

Statements endorsed by and information on the first Asia Pacific Solidarity Conference

Wednesday 4 July 2007, by [APISC](#) (Date first published: 13 April 1998).

The following statements were endorsed by acclamation in the final plenary session of the Asia Pacific Solidarity Conference, April 10-13, 1998 Sydney, Australia.

Contents

- [Asia Pacific Solidarity \(...\)](#)
- [Issues and Topics](#)
- [Asia Pacific Institute for \(...\)](#)

More than 750 people attended the conference, including 67 representatives from Asian, Pacific, Nicaraguan, United States and European progressive organisations.

1. Asia Pacific regional coordination
2. Counter-APEC conference in Auckland, New Zealand, 1999
3. East Timor
4. Indonesia
5. Statement by the Pacific delegates to the Asia Pacific Solidarity Conference
6. Sri Lanka - Tamil Eelam
7. Burma

1. Asia Pacific regional coordination

(The following resolution was presented to the final plenary session by Lisa McDonald, member national executive Democratic Socialist Party on behalf of the conference organisers.)

Given imperialism's escalating attacks on the peoples of this region through the deepening and widening neo-liberal austerity policies; and

given increasing state repression of those who are resisting and organising against these attacks,

this conference calls on all participants and all progressive forces in the region

(1) to maintain and increase the contacts and information exchange between struggles and parties in the region and

(2) to continue and step up solidarity in particular in campaigns in solidarity with those forces struggling to bring an end to the most repressive military regimes in the region

We urge that more conferences like this one be held in the future, whether in Australia or whatever country has the conditions and resources to host it.

And we encourage attendance at any future regional gatherings, such as that being planned for the end of this year by the forces present at the conference from Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan.

2. Counter-APEC conference in Auckland, New Zealand, 1999

(The following resolution was presented to the final plenary session following a motivation of the call for a counter-APEC conference in Auckland by Matt Robson, MP for the New Zealand Alliance.)

That this Asia Pacific Solidarity Conference endorses the calling of a conference in Auckland, New Zealand in September 1999 which will provide alternatives to the aggressive social and economic policies of APEC and which will aim to strengthen the ties between the eprogressive parties and movements of all Asian and Pacific countries fighting for social and economic justice and the rights of indigenous peoples.

3. East Timor

(The following statement was presented to the final plenary session on behalf of Action in Solidarity with Indonesia and East Timor - ASIET).

This conference condemns the Indonesian government's bloody occupation of East Timor and supports the courageous struggle of the Maubere people for freedom and self-determination.

The Australian government is the only government in the world to formally annoyance that it gives de jure recognition to Indonesia's annexation of East Timor. We demand that this recognition be withdrawn.

We condemn the Australian government's abuse of the human rights of East Timorese refugees in Australia and demand: Let them stay!

And we call on the Indonesian government to release East Timor resistance leader, Xanana Gusmao and East Timorese freedom fighters imprisoned in its jails.

4. Indonesia

(The following statement was presented to the final plenary session on behalf of Action in Solidarity with Indonesia and East Timor - ASIET).

This conference supports the valiant struggle of the pro-democracy movement in Indonesia to oust the dictator Suharto and his corrupt and repressive regime. We condemn the Australian government's support for the dictatorship and demand that all Australian aid to Suharto to withdrawn.

We also condemn the Liberal, National and Labor parties' vote in the Australian Senate on April 6 against the motion put by Australian Greens Senator Bob Brown which expressed concern for the welfare of 4 members of the Peoples Democratic Party arrested by the Indonesia regime in recent weeks and called on Suharto to ensure their safety and early and fair trials.

The conference supports the international campaign to free the political prisoners in Indonesia and endorses efforts to organise a national day of action in Australia on April 24 and an international day of action on August 22 as part of this campaign.

5. Statement by the Pacific delegates to the Asia Pacific Solidarity Conference

(The following resolution was proposed to the final plenary session by Rex Rumakiek, a representative of the Free Papua Movement, on behalf of the participants from the indigenous Pacific.)

We delegates from indigenous Pacific, from Te Ao Maohi (French Polynesia), Aetearoa (New Zealand), Australia, Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, West Papua and East Timor wish to remind delegates again that dispossession, social injustice, economic inequality and disempowerment of people across our region are perpetuated by continued colonial domination are now aggravated further by capitalist expansion.

We ask for the support of delegates for our campaign to have the following issues raised at the South Pacific Forum:

1. Self determination and independence for all colonised peoples of the Pacific
2. The continuation of the mandate of the UN decolonisation committee
3. An end to resource exploitation and environmental destruction in the South Pacific

We are made painfully aware that similar injustices are committed against people everywhere. We therefore take this opportunity to pledge our solidarity with peoples movements and struggles that you represent.

