and Indonesia. His publications include: *Liberal Values for South Asia*, *Declining Sri Lanka* and *Political Principles and Their Practice in Sri Lanka*. He recently released a collection of speeches entitled, *Asian Liberal Perspectives: Promoting Democracy, Equity, Pluralism*.

Hon. Wijesinha studied at Oxford University, England where he completed Bachelor and Doctor of Philosophy degrees.

## Session II: From BRICS to TIP: Implications for Trade and Investment Policies

### *Session Chair*



#### **Hon. Saumura Tioulong, MP**

Member of Parliament - Elect, Cambodia  
Sam Rainsy Party of Cambodia / Cambodia  
National Rescue Party

Hon. Saumura Tioulong is currently an opposition parliamentarian representing the capital city of Phnom Penh, a post that she holds since 1998. She obtained her MBA as well as her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from the University of Paris. In Paris, she later started her successful business career. Hon. Tioulong has been

supporting the democratic development in Cambodia even if she was in France. From 1993 to 1995, she served as Deputy Governor of the National Bank of Cambodia. She is a signatory of the Win with Women Global Initiative and has been actively involved in CALD projects.

### *Speakers*



#### **Hon. Niccolo Rinaldi, MEP**

Member of European Parliament, Italy  
Vice Chairperson, Alliance of Liberals and  
Democrats for Europe Group

Hon. Niccolo Rinaldi is the Vice Chairperson of Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Bureau and is a MEP for Italia dei Valori – Lista Di Pietro. He is also member of the International Trade Committee and of the Human Rights and Development Committee. Moreover, he is Vice-Chair of the Delegation to the Cariforum-EC

Parliamentary Committee. He is also member of the following delegations: South Asia, SAARC, Palestinian Legislative Council and the Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Mongolia Delegation. He is also a member for the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly Delegation.

Hon. Rinaldi has a degree in Political Science (Florence) and wrote his thesis about the street economy in Dakar (1988).



**Hon. Jerry Treñas, MP**

Member of the House of Representatives,  
Philippines  
Liberal Party of the Philippines

Hon. Jerry Trenas is a Member of the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal and Vice Chairman of the Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability, Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries and a Member of the Committees on Accounts, Ethics and Privileges, Justice, Local Government, Public Works and

Highways, Trade and Industry and Ways and Means.

Hon. Trenas also served as a three-term Mayor of the City of Iloilo from 2001 to 2010. He was also the Chairman of the League of Cities of the Philippines from 2007 to 2010. Since 2009, he has been a member of the Board of Trustees for the Cities Development Initiative for Asia. He has also been a member of the Board of Trustees for the Institute for Solidarity in Asia. From 2001 to 2004, he was Chairman of the Infrastructure Committee of the Regional Development Council; he was re-elected to this position in 2007.

Hon. Trenas earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science at Ateneo de Manila University, where he also later completed his law degree.

*Session III: ASEAN Community by 2015: Impact on Asia-Europe Relations*

*Session Chair*

**Hon. Buranaj Samutharaks**

Member of Parliament  
Former Spokesperson, Democrat Party of Thailand (DP)



Hon. Buranat Samutarak is a member of DP and serving his fourth consecutive term as Member of Parliament, where he plays an active role in the Foreign Relations Committee. He was the principal author of key draft legislations including National Healthcare Act, the Public Participation Act and the Privacy of Information Act. Hon. Buranaj was profiled as one of the up-and-coming young leaders of Thailand in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* article titled, “Young Turks on the Move”.

Prior to joining Democrat Party, he was Director of Research at Chulalongkorn University’s College of Public Health and worked at

Harvard University for Healthcare Financing and the Harvard Center for Population and Developmental Studies.

He graduated from Chulalongkorn University Medical School with the class' highest score in Thoracic Surgery. He went on to finish two Post Graduate Degrees in Public Health and Health Policy and Management from Harvard University.

### *Speakers*



#### **Dr. Wilfrido Villacorta**

Former Permanent Representative of the Philippines to ASEAN  
Former Deputy Secretary General, ASEAN  
Former Chair of the National Institute for Policy Studies, Philippines

Dr. Wilfrido Villacorta is the former Philippine Permanent Representative to and former Deputy Secretary-General of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). He re-assumed the lifetime position of Professor Emeritus accorded him by De

La Salle University on his retirement.

He was Dean and Senior Vice-President at De La Salle University. In 1986, he was a delegate to the 1986 Constitutional Commission, which drafted the 1987 Philippine Constitution. He sponsored the constitutional provisions on education, science and culture, the rights of children and the right to public information, and co-sponsored the provisions on social justice and human rights, the equality of women and men and the ban on nuclear weapons.

#### **Hon. Sir Graham Watson, MEP**

Member of European Parliament, UK  
President, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party



**Ms. Kem Monovithya**

Member of Permanent Bureau and Deputy Director,  
Public Affairs Department,  
Cambodia National Rescue Party

Ms, Monovithya Kem is the Deputy Director-General of Public Affairs at the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP). She is Cambodian-born, with global perspectives, after having lived in Cambodia, the U.S. and Europe. Prior to joining CNRP, she had more than several years of work experiences, locally and abroad, with human rights groups and development institutions such as United Nations agencies in Cambodia and the World Bank Headquarters in Washington DC. Her political involvement in Cambodia began since she was 12 years old at the first Cambodia's general elections in 1993. In 2006, she successfully led an international campaign to free her father and other rights activists from Cambodian prison. In 2008, she managed the campaign for the Human Rights Party which is now a founding partner of CNRP. During her years in Washington DC, she actively engaged in policy dialogues with various think-tanks and research institutions. She holds a Masters in Business Economics and a Bachelor in Business Administration.

**Presentation of Parallel Session Results**

*Session Chair*



**Mr. Willem Vanden Broucke**

Head, Inter-institutional Relations and Networking,  
ALDE Staff

Mr. Willem Vanden Broucke is currently the Head of Unit of the ALDE Inter-institutional Relations and Networking Unit. He is also the policy advisor for numerous ALDE delegations, including the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, Eurolat, Euronest Parliamentary Assembly, the Pan-African Parliament and finally NATO. He finished his Master of Laws LLM and served as an Attorney at law at the Appeals Court of Ghent. Mid-eighties he became Deputy Head of Cabinet of the Belgian Minister of Public Function and Science Policy in charge of European coordination, preparation of the Council of Ministers; negotiations with the Unions and legal proceedings.

