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MALAYSIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH THE ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (AIPA): DELEGATION, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS FOR REGIONAL PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY

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MASTER OF ARTS (INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS)
UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA
2026

MALAYSIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH THE ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (AIPA): DELEGATION, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS FOR REGIONAL PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines Malaysia's participation in the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) between 2009 and 2018, focusing on Malaysia's delegation patterns, constraints, and the prospects gained from engagement in regional political-security cooperation. AIPA functions as a regional inter-parliamentary platform that enables dialogue and cooperation among ASEAN legislatures and provides a complementary channel to executive-led diplomacy. Using a qualitative research design, primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with seven parliamentary experts selected via purposive sampling. These data were triangulated with document analysis of ASEAN and AIPA materials, Malaysia's House of Representatives Hansard records, media reports, and relevant scholarly literature. The findings identify seven key challenges affecting Malaysia's practice of parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA: ASEAN dominance over AIPA, political system diversity among members, the consensus requirement, limited capacity of parliamentary actors, weak report-back practices, limited implementation mechanisms for AIPA resolutions, and low public visibility. Despite these constraints, Malaysia gained strategic advantages through its participation in four key AIPA meeting platforms between 2009 and 2018. Guided by the Principles of Parliamentary Diplomacy as a conceptual framework, these prospects are categorised into three main dimension: institutionalisation, complementarity to traditional diplomacy, and knowledge exchange. Grounded in neo-regionalism and parliamentary diplomacy, the study suggests that while Malaysia's formal implementation of AIPA resolutions remains limited, sustained participation supports trust-building, policy dialogue, and knowledge exchange, which complement state-diplomacy. Overall, the research positions AIPA as a semi-formal diplomatic platform that can strengthen ASEAN's regional governance through more inclusive legislative engagement.

Keywords: AIPA, ASEAN, Malaysia, Regional Institutionalism, Parliamentary Diplomacy

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ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meneliti penyertaan Malaysia dalam *ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly* (AIPA) antara tahun 2009 hingga 2018, dengan memberi tumpuan kepada corak perwakilan Malaysia, kekangan yang dihadapi, serta prospek yang diperoleh daripada penglibatan dalam kerjasama politik-keselamatan serantau. AIPA berfungsi sebagai platform antara parlimen serantau yang membolehkan dialog dan kerjasama antara badan perundangan ASEAN, serta menyediakan saluran pelengkap kepada diplomasi yang dipimpin oleh pihak eksekutif. Dengan menggunakan reka bentuk penyelidikan kualitatif, data primer dikumpulkan melalui temu bual separa berstruktur dengan tujuh pakar parlimen yang dipilih melalui pensampelan bertujuan. Data ini ditriangulasikan dengan analisis dokumen bahan-bahan dari ASEAN dan AIPA, rekod Hansard Dewan Rakyat Malaysia, laporan media, serta literatur akademik yang berkaitan. Dapatan kajian mengenal pasti tujuh cabaran utama yang mempengaruhi amalan diplomasi parlimen Malaysia dalam AIPA, iaitu dominasi ASEAN ke atas AIPA, kepelbagaian sistem politik dalam kalangan negara anggota, keperluan mencapai konsensus, kapasiti terhad aktor parlimen, amalan pelaporan semula yang lemah, mekanisme pelaksanaan resolusi AIPA yang terhad, serta tahap keterlihatan yang rendah. Walaupun berdepan dengan kekangan tersebut, Malaysia memperoleh kelebihan strategik melalui penyertaannya dalam empat platform mesyuarat utama AIPA antara tahun 2009 hingga 2018. Berpandukan Prinsip Diplomasi Parlimen sebagai kerangka konseptual, prospek ini dikategorikan kepada tiga dimensi utama: penginstitusian, pelengkap kepada diplomasi tradisional, dan pertukaran pengetahuan. Berasaskan kerangka neo-regionalisme dan diplomasi parlimen, kajian ini mencadangkan bahawa walaupun pelaksanaan formal resolusi AIPA oleh Malaysia masih terhad, penyertaan yang berterusan menyokong pembinaan kepercayaan, dialog dasar, dan pertukaran pengetahuan yang melengkapi diplomasi negara. Secara keseluruhannya, kajian ini meletakkan AIPA sebagai platform diplomasi separa formal yang berupaya memperkukuh tadbir urus serantau ASEAN melalui penglibatan legislatif yang lebih inklusif.