Please take home with you to your people and your beautiful countries the warmest greetings from the indigenous people of the Pacific.

Your struggle is our struggle.

6. Sri Lanka - Tamil Eelam

(This resolution was presented to the final plenary session on behalf of participants in the workshop on Women and the Tamil struggle.)

This conference is gravely concerned by the continued Sri Lankan - Tamil Eelam war and the increasing genocidal dimension of that war evidenced by:

- (a) the targeting of civilian population by the Sri Lankan forces
- (b) the proportion of disappearances, torture, extra judicial killings, rape, arbitrary arrest and indefinite detention of Tamils

This conference

(1) calls upon both the government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation to secure a negotiated political solution that allows the Tamil people to realise its right to self-determination will full rights to all the people of Sri Lanka and Tamil Eelam.

(2) calls upon the Sri Lankan government for the immediate withdrawal of its armed forces from the

Tamil homeland

(3) calls for genuine negotiations for a political solution to be commenced with a neutral third party acceptable to both the government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamale Eelam.

7. Burma

(This statement was presented to the final plenary session on behalf of the All Burma Students Democratic Front.)

1. To call on the illegitimate military regime, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners including student leader Min Ko Naing and to take due process to transfer power to the National League for Democracy led by Aung San Suu Kyi which won the landslide victory in the 1990 elections
2. To call on the Australian Government to impose trade sanctions as called for by opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and to review the foreign policy of benchmark in the light of practical developments for democracy and human rights in Burma.

Initial Call to participate to the 1st Asia Pacific Solidarity Conference, 1998

The following call was issued for the 1st Asia Pacific Solidarity Conference, which gathered a wide range of left and progressive activists from the Asia-Pacific region from April 10 to April 13, 1998, in Sydney, Australia.

Asia Pacific in Crisis

Until recently, governments, corporations, banks and international financial institutions, all touted the Asia Pacific region as the region of miracle growth, of accelerated development, of economic boom. For millions of other people, the reality has long been different. Their experience has been one of political and social struggle for basic human rights, for a sustainable economic and social order.

The massive worker and student struggles in South Korea against new labour laws, the sharpening struggle against the dictatorship and cronyism in Suharto's Indonesia; the continuing uprising of the East Timorese people for self-determination; the labour struggles and renewal in the Philippines in the face of Philippines 2000 neo-liberal offensive; the ongoing war on the island of Bougainville; the conflict in Sri Lanka over national rights of the Tamil people and authoritarian government are just some examples of struggles in the region. The economic crisis will only sharpen these struggles.

The strengthening of authoritarian practices as a means of defending the austerity and economic restructuring policies have become major concerns throughout the region. Laws to ban trade union organisers from worksites in Australia; outright bans on independent trade unions in Indonesia; restrictions and harassment of non-government organisations in Malaysia are examples of this tendency.

These restrictions have shaped a pattern of general resistance to democratisation by governments throughout the region. Now the IMF is demanding even more attacks on the rights and living standards of ordinary people as the price of a bailout of the embattled Asian economies.

People's Resistance

But at the same time there are innumerable initiatives to fight repression and exploitation. New political movements have emerged in Indonesia; old movements are transforming themselves in the Philippines; an unofficial trade union movement can force the South Korean government to retreat; Malaysian democrats rally to the cause of the East Timorese; the Burmese democrats still refuse to surrender; anti-neoliberal activists are elected to the New Zealand parliament.

These are just a few of the many examples of democratisation initiatives in the region.

The Asia Pacific Institute has called the 1998 Asia Pacific Solidarity conference as a way to bring as many people as possible together to discuss these issues and struggles and to assess what fighting for democratisation and for socially just development can do. The conference aims to bring together political activists, NGO workers, intellectuals and academics from different ideological traditions.

Australian Supporters of the Conference:

Democratic Socialist Party

Resistance

Green Left Weekly

ASIET

PARTICIPANTS:

The following organisations and individuals from the region participated in the conference:

All Burma Student Democratic Front

All Burma Students League (India and Thailand) [Maung Maung Naing, Australian Rep]

Anna Maria Nemenzo, Vice-Chairman, AKBAYAN (Citizen's Action Party); National Co-ordinator, Women's Health Philippines Inc.