He subsequently served as Secretary-General of the Liberal Study Centre and Secretary of the Shadow Cabinet of the opposition.



In 1991 he joined the European Commission. He was responsible for infringement proceedings against Member States on public procurement and internal market matters.

1995 he joined the ALDE Group as Press Spokesperson. He was later Senior Policy Advisor on Home and Justice Affairs and coordinator of the ALDE Caucus within the European Convention towards the adoption of the European Constitution.

#### *Presenters*

**Hon. Jose Luis Martin “Chito” Gascon**

Undersecretary (Deputy Minister) for Political Affairs,  
Office of President of the Philippines

**Hon. Saumura Tioulong, MP**

Member of Parliament - Elect, Cambodia  
Sam Rainsy Party of Cambodia / Cambodia National Rescue Party

**Hon. Buranaj Samutharaks**

Member of Parliament  
Former Spokesperson, Democrat Party of Thailand (DP)

#### **Closing Plenary Session**

#### *Session Chair*



**Hon. Bi-khim Hsiao, MP**

Member of Legislative Yuan, Taiwan  
Former Secretary General, Council of Asian  
Liberals and Democrats

Hon. Bi-khim Hsiao began her political involvement with the international affairs of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) when she started the office of the DPP Mission in Washington D.C in 1995. From 1996 until 2010, successive Chairmen had appointed her as Director of International Affairs for the Party. Moreover, she was also the spokesperson for the former President Chen Shui-bian in his 2000 and 2004 election campaign and became his advisor after his first election in 2000.

In 2001, Hon. Hsiao was elected to the Legislative Yuan, representing overseas constituents, and was re-elected in 2004 from Northern Taipei City. She was again re-elected in 2012. She was a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, eventually chairing the Committee and was active in establishing parliamentary

exchanges and friendship with other countries. In 2011, she became Vice-President of the DPP's New Frontier Foundation.

Hon. Hsiao completed her undergraduate degree at Oberlin College where she received a BA (Bachelors of Arts) in East Asian Studies. She continued her graduate studies at Columbia University, United States of America, where she received a Masters degree in Political Science.

### *Closing Keynote Speeches*

#### **Hon. Sir Graham Watson, MEP**

Member of European Parliament, UK

President, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party

### *Closing Remarks*



#### **Hon. Mel Senen Sarmiento, MP**

Member, Philippine House of Representatives

Secretary General, Liberal Party of the Philippines

Hon. Mel Sarmiento is the incumbent Representative of the 1<sup>st</sup> District of Samar. Prior to winning a seat in the House of Representatives, he served as Vice Mayor and eventually, Mayor of Calbayog City, Samar. He is currently the Liberal Party Secretary General.

Hon. Sarmiento has authored 26 bills of both national and local importance. Some of these bills include amendments to the 1991 Local Government Code aimed at strengthening local government units; institutionalizing transparency between local treasurers and the taxation arm of the government in the hope of raising revenues for all levels of government; and revising the fisheries code to give the local fisherfolk a more equitable share in the utilization of marine resources.

Hon. Sarmiento has delivered a good number of privileged speeches in plenary touching on the topics of: Improving the Rice Production in Samar, Strategic Urban Planning, Millennium Development Goals, Disaster Risk Reduction, Alternatives to the Clean Water Act, and Rationalizing the Business Process in the Philippines. Hon. Sarmiento finished Bachelor of Commerce at the University of San Carlos, Cebu City.



**Dr. Chee Soon Juan**

Secretary General, Singapore Democratic Party  
Former Chairperson, Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats

Dr. Chee Soon Juan is a politician and political activist from Singapore. He is currently the Secretary General of the Singapore Democratic Party. Recognised by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience, Dr. Chee has been arrested and jailed more than a dozen times for his political activities, mainly for repeatedly breaking

Singapore's laws requiring organizers to obtain a police permit before staging political demonstrations or making public speeches on political issues. He has also been sued for defamation on multiple occasions as a result of comments he has made about members of Singapore's governing People's Action Party.

Prior to entering politics, Dr. Chee was teaching neuropsychology at the National University of Singapore. However, he was dismissed from this position in 1993 after being accused of misappropriating research funds. He served as a fellow at the Monash Asia Institute in Australia, the University of Chicago, and the Reagan-Fascell Democracy Program at the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Chee is also the Chairman of the Alliance for Reforms and Democracy in Asia. He was a recipient of Parliamentarians for Global Action's "Defender of Democracy" award in 2003. In 2011, he was awarded Prize for Freedom by Liberal International.



## **LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

### **Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe**

Antonyia Parvanova  
Graham Watson  
Hans van Baalen  
Koen Van Ramshorst  
Niccolo Rinaldi  
Therese Murdock  
Willem Vanden Broucke

### **Civil Will Green Party, Mongolia**

Demberel Sambuu  
Ganbaat Tseepil  
Monsor Myandavaa

### **Community of Democracies**

Magdalena Gawronska  
Maria Leissner

### **Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan**

Chang, Chi-Chang  
Chang, Li-Ke  
Chang, Tun-Han  
Chen, Chiech-Ju  
Chen, Chung Liang  
Chen, Hui-Chen  
Cheng, Wen-tsan  
Chiu, Chih-Wei  
Chiu, Shih-Yuan  
Chiu, Yi-Ying  
Ho, Chih -Wei  
Hsiao, Bikhim  
Hsieh, Huai Hui  
Jang, Jen-Shiang  
Lee, Kun-Tse  
Liu, Chao-Hao  
Liu, Sheng Hung  
Liu, Shih-Chung  
Su Tseng-Chang  
Tsai, Huang-Liang  
Tsai, Pei-Hua