Kata Kunci: AIPA, ASEAN, Malaysia, Institusionalisme Serantau, Diplomasi Parlimen

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Throughout the journey of completing this research, numerous individuals and institutions have contributed to the successful completion of this master's thesis.

First and foremost, I am deeply grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Mas Juliana Binti Mukhtaruddin, for making this research possible. Her unwavering support and guidance have played a crucial role in shaping the direction of my academic journey. Her extensive knowledge and experience kept me focused and helped me navigate the complexities of research and writing. Mr. Muhammad Afifi bin Abdul Razak was an supportive co-supervisor.

My heartfelt love and gratitude go to my father, Mr. Kannu Subramaniam, whose unwavering belief in me, which has been a constant source of strength and motivation. I am equally indebted to all my colleagues, senior lecturers, and friends who offered their support and guidance during my master's journey.

Special thanks and sincere appreciation go to the Parliament of Malaysia, as well as all the officials and staff who were directly or indirectly involved in this research. Their cooperation and the provision of primary data were invaluable to the success of this study.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PERMISSION TO USE ..... **i**
ABSTRACT ..... **ii**
ABSTRAK ..... **iii**
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ..... **iv**
TABLE OF CONTENTS ..... **v**
LIST OF TABLES ..... **ix**
LIST OF FIGURES ..... **x**
LIST OF APPENDICES ..... **xi**
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ..... **xii**

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION **1**
1.1 Introduction 1
1.2 Problem Statement 8
1.3 Research Questions 12
1.4 Research Objectives 12
1.5 Significance of the Research 12
1.6 Scope of the Research 15
1.7 Theoretical Framework 16
1.7.1 Regionalism Theory 17
1.7.1.1 Origins of Regionalism Theory 17
1.7.1.2 Understanding Neo-Regionalism Theory 19
1.7.2 Neo-Regionalism and ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) 21
1.7.3 Defining Parliamentary Diplomacy 23
1.7.3.1 Development of Parliamentary Diplomacy Principles 25
1.7.4 Summary 31
1.8 Research Methodology 32
1.8.1 Research Design 32
1.8.2 Data Sources and Instruments 34
1.8.3 Sampling and Recruitment of Interviewees 36
1.8.4 Ethical Approval, Consent and Data Protection 40
1.8.5 Interview Procedures 42
1.8.6 Data Analysis 43

Universiti Utara Malaysia

1.8.6.1 Content Analysis 43
1.8.6.2 Six Steps of the Thematic Analysis 44
1.8.6.3 Triangulation Analysis 47
1.8.6.4 Analytic Audit Trail 47
1.8.6.4.1 Generation of Raw Data 48
1.8.6.4.2 Organising and Coding Process 48
1.8.6.4.3 Clustering Related Code into a Potential Theme 52
1.8.6.4.4 Refining of Final Themes 52
1.8.6.4.5 Presenting the Findings 52
1.8.7 Methodological Limitations 53
1.9 Literature Review 54
1.9.1 Background of Parliamentary Diplomacy Practice 54
1.9.2 Development of the Parliamentary Diplomacy Concept 59
1.9.3 Significant Evidence of Parliamentary Diplomacy 68
1.9.4 Research Gap 80
1.10 Chapter Organisation 82
1.11 Conclusion 84

CHAPTER TWO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY PRACTICES 85
2.1 Introduction 85
2.2 Background of Parliamentary Diplomacy 85
2.2.1 Origin of the Parliamentary Diplomacy Concept 85
2.2.2 The Growth of International Parliamentary Institutions 87
2.3 Development of ASEAN Regional Parliamentary Diplomacy 89
2.3.1 Overview of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) 89
2.3.2 Background of ASEAN Parliamentary Diplomacy 90
2.3.2.1 Significant Organs of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly 94
2.3.2.1.1 AIPA General Assembly 94
2.3.2.1.2 Executive Committee 95
2.3.2.1.3 Standing Committees 95
2.4 The Development of Parliamentary Diplomacy in Malaysia 96
2.4.1 Background of the Malaysian Legislative Body 96