Australasian Federation of Tamil Associations

Bougainville Interim Government

Campaign for Popular Democracy, Thailand

Communist Party of Nepal (UML)

Communist Party of Japan

Communist Youth League of Russia (KOMSOMNOL)

Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) of Australia

Representative to the UN of the National Coalition Government [in exile] of the Union of Burma

Dr Jayanta Rongpi, Member of Indian Parliament representing the Autonomous State Demand

Committee, Assam. (A part of the progressive mass movement in India.)

Free West Papua Movement (OPM)

Indonesian National Democratic Struggle Committee

Jose Ramos Horta, Nobel Peace Laureate for East Timor

Labour Party of Pakistan

Mari Alkatiri, Foreign Affairs head, FRETILIN, Revolutionary Front for Independent East Timor

Malaysian Peoples Party (PRM)

Malik Miah, Solidarity (US) and Indonesia Alert!

Melanesian Solidarity (MELSOL), Papua New Guinea

NewLabour Party (NLP) of New Zealand

New Socialist Party of Sri Lanka (NSSP)

Peoples' Democratic Party (PRD) of Indonesia

Prof Francisco Nemenzo, founding chairman, Union for Socialist Ideas and Action (BISIG), the Philippines

Renato Constantino Jr., Chairman SANLAKAS democratic federation, the Philippines

Union of Kanak and Exploited Workers (USTKE), New Caledonia

Asia Pacific Solidarity Conference: Participants

The following organisations and individuals indicated their intention to participate in the conference:

Asia

Burma

Nyan Lynn Shwe, All Burma Student Democratic Front.

National Coalition Government Union of Burma.

Cambodia

Kien Sereyphal, Cambodian Women's Development Agency.

India

Dr Jayanta Rongpi, Member of Indian Parliament representing the Autonomous State Demand Committee, Assam.

Indonesia

Anna Sarasvati, National Council, Peoples Democratic Party (PRD).

Abdul Hamadi, National Democracy Struggle Committee (KNPD).

Edwin Gozal, representative to the Asia Pacific region, PRD.

Yahya Suyasa, national Council, PRD

Japan

Kimitoshi Morihara, Vice-head of International Department, Japanese Communist Party.

Norio Okada, Editor, Japanese Press Service.

Takashi Kono, Vice President, Japan Asia, Africa and Latin America Solidarity Committee (AALA).

Korea

Yoong Youngmo, International Secretary, Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU).

Laos

Womens Union of Laos (to be confirmed).

Malaysia

Prof Dr Syed Husen Ali, President, Malaysian Peoples Party (PRM).

Dr Sanusi Osman, Secretary General, Malaysian Peoples Party

Hasan Karim, Chairperson, Malaysian Peoples Party Youth Wing

Nepal

Communist Party of Nepal (UML).

Pakistan

Chairperson, Mohammed Shoaib Akber, Labour Party of Pakistan.

Philippines

Prof Francisco Nemenzo, founding Chairperson, Union for Socialist Ideas and Action (BISIG); former Vice Chancellor, University of the Philippines (Visayas); Professor of Political Science, University of the Philippines.

Renato Constantino Jr., founding convenor, Asia Pacific Coalition on East Timor (APCET); National Chairperson, SANLAKAS democratic movement.

Sonny Melencio, Campaign Officer, SANLAKAS.

Ana Maria Nemenzo, Vice-Chairman, AKBAYAN (Citizen's Action Party); National Co-ordinator, Women's Health Foundation..

Gerard Cinchos Arances, Education Officer and member National Secretariat KAMALAYAN socialist student organisation.

Thailand

Professor Suthy Prasartset, Advisor, Assembly of the Poor; Vice-Chairperson, Campaign for Popular Democracy

Singapore

Tang Leong Hong, Workers Party of Singapore.

Dr Chee Soon Juan, Secretary General, Singapore Democratic Party.

Sri Lanka

Dr Sunil Ratnapriya, Director, Sri Lanka Institute of Occupational Health and Safety; national executive member, New Socialist Party of Sri Lanka (NSSP).

Tamils

Ana Pararajasingham, Australasian Federation of Tamil Associations.

Vietnam

Women's Union of Vietnam (to be confirmed).

Pacific

Bougainville

Moses Havini, Bougainville Interim Government.

East Timor

Mari Alkatiri, First Deputy Chief of FRETILIN External Delegation

Filomena Almeida, head Information Department, FRETILIN Australia.

Fiji

Steven Ratuva, President, Fiji Anti-Nuclear Group, reseacher University of South Pacific.

New Caledonia/Kanaky

Louis Uregei, Secretary-general, Union of Kanak and Exploited Workers (USTKE).

New Zealand

Matt Robson, MP Alliance parliamentary foreign affairs spokesperson.

Matt McCarten, National Director, NZ Alliance.

Murray Addison, Counter-APEC 1999 organising committee.