Wang, Chung Hsin  
Wu, Hsin-Hsing  
Wu, Jau-Shieh  
Wu, Ping-Jui  
Wu, Yi-Chen  
Yang Huang, Maysing  
Yeh, Jia Jiun  
Yu, Mei-Nu

**Democrat Party, Thailand**

Buranaj Smutharaks  
Isra Sunthornvut  
Kasit Piromya  
Nant Thananan

**Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom**

Feliz Schilling  
Hans Andre Richter  
Hans-Georg Jonek  
Juliane Schmucker  
Jurgen Morlok  
Katrin Bannach  
Khim Sophana  
Moritz Kleine-Brockhoff  
Nur Rachmi  
Olaf Kellerhof  
Pimrapaatt Dusadeeisariyakul  
Rainer Adam  
Siegfried Herzog  
Sungeun Lim  
Wimonpug Promsrimas

**Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle**

Hanjaya Setiawan  
Irine Yusiana Roba Putri  
Monang Johannes

**ISEAS**

Wolfgang Sachsenröder

**Liberal Forum Pakistan**

Beena Qayyum Khan

**Liberal International**

Emil Kirjas

**Liberal Party Sri Lanka**

Rajiva Wijesinha

**National Democratic Institute for International Affairs**

Ivan Doherty

**National League for Democracy, Burma**

Ma Kyi Pyar

**Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia**

Jayanthi Balaguru  
Lee Hui Seng  
Tan Keng Liang  
Vincent Ho Swee Peng

**Sam Rainsy Party / Cambodia National Rescue Party**

Kem Monovithya  
Khean Viset  
Kim Sopheha  
Mardi Seng  
Mean Spheha  
Mu Sochua  
Sam Rainsy  
Saumura Tioulong

**Singapore Democratic Party**

Chee Soon Juan  
Hui Leng Go  
Muhammad Jufri BinMohd Salim  
Poh Hong Yeo

**South Korea**

Jung Tae ho

## CONFERENCE REPORT



The 6<sup>th</sup> meeting between the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD) and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) focused on the increasing shift of global power to Asia and how countries in Asia and external actors are responding to this development. The one-day meeting explored on how Asia's political-security environment, economic clout, and regional integration would impact on strategic relations between Asia and Europe.

The meeting commenced with enthusing speeches from distinguished speakers who also congratulated CALD for celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and for continuing to provide a venue to discuss the growing dynamics of Asia-Europe relations. The meeting included three parallel sessions. Session I analyzed the political and security environment in Asia and identified avenues for inter-regional cooperation that would ensure a stable environment that promotes and sustains growth. Session II focused on the emergence of “breakout nations” from Asia and its implications for the economic and fiscal policies of other regions. The last session, Session III, looked into the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Community as a regional integration project and tackled the issues and problems that accompany Southeast Asia's integration and its dynamics with Europe and other regions.

This report provides a summary of highlights presented by the invited speakers during the opening ceremonies as well as the salient points raised in the three parallel sessions.

### **Opening Plenary Session**



The Opening Plenary Session was chaired by Hon. Henedina “Dina” Abad, MP, deputy speaker of the Philippine House of Representatives and vice president for policy, programs and advocacy of the Liberal Party of the Philippines (LP). She also served as the chairperson of the CALD Women's Caucus. Joining Abad was Hon. Isara Sunthornvut, Member of Parliament from the Democrat Party of Thailand.

## Welcome Remarks

### **Hon. Joseph Emilio “Jun” Abaya**

Secretary (Minister) of Transportation and Communication, Philippines  
Executive Vice President and Acting President,  
Liberal Party of the Philippines (LP)

Abaya welcomed the CALD and ALDE members, as well as the representatives from the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) and Liberal International (LI). He congratulated CALD for weathering the ‘storms’ of the past twenty years, and commended each CALD member party for playing an active role in bringing forward the concepts of democracy and liberty in their respective nations. Like a vehicle that has different parts and components essential for its smooth travel, Abaya noted that party members are integral to the strengthening and success of CALD as an organization.



Abaya also shared the importance of working together towards a common purpose. For one, he expressed his pride that he is working with President Benigno Simeon Aquino III, who, halfway through his presidency, has already accomplished a lot and continues to live out the principles of the Liberal Party to sustain the focus on the narrow, but straight path.

With CALD, ALDE, LI, FNF and member parties united as one, Abaya said liberals can further advance the objective of institutionalizing democracy and freedom to eradicate corruption and foster growth. The challenge, he said, is to “make Asia a proactive partner in institutionalizing development of various strategies based on the principles of equality, democracy, transparency and consensus building.”



**Hon. Sam Rainsy**

Leader of the Cambodian Opposition

Chairperson, Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats



As chair of CALD, Sam extended a warm welcome to all participants. He thanked everyone for attending the conference despite the onslaught of a typhoon. He expressed his hope for a different kind of typhoon, a political typhoon that will bring down all the dictatorships in the world. Sam thanked the LP for hosting the event and extended a personal gratitude to Senator Franklin Drilon, Senate President of the Philippines and former chair of CALD for adopting a resolution on Cambodia calling for free and fair elections. He also thanked other parties who have taken part in showing that CALD is truly solidarity in action. He invited his Asian colleagues to welcome their European counterparts because the conference, he said, is an opportunity to learn from the European Union (EU) the success stories of integration, which ASEAN is supposed to follow by 2015 as an ASEAN community.

Sam said that while ASEAN prepares for 2015, it would still be a problematic regional grouping because of the different circumstances and political inclinations of ASEAN members. He stressed that ASEAN, just like the European Union, should first recognize and accept the common values of democracy, human rights, and good governance in order to build a sound and strong foundation for regional integration.

**Hon. Sir Graham Watson, MEP**

Member of European Parliament, United Kingdom

President, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party

Watson started with warm greetings to old friends in CALD and expressed how privileged he was to be in a country run by liberals. CALD is already twenty years but “it’s the liberal spirit that continues to keep up young,” he said. Watson shared how impressed he was by the quality of the speakers in the conference, which would have discussions on security issues, trade, and ASEAN 2015.