Universiti Utara Malaysia

2.4.2 Initial Phase of Malaysia's Engagement in ASEAN Parliamentary Diplomacy....97
2.4.3 Malaysia's Commitment to AIPA....101
2.4.4 The Delegation Pattern of Malaysia Delegation to AIPA....102
2.5 Conclusion....105

CHAPTER THREE CHALLENGES MALAYSIA FACES IN AIPA PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY....106
3.1 Introduction....106
3.2 Constraints on Malaysia's Parliamentary Diplomacy in AIPA (2009–2018)....107
3.2.1 ASEAN Domination over AIPA....107
3.2.2 Diverse Political System in AIPA Members....110
3.2.3 Consensus Requirement in AIPA....112
3.2.4 Limited Capacity of Malaysia's Parliamentary Actors....115
3.2.5 Lack of Report-Back Activities....120
3.2.6 Limited AIPA Resolutions Implementation Mechanism....129
3.2.7 Lack of Popularity of the Topic....132
3.3 Chapter Summary....134

CHAPTER FOUR PROSPECTS THAT MALAYSIA GAINED AIPA PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY....136
4.1 Introduction....136
4.2 Malaysia's Views on Parliamentary Diplomacy Within AIPA....137
4.3 Validating the Principles of Parliamentary Diplomacy....139
4.3.1 Institutionalisation....140
4.3.1.1 Institutionalisation of AIPA General Assembly....142
4.3.1.2 Institutionalisation of ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface....143
4.3.1.3 Institutionalisation of AIPA Fact Finding Committee to Combat Drug Menace....143
4.3.1.4 Institutionalisation of AIPA Caucus....144
4.3.2 Complementary to Traditional Diplomacy....145
4.3.2.1 AIPA General Assembly Complements Traditional Diplomacy 148
4.3.2.2 ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface Complements Traditional Diplomacy....148

Universiti Utara Malaysia

4.3.2.3 AIPA Fact-Finding Committee to Combat Drug Menace (AIFOCOM) Complements Traditional Diplomacy 149
4.3.2.4 AIPA Caucus Complements Traditional Diplomacy 149
4.3.3 Exchange of Knowledge 150
4.3.3.1 Exchange of Knowledge during AIPA General Assembly 153
4.3.3.2 Exchange of Knowledge during ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface 153
4.3.3.3 Exchange of Knowledge during AIFOCOM to Combat Drug Menace.....153
4.3.3.4 Exchange of Knowledge during AIPA Caucus 154
4.4 AIPA Political-Security Discussions: Serving Parliamentary Diplomacy Concept (2009-2018).....155
4.4.1 High-level Meetings.....155
4.4.1.1 AIPA General Assembly 155
4.4.1.2 ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface 159
4.4.2 AIPA Ad-Hoc Committees 163
4.4.2.1 AIPA Advisory Council on Dangerous Drugs (AIPACODD)....163
4.4.2.2 AIPA Caucus 167
4.5 Conclusion 170

CHAPTER FIVE CONCLUSION 172
5.1 Introduction 172
5.2 Summary 172
5.3 Research Limitations.....176
5.4 Recommendations for Future Research 178
5.5 Conclusion 180

REFERENCES.....181
APPENDICES 204

Universiti Utara Malaysia

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1 *Number of Adopted Resolutions in AIPA in Three Main Subject Categories, 2009 to 2018* 6
Table 1.2 *List of Expert Interviewees (Anonymised)* 39
Table 1.3 *Summary of Initial Code* 49
Table 2.1 *Malaysia's Delegations to the AIPA General Assembly from 2009 – 2018* 103
Table 3.1 *AIPA-Related discussions in the House of Representatives (2009–2018)* 121

Universiti Utara Malaysia

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 Proposed Framework for Parliamentary Diplomacy Principles..... 28
Figure 1.2 Six Steps of the Thematic Analysis..... 44
Figure 3.1 Frequency of AIPA topics discussed in the House of Representatives sessions (2009–2018)..... 121