Papua New Guinea

Powes Parkop, General Secretary, Melanesian Solidarity (Melsol).

Tahiti

Tamara Bopp-Dupont, member Territorial Assembly, Tavini Huiraatira (Polynesian Liberation Front).

West Papua

John Ondawame, Free Papua Movement (OPM).

Rex Rumakiek, OPM.

Indigenous Australia

Murradoo Yanner, Carpentaria Lands Council.

Doreen Kartinyeri, Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement.

Jenny Munro, Metropolitan Aboriginal Lands Council.

Australia

Action in Solidarity with Indonesia and East Timor (ASIET) Australia.

Resistance socialist youth organisation.

Democratic Socialist Party.

Green Left Weekly newspaper

Australia West Papua Association

Minerals Policy Institute

plus see individual activists and researchers list below

United States

Malik Miah, national executive, Solidarity (US socialist organisation),
Indonesia Alert!

Barry Shepherd, Solidarity

Paul Keys, Indonesia Alert!

Kurt Biddle, co-convenor Indonesia Alert!

Europe

France

Pierre Rousset, Communist Revolutionary League and Fourth International

Germany

Party of Democratic Socialism.

Russia

Mitinia Daria A, Communist Youth League of Russia, member of parliament.

Spain

United Left.

Turkey

Hayri Kozanoglu, national committee, Freedom and Solidarity Party.

Latin America

Nicaragua

Dorotea Wilson, Directorate member, Sandanista National Liberation Front (FSLN).

Individual researchers and activists

Bella Galhos, Canada based East Timor activist.

Dr George Aditjondro, Indonesia.

Dr Jomo Sundaram, University of Malaya.

Dr Asoka Bandarage, feminism and women in Asia, member Editorial Board, Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars.

Dr Lynette Dumble, Melbourne University Australia, womens issues in Southeast Asia.

Makere Harawira, University of Auckland, Maori issues.

Narayani Tiwari, Nepalese researcher, women and development, Australian National University.

Max Watts, dissent inside the military, Papua New Guinea.

Jean McSorley, nuclear energy activist and commentator, Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union.

Dr Jim Green, nuclear technology researcher.

Issues and Topics:

The conference consisted of a series of workshops, feature talks, panels, country reports plus a conference dinner and cabaret and cultural night.

Topics and issues covered included:

The economic and political crisis in Asia

The left and meeting the crisis in the Philippines

Democracy and colonialism in the Pacific

The struggle for indigenous rights in Australia

The struggle against military dictatorships: Burma, Pakistan, Indonesia, Turkey

The regional environmental crisis

Imperialism's new neo-liberal initiatives: from APEC to IMF interventions

Women's oppression and the struggle for liberation in Asia and the Pacific

Overthrowing Suharto and beyond: the movements in Indonesia and East Timor

Strategies for victory in East Timor

Strategies for defeating neo-liberalism: Parties, movements, NGOs.

Economic and political developments in Japan

The workers struggle in South Korea

Challenges for the Indonesian opposition

The Left in South Asia

Countering APEC, defeating neo-liberalism, ending repression: prospects and projects

Asia Pacific Institute for Democratisation and Development

The Asia Pacific Institute for Democratisation and Development is a new initiative in the Asia Pacific region. During February to May 1997 a range of individuals involved in political movements, community organisations and universities consulted over the need for greater regional co-ordination and dialogue regarding the current struggles against authoritarianism, violations of the right to self-determination and the social and economic impacts of the world-wide neoliberal offensive.

An interim council was formed to establish the Institute. During the 1998 1st Asia Pacific Solidarity Conference, the interim council of the Asia Pacific Institute for Democratisation and Development met and confirmed its membership. The council met again immediately after the conference and resolved to quickly expand the institute's membership. Representatives from Thailand, India and Pakistan attended and will be invited to join the council.

The council also resolved to publish a selection of conference talks, to publish a brochure outlining its program of activities and to seek to expand the institute's home page, link it to the home pages of parties and movements in the region and help find resources for more parties and movements to have their own home page.

The council decided to meet again by December 1998.

The provisional aims of the institute were agreed as follows:

To promote research and disseminate ideas on the issue of how to ensure a socially just and environmentally sustainable development as well as rounded democratisation.

To facilitate dialogue and co-operation between the academic community, the NGO community and the peoples' movements (parties, trade unions, campaign committees, etc.)

The interim council comprises academics, political leaders and community activists from Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Australia and New Zealand. It is proposed to expand this initial list to include East Timor, Japan and South Korea.

View online : <http://www.dsp.org.au/apiaustralia/...>