While he is quite optimistic about Southeast Asia’s trajectory, he said that Europe’s current status is not a pretty picture. He narrated how Europe is stuck in a crisis of sovereign debt and how bank capitalization continues to trouble it.

Watson is thankful though that Europe’s current situation is not at all similar to the aftermath of the Wall Street crash, when democratic governments in Europe resorted to populist politics, and when fascist and communist parties were

elected into office and wreaked havoc in the economy. But the fear of recession and unemployment continues to linger especially when parties of the extreme right in France are 24% in polls, the anti-European and anti-immigrant in Britain took 26%, and a comedian in Italy took a quarter of all votes cast in their national elections.



“Economic hardship hits liberals,” Watson noted. That is why liberals are redoubling their efforts and pushing for more successes similar to Norway, Austria and Luxembourg where national elections showed encouraging results. Watson said Europe needs more trade with the developing and growing economies in Asia. He shared that their free trade with South Korea is a huge success and they have started initiating talks and partnerships with Singapore, Japan, Malaysia, and Thailand. “Trade is the fastest way to pull people out of poverty,” Watson said, quoting Adam Smith. Watson said

that the prospects of ASEAN are brighter as it increases regional cooperation. He thanked the liberals who put long term strengths and common concerns above immediate satisfaction and person gain. In particular, he thanked the heroes of Asia such as Ninoy Aquino, Kim Dae-jung, Martin Lee, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, among others, who have “labored with the bricks of effort and the mortar of persistence to make Asian liberalism what it is today.”

### **Dr. Rainer Adam**

Regional Director, Southeast and East Asia Office  
Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom



Adam congratulated CALD on its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and conveyed that it is more than a partner organization, more than a platform and a forum, more than a meeting place for liberals. CALD’s success lies in its philosophy that promotes the integrity and capacity of individuals and the supremacy of the human spirit. Adam said that CALD and the FNF are kindred souls who both went through tough times together over the years. He added how proud he is of CALD because he witnessed its growth - from being a band of opposition parties to being influential players in

Asia. Because of this, CALD continues to nurture political forces that believe in freedom. Adam also shared the current challenges that he thinks are important to address. On top of the list is the success of the authoritarian regime of China, which according to him, “combines skillful political repression with economic development.” The liberal voice of reason, he said, is needed to debunk



economic miracles achieved by authoritarian government. It is vital to put forward political reform and human rights to climb out of poverty, preserve human dignity and attain human development, he continued. Adam also noted that the “end goal must always be to empower the citizens to make their own economic and social decisions and carry their own responsibility.”

He believes CALD has a bright future ahead and the best is yet to come for freedom and democracy in Asia.

### **Keynote Address**

#### **Hon. Franklin “Frank” Drilon, MP**

Senate President, Senate of the Philippines

Vice Chairperson, Liberal Party of the Philippines

Former Chairperson, Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats



Drilon extended his warm welcome to friends from Europe and Asia and said that he was delighted that the LP was given the honor to again host the CALD-ALDE meeting. Drilon shared that he attended CALD’s 10<sup>th</sup> year anniversary in Bangkok, Thailand which was then hosted by the Democrat Party and graced by former Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai; the founding Chair of CALD and former Thai Foreign Minister and ASEAN Secretary General, Dr. Surin Pitsuwan; and the CALD Chair during that time, M.R. Sukhumbhand Paribatra, who is now the Governor of Bangkok. Now that CALD is on its 20<sup>th</sup> year of democratic activism, Drilon underscored that he is proud that CALD and LP were able to tackle head on “the most pressing and relevant issues with clarity of vision and determination to seek the best solution amidst various political, economic and social struggles.”

Drilon said that Asia still has a long way to go in terms of the level of democratic advancement, economic development, and political maturity and stability. Europe, being a good model for regional integration, could be a good model for ASEAN. With this, the continued partnership of CALD and ALDE becomes more vital not only because it is characterized by mutual respect, transparency and mutual accountability, but also by synergy that can result in mutual growth and development.

“Throughout the years CALD has experienced its ups and downs, but it continues to remain hopeful.” Drilon cited examples of inspiring personalities that offer hope and determination amidst the difficulties of tyranny and repression. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, after 15 years in detention, is actively campaigning in and outside Burma to lead her people to the path of freedom and democracy. In Cambodia,

Sam Rainsy won 55 seats—an increase of 26 seats in parliament, but stood up to reject the electoral results because of cheating and massive electoral prejudices. His party continued to fight for the truth in the “parliament of the streets.” In Singapore, Dr. Chee Soon Juan, after repeated prosecution and incarceration, can now travel freely, and join us in liberal gatherings, Drilon added.



Drilon also proudly shared the perseverance of the Aquino administration in the Philippines, which continues to pursue good governance and sustainable development in the country. While surrounded by intense public clamor due to the alleged misuse of government resources, Drilon said, “The Aquino government will not spare anyone who will be proven guilty from accountability and punishment.” Drilon noted that with the Aquino administration’s strong adherence to democratic principles and ideals, the platform of good governance, upon which the administration stands, would have a stronger foundation.

The Philippine Senate President also emphasized that there are other things more important than being in power. The core liberal values of protection of human rights of every individual, the rule of law, good governance are what define liberals. “In times of struggles”, he said, “these are what keep liberals going. In times of victory, these become our moral compass.”

“Political parties are the heart and soul of a democracy. We, liberals, should be at the forefront of political party reform. We must reach out to our constituents. We

must remain inclusive and consultative...We must remain optimistic. We must not lose hope,” Drilon said. “Democracy is a continuing struggle. For as long as we remain steadfast in our convictions and principles, we will prevail,” he added as he concluded his speech.

### **Continuation of Opening Plenary Session**

The second part of the Opening Plenary Session was chaired by Hon. Antonyia Parvanova, Member of European Parliament from Bulgaria and Vice President of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Group.



### **Keynote Speeches**

#### **Prof. Dr. Jürgen Morlok**

Chairman of the Board of Trustees  
Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF)

Morlok extended his compliments to CALD by saying that: “CALD is the only true cooperation of political parties in Asia.” He said that CALD has found its way to explore “serious political cohesions” across borders as it continues to not only provide a venue for exchange of ideas, but also to give tangible support to partners and members in Cambodia, Taiwan, Singapore, and Myanmar.