Universiti Utara Malaysia

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A Interview Request Letter and Interview Questions 204
Appendix B Interview Request Letter..... 208
Appendix C Graduate School Letter for Data Collection 210
Appendix D Approval Email from Parliament of Malaysia 211
Appendix E Notes Taken During the Interview Sessions..... 213
Appendix F Photographs of the Experts receiving Appreciation Frames..... 240

Universiti Utara Malaysia

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIFOCOM	ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly Fact-Finding Committee
AIPA	ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly
AIPACODD	ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly Advisory Council on Dangerous Drugs
AIPO	ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation
APM	ASEAN Parliamentary Meeting
APU	African Parliamentary Union
ASA	Association of Southeast Asia
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASOD	ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
COPA	Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas
CPA	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
***DPR* RI**	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Republic Indonesia
EALA	East African Legislative Assembly
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
GA	General Assembly
GRINGOs	Government-Inspired Non-Governmental Organisation
HLTF	High-Level Task Force
IGOs	Inter-Governmental Organisations
IO	International Organisations
IPI	International Parliamentary Institution
IPIs	International Parliamentary Institutions
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
IRT	Item Response Theory
MPs	Members of Parliament
NACD	National Authority for Combating Drugs
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OLS	Ordinary Least Squares

Universiti Utara Malaysia

OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PAP	Pan-African Parliament
PD	Parliamentary Diplomacy
PIC	Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia
RO	Regional Organisation
ROs	Regional Organisations
SEA	Southeast Asia
ToR	Terms of Reference
TurkPA	Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
V-Dem	Varieties of Democracy
YDPA	Yang di-Pertuan Agong

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Contemporary cross-border issues increasingly require close cooperation among states. Political leaders around the world view diplomatic relations as a primary means of addressing and resolving international problems and maintaining peaceful external relations. Diplomacy involves managing international relations through interaction, negotiation, and other mechanisms to promote and preserve peaceful relations (Cornago, 2008). It also functions as a tool for formulating, implementing, and monitoring foreign policy, as well as resolving conflicts through negotiation, mediation, and lobbying (Umo-Udo & Orifa, 2018). Among the various forms of diplomacy, this research focuses on parliamentary diplomacy.

Parliamentarians are traditionally seen as domestic political actors and representatives of citizens, distinct from the executive branch. However, in recent decades, the roles of parliamentary actors have expanded into more internationalised activities. Malamud and Stavridis (2011) distinguish three major approaches through which parliamentary bodies engage in international affairs: (1) involvement in foreign policy decision-making, (2) conducting parliamentary diplomacy focused on peacebuilding and conflict prevention, and (3) authorising parliaments to act as representatives within parliamentary institutions (Malamud & Stavridis, 2011).

In an institutionalised arrangement, parliamentarians engage with foreign counterparts through International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs) (Malamud & Stavridis, 2011). Cutler (2006) defines IPIs as multilateral deliberative forums that operate according to established consultative or legislative norms. IPIs can be independent institutions or attached to existing international organisations. A basic requirement is that at least three national parliaments participate (Cutler, 2006). Moreover, Šabič (2012) explains IPIs as platforms that facilitate cooperation among parliamentarians to pursue collective interests, adopt resolutions and strategies, and advance policies through advocacy, persuasion, and institutional pressure (Šabič, 2012).

There are numerous examples of IPIs. At the supranational level, the European Parliament (EP) serves as a major platform for political debate and EU-level decision-making (European Parliament, 2023). It exercises legislative functions alongside the Council of the European Union, performs checks and balances over EU institutions and agencies, and shares budgetary authority for approving the EU budget (Department for European Policies, 2023). The EP thus represents a fully-fledged supranational parliamentary institution.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) is another example of IPIs which brings together parliaments from 53 Commonwealth countries, including Malaysia. It seeks to promote and share knowledge of good practices in parliamentary democracy, including legislative, constitutional, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions. These are guided by the Commonwealth's core values of mutual development, equality, gender, human rights, and environmental protection as set out

Universiti Utara Malaysia

in the Commonwealth Charter (Loft & Walker, 2023). Thus, the CPA organises programmes and activities designed to be effective, sustainable, and impact-oriented (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), 2021).

