

# ASIA-PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM (APPF)

## 28<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

Draft Resolution Sponsored by: Canada

### A DIGITAL ECONOMY FOR ALL

**Aware** that digitalization is transforming the way that people learn, receive health care, work, socialize, access information, and purchase and sell goods and services;

**Reiterating** that the economic empowerment of all individuals and communities must be the core preoccupation of strategies focused on the digital economy, with a view to ensuring that no one is left behind as the digital transformation of economic activity continues;

**Considering** that improved connectivity can facilitate greater and more equitable participation in national, regional and global economic systems;

**Recognizing**, more specifically, that improved connectivity facilitates access to e-commerce, online financial services, telehealth and distance learning, as well as professional and government services that are delivered through digital platforms;

**Affirming** the importance of openness, inclusivity, privacy, accessibility and tolerance in the digital sphere;

**Recalling** resolutions adopted at previous Annual Meetings of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) on innovation, connectivity, economic growth, free trade and e-commerce;

**Welcoming** the Internet and Digital Economy Roadmap and the Connectivity Blueprint adopted by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) member economies;

**Supporting** efforts within the Asia-Pacific region to negotiate and implement agreements that facilitate rules-based international trade in goods and services, especially digital services;

**Convinced** of the important role that APPF Parliaments can play in promoting an approach to international trade and the digital economy that aims to achieve sustainable growth with benefits that are broadly shared;

**Emphasizing** that implementation of the World Trade Organization's (WTO's) *Agreement on Trade Facilitation* would support the participation of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in digital trade in the Asia-Pacific region and around the world;

**Recognizing** the WTO's Joint Statement on Electronic Commerce of January 2019, wherein signatories confirmed their intention to begin negotiations on trade-related aspects of e-commerce;

**Noting** that e-commerce can help to improve the living standards of – and employment opportunities available to – traditionally marginalized individuals and groups, such as women, minorities, Indigenous peoples, differently abled persons, and those living in remote communities;

**Bringing** awareness to the gender “digital gap” and the important role that APPF Parliaments and Member Countries can play in ensuring its elimination;

#### **RESOLVES TO:**

1. **Work** toward the ultimate goal of universal connectivity;
2. **Support** national policies, programs, regulations and budgetary tools that can enable all people and MSMEs to adopt and benefit from digital platforms and technology;
3. **Promote** early and lifelong access to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and digital skills training at the national level;
4. **Encourage** investment in telecommunications infrastructure that would eliminate the urban-rural “digital divide” and provide Internet access that is reliable and affordable;
5. **Urge** APPF Member Countries to ensure that their telecommunications regulatory regimes are integrated, transparent, predictable and rules-based;
6. **Call** on APPF Member Countries that have not already done so to ratify the WTO's *Agreement on Trade Facilitation* and to undertake measures necessary to implement the agreement;
7. **Promote** responsible and rules-based e-commerce by using parliamentary scrutiny to seek compliance of national laws, regulations and policies with internationally recognized standards.