While twenty years ago, liberalism and democracy were not the dominant trends in Asia, Morlok said that the CALD founders “went against the tide” with their political ideas and ideals and helped strengthen policies on freedom in several countries. “Proud to be a liberal” is a great slogan that CALD adhered to over the years making liberalism part of the future of Asian countries.



Morlok also tackled the current challenge of the Free Democratic Party (FDP), which narrowly failed to reach the 5% threshold during the German elections. This situation meant the lost of jobs from ministers and members of parliament to researchers and assistants. According to Morlok, in his nearly 50 years as a member of FDP, the election lost has been the biggest blow. He added that without a representation in the federal parliament, they would have to work harder in the next four years.

He shared a few insights he learned from the recent electoral defeat. First, he said to not take anything for granted. “Past victories will not automatically repeat themselves,” he warned. Every election is a new one and parties and its members should not believe that they know better than the polls. Second, no one gets votes out of sympathy or pity. What truly works is to have serious candidates with plausible track records and to use past accomplishments to make their plans credible. Lastly, act on the most important promises because the confidence of the voters is very hard to gain, but very easy to lose and more importantly, even harder to regain. Morlok expressed his hopes that a new leadership will emerge in the FDP – someone who is willing to reinvent the party and who will be able to reconnect the members to the party and the party to the voters. He said that he is excited of the uplifting signs that are currently happening - increasing membership and political analysts agreeing that the lack of liberals in the German Bundestag leaves a dark void. He is optimistic that the FNF will help regenerate German liberalism while remaining committed to international programs such as CALD.

He conveyed his excitement for the months/years ahead: the success of ALDE in the upcoming May 2014 European elections; the progress of the European integration in developing trade liberalization and promoting fundamental rights; and the plans of ASEAN on having a common market and strengthening the ASEAN Human Rights declaration. “I’m sure we are on the threshold for an area for liberals, be it on Asia or in Europe or anywhere else, to have the opportunity of being a dominant force and we shall have to work hard for it”, he concluded.



**Hon. Su Tseng-chang**

Chairperson, Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan (DPP)  
Former Premier, Executive Yuan, Taiwan



Su recounted that CALD started in Taiwan in 1993 when he was still serving as secretary general of DPP and when the democratization in his country was gaining momentum. He said that CALD has been the most important party alliance in Asia – continuing to promote democracy, human rights, and freedom throughout the region.

Twenty-seven years ago Su related that he founded, together with 17 others, the very first democratic party in Taiwan - the DPP. Since then, DPP kept pushing for democratization as the only path to end political persecution. Su shared his experience when they fought hard against the KMT's one-party rule until they successfully held the first general elections, which lead to DPP's victory as ruling party in 2000. According to Su, Taiwan joined the Philippines and Korea in leading the third wave of democratization in East Asia.

Su also shared the opportunities and challenges that Taiwan encountered when a change of heart of its citizens occurred in terms of aiming for long-term reforms. He said that his party experienced democratic setbacks when the old regime returned to power. And with globalization continuing to shape the world affairs, Su said it is imperative to stay in solidarity to sustain regional and international cooperation.

Despite the challenges, Su encouraged everyone to remain hopeful because there are great and successful stories currently unfolding across the region. Burma, for instance, showed that with the power of the people and with international support, political transition could gain ground. Also, the Philippines showed that with liberal leadership, political reforms to achieve good governance could be accomplished.

Su also noted the importance of working together in forging a democratic alliance among Asian democracies to safeguard common interests such as peaceful resolution to end disputes in the East and South China seas. Su shared that in this regard, Asian could be guided by the three R's: responsibility, reconciliation and rebalance. He said, "The DPP is committed to its responsibilities for the future of Taiwan, is willing to reconcile through dialogues as a means to normalize cross-strait relations, and desires to be a responsible partner of fellow democracies in the Asia Pacific."

Finally, Su congratulated CALD in its 20<sup>th</sup> year anniversary and encouraged all CALD members to stand firm, whether in power or in opposition, to deter the threats of democracy and to continue to promote freedom and democracy throughout the world.

**Hon. Hans van Baalen, MEP**

Member of European Parliament, the Netherlands  
President, Liberal International (LI)

Hans van Baalen gave a rousing speech that highlighted the work of liberal leaders and organizations that embraced and continue to embrace liberal principles in Europe and Asia.

The LI, he said, started as a kind of academic club, but has blossomed to be a more professional organization. He thanked Jules Maaten, country director of FNF in the Philippines, who laid down the cornerstones of LI as its first secretary general. In the European Parliament, Christian Democrats (CDU) and Social Democrats (SPD) have no ideals and are only after power, van Baalen said. While liberals, on the other hand, value ideas and will fight even harder inside and outside the European Parliament. In Germany, despite the loss in the election, he believes that the FDP will bounce back and will conquer the Bundestag. He said that CDU and SPD “are a party of the past and not the future”, and this would pave the way for the return of the FDP.



In Asia, he referred to the likes of Sam Rainsy as “freedom fighters,” people who don’t just assume political roles, but also fight for freedom and provide a “voice of optimism” even in difficult circumstances. Liberals, he emphasized, should not only be nice people. Liberals should be a “fighting organization,” one that can set the standards.

One such “fighting organization” is the DPP Taiwan, which fought for democracy since its inception and is currently fighting for its people to decide on the country’s future. He stressed that, “only the people of Taiwan may decide on the course they will take, whether it be closer to China, whether it would be more independent, [or] whether it would be status quo – nobody can speak for the Taiwanese people but themselves.” In the Philippines, the three generations of Aquinos have set the standards. The LP, he said, is currently ruling the country in a democratic and progressive way. Another example is Indonesia, a country which puts a premium on tolerance.

Though a lot of countries are experiencing democratic harvests, van Baalen said that other countries still need help in developing democracy. He reminded the plenary to not forget Daw Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma, Sam Rainsy of Cambodia, and even North Korea and Vietnam. By having an association of democracies, such as LI and CALD, Liberals can move forward together in peace and democracy.