At the continental level, the African Parliamentary Union (APU), established on 13 February 1976, aims to facilitate coordinated action among the legislatures of African states. It operates as a forum for dialogue and parliamentary diplomacy to support peace, sustainable development, democracy, and good governance. These objectives are pursued through annual conferences, parliamentary meetings, and forums that strengthen inter-African cooperation and peaceful conflict resolution (African Parliamentary Union, 2019).

These examples illustrate how national parliaments engage in multilateral parliamentary diplomacy through IPIs. Although IPIs differ in background, authority, and working methods, most share similar goals, focusing on conflict resolution, peacebuilding, legitimising legislative institutions, and promoting good governance. Thus, these show the important features of International Parliamentary Institutions as a tool of parliamentary diplomacy.

At the regional level, many IPIs are affiliated with regional organisations and are intended to support regional integration by involving parliamentarians in regional affairs (Costa et al., 2012). In Southeast Asia, the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) is the principal IPI associated with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Established on 2nd September 1977, by the five initial ASEAN member states' parliaments, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines,

and Malaysia. AIPA serves as a communication hub for the legislative bodies of ASEAN states. It aims to promote close cooperation and mutual understanding among parliaments and to support the realisation of the ASEAN Community 2025 by promoting ASEAN policies among citizens (AIPA Secretariat, 2023).

AIPA's goals are to promote unity among ASEAN members through legislative cooperation and to advance ASEAN's objectives. It emphasises knowledge sharing and facilitates interaction and negotiation among members, enabling legislative bodies to contribute to regional harmonisation and the promotion of ASEAN-related policies. AIPA also assists members in addressing shared challenges and seeking solutions to issues of mutual concern. Through AIPA, parliamentarians can express their views and positions on specific issues and seek consensus-based solutions (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015).

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AIPA supports the implementation of ASEAN policies and the ASEAN Community, which is based on three pillars: the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC), by producing and adopting non-binding resolutions that serve as references for consideration in the formulation of national laws (AIPA Secretariat, 2023). Among these pillars, the APSC plays a crucial role in ensuring that people and member states live in a peaceful and harmonious environment by preserving regional stability through comprehensive approaches. It also provides a favourable climate for the achievement of the economic and socio-cultural community goals (The ASEAN Secretariat, 2019).

The APSC comprises political development, norm-setting, conflict prevention and resolution, post-conflict peacebuilding, and implementation mechanisms designed to foster a peaceful regional environment and facilitate the peaceful settlement of disputes (ASEAN Secretariat, n.d.). Despite its importance, the APSC has been criticised for its limited effectiveness in addressing sensitive regional issues, including the Myanmar crisis, inter-state tensions such as the 2008-2011 Thailand-Cambodia border conflict, and its inability to project a strong collective position due to ASEAN's weak institutional framework, which is also reflected in AIPA (AIPA Secretariat, 2025; Khoirunnisa, 2024; Tene, 2025).

The APSC Blueprint highlights AIPA's supporting role in promoting a rules-based ASEAN Community by facilitating regional integration and national-level implementation of ASEAN agreements and declarations (The ASEAN Secretariat, 2016). In this regard, Mulia (2015), former Speaker of the Dewan Rakyat and AIPA President, stated that:

> In line with the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint, AIPA is equally committed to the realisation of a cohesive, peaceful and resilient region with a shared responsibility for comprehensive security.
>
> (Mulia, 2015).

This statement reaffirms AIPA's support for the APSC Blueprint and underscores the organisation's commitment to promoting a peaceful and secure region by urging ASEAN executives to strengthen cooperation against transnational crime and regional security threats. However, reflecting ASEAN's own characteristics, AIPA's political-security cooperation remains comparatively weak when compared to its economic and socio-cultural work. This can be illustrated by the number of adopted resolutions in each field, summarised in Table 1.1.

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Table 1.1

Number of Adopted Resolutions in AIPA in Three Main Subject Categories, 2009 to 2018

Years	Number of Resolutions based on Subject-Category		
	Political and Security Matters	**Economic Matters**	**Social-Cultural Matters**
2009	5	5	7
2010	3	3	4
2011	3	2	5
2012	2	4	3
2013	1	2	4
2014	2	2	5
2015	3	3	4
2016	5	3	4
2017	0	4	3
2018	0	5	4
Total	**24**	**33**	**43**

Source: (AIPA Secretariat, 2025)

Table 1.1 shows the number of resolutions adopted by AIPA between 2009 and 2018 across the three main subject categories of Political-Security, Economic, and Social Matters, which align with the ASEAN Community pillars. The data indicate that adopted resolutions on political-security matters were the fewest, 24, compared to 33 on economic matters and 43 on socio-cultural matters. Notably, no political-security resolutions were adopted in 2017 and 2018, underscoring the limitations of AIPA in addressing the challenges in strengthening political-security cooperation (AIPA Secretariat, 2025).

The 2009-2018 timeframe is analytically significant when considered alongside regional and domestic issues. At the regional level, Southeast Asia faced a range of evolving security challenges, including terrorism and violent extremism,

transnational crimes such as drug trafficking, human trafficking and arms smuggling, as well as emerging issues such as cybercrime, border management, and disaster response (The ASEAN Secretariat, 2015).

Non-traditional security concerns such as environmental degradation, haze pollution, and irregular migration, exemplified by the Rohingya crisis, further underscore the need for collective regional action. Against this complex background, the relatively low number of adopted resolutions on political-security matters suggests the persistent challenges of AIPA's political-security cooperation and its limited capacity to address both traditional and non-traditional security threats in pursuit of regional peace and stability (Viet Nam News, 2023).

Malaysia was directly affected by many of these regional political-security issues, which shaped its engagement in ASEAN and AIPA. The Rohingya humanitarian crisis, for instance, generated a significant migrant crisis into Malaysia and triggered domestic debate and public pressure for a stronger regional response. As ASEAN Chair in 2015, Malaysia faced pressure and high expectations to provide leadership, and the crisis challenged ASEAN's long-standing principle of non-interference (Bernama, 2015).

In the same period, Malaysia held prominent positions in AIPA, including hosting the first AIPA Caucus in 2009, serving as AIPA President in 2015, and hosting the 12th AIPA Fact-Finding Committee to Combat the Drug Menace (AIFOCOM) (AIPA Secretariat, 2009; ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2015; Razak, 2015). However, despite these high-profile roles, AIPA's political-security cooperation, as

reflected in the adoption of resolutions, appears limited, indicating existing constraints in this area. Accordingly, it is necessary to examine the outcomes of Malaysia's involvement in AIPA, despite its sustained commitment throughout the period.

From this background, the 2009 to 2018 period provides a focused case to understand Malaysia's engagement in the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), by focusing on three interrelated dimensions. First, it traces the development of parliamentary diplomacy globally and in AIPA through a broader history of parliamentary diplomacy, the evolution of AIPA, and analyses Malaysia's own development of parliamentary diplomacy and delegation patterns within AIPA. Second, the research identifies seven key challenges that arise in Malaysia's involvement in AIPA. Third, it assesses the prospects of Malaysia's participation in AIPA by examining four key AIPA meetings related to political-security cooperation and evaluating how it fulfilled the principles of parliamentary diplomacy.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

1.2 Problem Statement

Malaysia has participated in ASEAN parliamentary diplomacy since its inception, with the period between 2009 and 2018 serving as the empirical focus following the transition from AIPO to AIPA. Malaysia's delegation selection to AIPA is shaped by both AIPA-level rules and National Parliamentary level selections. At the AIPA level, delegations are limited to 15 Members of Parliament (MPs) and must include at least three women MPs (AIPA Secretariat, 2025). At the national level, Malaysia applies a Speaker-led delegation process intended to ensure representation across states and to reflect parliamentary party composition. In practice, however, delegation outcomes

mirror parliamentary seat distribution, because the ruling coalition holds the parliamentary majority (Seifert, 2015; Buchwald, 2018).