**Hon. Kasit Piromya, MP**

Member of Parliament, Thailand

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Thailand

Democrat Party of Thailand (DP)



In his presentation, Piromya provided a bit of historical background on the situations of Europe and Asia in the post-Cold War era, and the partnerships that they built and strengthened throughout the years. He explained the challenges of Southeast Asian countries in terms of fighting illiberal democracy, and the importance of international support and partnerships.

Being a diplomat since the 1970s, Piromya said he was a keen observer of two great events that transpired after the Cold War: 1) the struggle of colonized countries in the Asia Pacific towards independence; and 2) the struggle of the free world against the rise and expansion of communism. He added that countries in the Asia Pacific region had three options that time: 1) to join the communist world; 2) to join the free world (Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines); and 3) to join the non-aligned movement (Burma and Indonesia).

With the Asian countries aligned on their respective trajectories, the European countries, meanwhile, had a two-prong approach - to establish economic and security relationship towards Asian countries. For instance, the United Kingdom and France joined the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), which was backed by the United States with the Philippines, Pakistan, Thailand, Australia, and New Zealand as members. These countries opted for free-market and democracy. Piromya also noted that the European countries who were key members of the European Union initiated the “ASEAN-EU dialogue” to help Southeast Asian countries to develop economically. Europe, after the Cold War, had to keep on pushing for a comprehensive partnership (economic partnership) arrangement with Asian countries, at a regional or bilateral level, to reclaim its rightful position worldwide. Moreover, the European Union have also been actively participating in the political process in Asia calling for democratization to achieve a modernized society with democracy, human rights, freedom, good governance, and the rule of law (i.e. supporting the case of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s call for freedom in Burma).

Piromya said Europe should sustain and be more active in its work in Asia. Asian countries need the substantive support and intellectual capacity of European friends. He said, "Let's work in a more intense manner so that we can fight illiberal democracy, populist democracy, absolute majoritarianism inside the parliament... totalitarianism or authoritarianism in a democratic setting in many of the Asian countries." He added that European countries should stop being kind and benevolent to communist regimes in Laos and Vietnam, to the authoritarian regime in Cambodia, to the "family-oriented regime" in Singapore, to the one-party rule in Malaysia and to the rising one-party and one-family rule in Thailand.

In Thailand, Piromya said that while he thinks they are gaining successes in terms of increasing civic participation from various sectors, they still need international support. The European Parliament, for instance, needs to "come out in a more forceful manner and to have some sort of reprimands, threat and even sanctions to all the governments in Asia that have abused democracy and democratic elections and turned themselves into a family-authoritarianism in the parliament and in government."

The challenge for everyone is how to overcome traditional belief and practices that are not in line with democratic practices. The challenge for political parties is not only to facilitate the road to power, but also the road toward party-society engagement. In Thailand, Piromya said, they need to work together to expand the empowerment at the ground level and to implement a more decentralized process. He emphasized that education and sharing of best practices and experiences are key to promote relationships at the political, institutional, and even at the civil society levels.

### **Presentation of Results of Parallel Sessions to the Plenary**

Mr. Willem Vanden Broucke, head of ALDE's Inter-Institutional Relations and Networking Unit, served as chair of the session which presented the results of the parallel discussions. He briefly provided a background on the three parallel sessions and introduced the presenters. Session I focused on Asia's political and security environment and the avenues for inter-regional cooperation. The session looked also into how the cooperation between Asia and Europe responded to the on-going changes in the Asian political security terrain. Hon. Jose Luis Martin "Chito" Gascon, Undersecretary (Deputy Minister) for Political Affairs of Office of the President and former director general of the LP, presented the results of the first session. Session II tackled the international community's refocusing of attention from the emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South America (BRICS) to the so-called "breakout nations" of Turkey, Indonesia, and the Philippines (TIP), and even Mongolia. The session discussed the current developments and its implications for the economic policies of countries and regions involved. Hon. Saumura Tioulong, Member of Parliament-elect from the Sam Rainsy Party (SRP) of Cambodia, provided the summary for the second



session. Session III focused on the impact of the planned ASEAN 2015 Community on Asia-Europe relations. The session discussed Southeast Asia's preparedness and tried to address the issues and problems that accompany Southeast Asia's integration. Hon. Buranaj Smutharaks, Member of Parliament from DP Thailand, presented the results of the discussion from the third session.



### **Parallel Session I Summary**

The speakers from Session I included Hon. Hans van Baalen, Member of the European Parliament and LI President; Mr. "MC" Jun Abad, chair of Institute of Strategic and Development Studies (ISDS) and former spokesperson of ASEAN; Mr. Shih-chung Liu, Director of the DPP Department of International Affairs and former senior foreign policy adviser to the President of Taiwan; and Hon. Rajiva Wijesinha, Member of Parliament and President of the Liberal Party of Sri Lanka. Gascon said the first session had very lively discussions on issues that covered East and Southeast Asia and South Asia including matters of security in the Korean Peninsula and territorial disputes in the West Philippine Sea. He also shared the discussions on non-traditional security issues such as terrorism, trafficking in drugs and in persons, climate change and natural disasters.

Gascon shared the following key takeaways from Session I:

1. Multilateralism is an important modality in resolving disputes despite its difficulties. Multilateralism must be supported by "plurilateralism," which

refers to regional arrangements. Gascon explained that if multilateralism is a global arrangement, plurilateralism is the strengthening of regional arrangements. Examples of plurilateralism are the mechanisms of ASEAN and the ASEAN Regional Forum as well as the East Asian Summit and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

2. Liberals in Europe or Asia must bring the important issues in both regions to the fore. To do this, it is important to strengthen the liberal and democratic voices in both regions. As more and more liberals in Europe win, perhaps, Gascon said, the relationship with Asia would be strengthened as well over time.
3. There is a need to work on multiple tracks of dialogues, from track I to track III. People-to-people dialogue must also be included in many areas to improve cooperation on education, counter-terrorism, disaster relief and response, among others.
4. It is important for networks such as CALD and ALDE to promote freedom and democracy in all its forms particularly as it relates to democracy in China. It is also important to encourage and support democracy activists in Hong Kong and Taiwan where “backsliding in democracy” has been happening. It is important to note that ASEAN and SAARC countries are capable of cooperating in the economic and security fields, and this could help in lessening their dependence on China or India.



## Parallel Session II Summary

Session II speakers were Hon. Niccolo Rinaldi, Member of the European Parliament and vice chair of ALDE; Hon. Jerry Trenas, Member of Parliament from LP Philippines, who was represented by his assistant Mr. Mondes; and Tioulong from SRP Cambodia who also served as the session's presenter. Tioulong was thankful for the participation of the speakers and the audience who, despite being a small group, were able to provide very important points for discussion and debate. From the presentations to the open forum, she said the participants expressed that any liberalization of trade should be related to issues pertaining to democracy and human rights.

Rinaldi, coming from a liberal platform, shared the four instruments that must be present on trade liberalization. The first instrument is the role of civil society. Rinaldi noted that civil societies are grassroots organizations that can best evaluate the impact of certain trade measures on livelihood and the living conditions of citizens. The second tool is the role of parliamentarians because they can bridge the gap between the technocrats who negotiate international trade agreements and the citizens who voted for the parliamentarians. The third tool is to get an evaluation of the impact or consequences of liberalization agreements on livelihoods, the environment, and on the social fabric of the society. The last tool is to check the existence of domestic legislation that could complement and supplement any international trade agreement to make sure that the weakest elements of the society will be protected and that trade benefits will be redistributed accordingly to benefit the majority of the people. An example of accompanying domestic legislation could be on the fight against corruption.



Tioulong also shared that there were discussions on the sustainability of trade liberalization agreements vis-à-vis their negative impacts. It is important to be cautious on the long-term impacts of trade agreements, she said, because they only appear after five, ten, or fifteen years. Lastly, Tioulong said there were also discussions on the artificial categorization of BRICS and TIPs because they do not represent homogenous group of countries and the only common factor among them is their high growth rate. Hon. Raul Daza, former chair of CALD and former president of the LP, said it was dangerous to use such categorization because it could justify the mantra of some Asian leaders such as Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore who subscribe to the idea that for the sake of high economic growth, human rights and freedom can be forgotten.





Rinaldi proposed alternative standards in order to classify countries. First is the democracy standard where a country is categorized according to its respect for fundamental freedoms and democracy. Second is based on what the country has to offer (i.e. Bangladesh - labour force; Taiwan/Singapore – technology). Third is whether the country is a recipient or investor of foreign investments. Finally, a country can also be categorized according to the environmental impact of trade liberalization (i.e. whether the impact is low or high).

### **Parallel Session III Summary**

The speakers in session III included Dr. Wilfrido Villacorta, former deputy secretary general of ASEAN, Ms. Kem Monovithya, deputy public affairs director of the Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP), and Sir Graham Watson. Dr. Buranaj Smutharaks, DP Member of Parliament, gave the synthesis of the last session.

Buranaj said the speakers raised excellent points about the historical aspects of the EU and ASEAN relations as well as the recent problems encountered by the two groupings. He shared that ASEAN and EU are products of their colonial histories. ASEAN is a creation of independence movements which regard the sovereignty of nations as sacrosanct. EU, on the other hand, is a result of the post war conflict which views sovereignty as dangerous, thereby encouraging nations to come together and form a strong trade union for commercial interests. Today, he added, “EU and Europe can in many ways shape the relationships

between many regions of the world.” As for ASEAN, the historical tenet of non-interference became the reason why ASEAN was never taken seriously in the region and has never achieved its full potential. Despite this, Buranaj explained how ASEAN was successful in enshrining democracy and human rights in its principles, but it remains to be seen whether it could really walk the talk especially with the challenges it previously faced such as Indonesia’s involvement in East Timor, EU’s boycott of the EU-ASEAN dialogue in 2004 over Myanmar, and the failure of ASEAN to issue a statement for the first time during the ASEAN Foreign Minister’s Meeting due to China’s interference through the host country Cambodia over the South China Sea crisis.



The panelists identified three challenges for the EU and ASEAN partnership to work. First is the challenge of engagement, which must be based upon a proper dialogue mechanism that encourages openness, democratization and reforms. It would be futile, Buranaj cautioned, if a regional grouping engages with authoritarian states to promote trade only to legitimize those regimes. Second is the challenge of integration, which lies in the exchange of people in education and positive trade influences. The success of ASEAN Economic Community in 2015, for example, would really depend if the people in each ASEAN country would see and feel positive changes brought about by integration. Last is the challenge of identity, which is the challenge of overcoming the immense diversities within ASEAN and making relationships between and among regional groupings work. Buranaj noted that there are other challenges that are based on issues which cannot be met on a national and sub-regional level, but on a supra-

national level such as immigration, transnational crimes, climate change, conflict over resources, among others.

Buranaj said the ASEAN-EU relations must be based on common principles and liberal values. The values of freedom, free trade, social justice, fairness, and openness are principles that must define the nature of partnerships in the future in order to overcome huge diversities and forge positive change.

### **Closing Plenary Session**

Hon. Bi-khim Hsiao, MP, Member of Legislative Yuan from DPP Taiwan and former CALD Secretary General, chaired the last session.



### **Hon. Sir Graham Watson, MEP**

Member of European Parliament, United Kingdom  
President, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party

In his closing keynote speech, Watson revisited the very essence of liberalism and discussed why it is important to embrace and live it as individuals. He elucidated liberalism as a powerful thought that would indeed create a difference in communities. The CALD-ALDE conference and CALD's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, he said, refreshed his liberalism. The debates throughout the event, he added, reminded him of what liberals are all about.



He said that the “immense wealth of liberal thought” and the “torrents of liberal ideas” cascade down the hillsides of history. While the French and American revolutions provided the legal framework to which liberal ideas are anchored, Watson said that these ideas have been around since time immemorial. “If politics is about the application of thought to challenges and the application of character to circumstance, liberalism offers so much more than other currents of thinking,” Watson emphasized.



Liberalism, he explained, “is a formula, one that can be applied to any society at any time, to create the policies to produce a liberal society.”

Liberal values are universal values. Watson said that they offer people “the chance to build and safeguard a free, fair and open society in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, community and equality of opportunity and in which nobody shall be enslaved by ignorance or poverty or pressure to conform.” And it is this formula that should be applied to the challenges of today, namely: the challenge of creating and securing prosperity in a global marketplace; the challenge of feeding, clothing, and housing a rapidly growing world population and keeping population within sustainable limits; the challenge of fighting internationally organized crimes that create huge scale havoc in the communities; and the challenge of climate change that is quickly approaching its tipping point.

Despite the lack of mechanical and financial resources to address all the challenges, Watson said that, “our only real failure would be a failure to try.” He added that liberals must find ways to work more effectively together and must forge in their souls the consciousness of a global community.

## **Closing Remarks**

### **Hon. Mel Sarmiento, MP**

Member, Philippine House of Representatives  
Secretary General, Liberal Party of the Philippines

Sarmiento started his speech by sharing the status of provinces in the Philippines that were affected by the storm surge caused by Typhoon Yolanda. The typhoon entered in the Visayas region on the day CALD was holding its conference. He said that President Noynoy Aquino, who was monitoring the situation at the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council at that time, assured the Filipino people that government support would be provided to the affected areas.



Sarmiento agreed that discussions on climate change must continue, as what Watson earlier mentioned and that he and Tioulong of SRP Cambodia would further discuss the catastrophe in the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction in Geneva.



He thanked CALD, LI, ALDE, as well as the speakers of all sessions for sharing the lessons that “help understand more the present, so that we can lay the foundations of the future.” Sarmiento said, “The twenty years of CALD is testament that liberalism contains timeless values that leaders and policy makers can use as guide in steering the direction of their nations.” He added that these are the same values that help the Philippines endure storms and adapt to changing conditions. These are the values that help President Aquino “eradicate the opaque barrier between government and the people, and offer transparency and accountability instead.”

The amazing thing about liberals, Sarmiento added, is their capacity “to forge new alliances, to learn from mistakes, to overcome predicaments, and to remain committed to the people so they can enjoy the freedoms and a better life under a regime of social trust with the leaders of the nation.” Sarmiento called on the liberals to focus on the vision of continuing to build their respective parties as broad and as comprehensive as possible so that they can be of better service to their people.

### **Hon. Niccolo Rinaldi, MEP**

Member of European Parliament, Italy

Vice President, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Group (ALDE)



First of all, Rinaldi expressed his heartfelt wishes to the Filipino people to have a quick recovery after the typhoon.

Rinaldi then thanked Watson, who was the head of ALDE Group then, for establishing the partnership with CALD and for believing in the power of networking and sharing dialogues across the globe.

He said that the twenty years of CALD and the six years of partnership between ALDE and CALD are milestones that have to be celebrated because these years reaffirm liberal and democratic values.

Rinaldi discussed free trade and how it is evolving over the years. Free trade, and the global market, he said, became a sort of “gospel” to economists as much as to liberals. With China embracing global free trade as well, he explained the necessity for trade to be accompanied by democratic accountability. The roles of democratic institutions and parliamentarians are very important in shaping the trade environment and that the core values of environmental sustainability, social progress for citizens, human rights, and anti-corruption.

Rinaldi also shared three characteristics that make the CALD-ALDE partnership unique and special. First, he said CALD and ALDE members share the awareness of common destiny and the interdependence of life. What happens in the Philippines has a direct impact in Africa and Europe and vice versa. Second, there is mutual learning. He said that the conferences and events are always a source of personal enrichment. Third, there is an atmosphere of good mood – “there is an open spirit and positive approach to the job we have to undertake.” The message of optimism, Rinaldi emphasized, is very important especially to a society often threatened by anxiety, despair, and fear. And with this optimism, Liberals can always be at the forefront of conveying a message of hope.

### **Dr. Chee Soon Juan**

Secretary General, Singapore Democratic Party

Former Chairperson, Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats



Chee finally attended his first CALD event after being bankrupt and banned from travelling since 2006. After extending gratitude to all the distinguished guests and speakers of the conference, he zeroed in on one of the key themes of the event, the power-shift from Europe to Asia. Chee said that the discussion of “power” was referred to by most as “economic power” or the increased of power measured in GDP growth.

GDP growth, he added, is “merely an aggregate of goods that we produce and services that we render” and “does not tell us anything about the well being of the people working to produce this growth.” He added that “in our rush to be economic powerhouses we inadvertently or otherwise fuel human kind’s fatal weakness, greed.”

Chee underscored that it is important to make a distinction and not lead people into false notion that achieving GDP growth makes everyone wealthier, healthier, and happier. He provided examples of situations that contribute to GDP growth, but not to the well being of a person. A company, for instance, pays hefty bonuses to directors, but impacts on the painful retrenchment benefits of workers. Also, when trees are cut down and turned into paper, GDP grows, but it decreases trees that give out oxygen and reduce carbon dioxide. Chee also

shared the situation of China, which currently enjoys economic success, but experiences massive amount of environmental degradation to its villages that turn to “cancer villages.” Moreover, China’s economic growth, he cautioned, “masks a dangerous bubble that when burst, will wreak economic and financial havoc throughout the world.” In Singapore, Chee said that while it enjoys one of the highest GDP per capita in the world at \$65,000, Singaporeans real wages decline over the years. Also, according to a survey, Singaporeans are ranked as the least happy people in the world. He said that the focus on higher growth rates have resulted in a “generation of greater poverty.”

Chee said that the obsession with the GDP has driven economies to absurd contradictions. However, Chee said there could be alternative indicators such as the Genuine Progress Index, which takes into account the socio-political costs that go into the GDP.

In conclusion, Chee called on CALD and ALDE to promote the practice of comparing how responsive political leaders are to the needs of the people, instead of focusing on GDP growth.

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