Between 2009 and 2018, Southeast Asia experienced evolving political-security challenges, including transnational crime, human and drug trafficking, and the Rohingya migration crisis (The ASEAN Secretariat, 2016; Mulia, 2015; The ASEAN Secretariat, 2019). Despite this complex regional content, the number of AIPA political-security resolutions adopted remained comparatively low. Only 24 political-security resolutions were adopted across the AIPA General Assemblies between 2009 and 2018, fewer than those adopted under the economic and socio-cultural matters, as indicated in Table 1.1 (AIPA Secretariat, 2025).

A core problem arises from the interaction between limited AIPA guidance and national-level discretion in delegation selection. Because AIPA provides only basic criteria, selection authority largely remains with the national parliament led by the Speaker. Although this process is intended to reflect state representation and party distribution, it can still produce delegations dominated by government-bloc MPs, because the ruling coalition holds a parliamentary majority (Seifert, 2015; Deinla, 2013). This pattern aligns with broader critiques that AIPA delegations tend to be dominated by ruling-party representatives, raising concerns about representational balance and parliamentary pluralism within AIPA (Yildiz, 2024; Ruland, 2013).

A second problem concerns AIPA's limited performance in political-security cooperation. The adoption of AIPA resolutions depends on member consensus, and political-security issues are often sensitive and sovereignty-related, making consensus

more difficult to achieve (Sen, 2018). In this case, an objection by a single member could stop a proposed discussion or prevent a draft resolution from proceeding, thereby constraining resolution adoption and limiting AIPA's ability to address regional political-security issues (Yildiz, 2024; AIPA Secretariat, 2025). This dynamic undermines AIPA's effectiveness as a regional parliamentary institution that can advance ASEAN's political-security agenda through the parliamentary channel.

Despite Malaysia's sustained engagement in AIPA, its involvement has received limited scholarly attention, resulting in limited discussion of its outcomes and prospects. Existing literature also highlighted the criticisms of parliamentary diplomacy as being used for "parliamentary tourism" without producing effective results (Loureiro, 2025; Guahk & Pepe, 2023). Such critiques contribute to scepticism about the practical value of parliamentary diplomacy, including within AIPA.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Collectively, these factors and causal dynamics imply two key issues regarding Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy in AIPA between 2009 and 2018. First, because delegation selection is largely determined through the national parliament, Malaysia's delegations may still be dominated by government-bloc MPs, despite the stated intention to reflect party composition and state representation. This outcome is consistent with broader critiques that AIPA delegations tend to be largely composed of ruling-party representatives (Ruland, 2019; Laurence, 2015; Ruland, 2013). Second, despite the region's evolving political-security challenges, the comparatively low number of political-security resolutions adopted at AIPA General Assemblies indicates constraints on AIPA's political-security cooperation. These constraints are shaped by

the consensus requirement, which can restrict resolution adoption and weaken AIPA's capacity to sustain political-security cooperation (Pham, 2025).

From this context, three research questions are developed concerning Malaysia's engagement in AIPA parliamentary diplomacy from its early involvement in ASEAN parliamentary cooperation to its delegation patterns between 2009 and 2018; the challenges that constrained Malaysia's practice of parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA between 2009 and 2018; and the prospects Malaysia gains from participation in AIPA meetings related to political-security cooperation. Accordingly, this research analyses Malaysia's origins and development, challenges and prospects in AIPA parliamentary diplomacy between 2009 and 2018, particularly on political-security field. The prospects are examined through Malaysia's participation in four key AIPA meetings related to political-security cooperation, analysed using the principles of parliamentary diplomacy as the conceptual framework. The findings aim to deepen understanding of Malaysia's historical involvement in AIPA, the challenges shaping its participation, and the prospects of Malaysia's involvement in AIPA in four Political-Security related meetings.

Grounded in neo-regionalism theory and the concept of parliamentary diplomacy, this research views AIPA as a multidimensional and semi-formal platform that facilitates legislative cooperation and contributes to Southeast Asia's regional integration process. Methodologically, it employs a qualitative design combining documentary analysis of the Parliament of Malaysia, AIPA and ASEAN documents, House of Representatives Hansard records, relevant literature and semi-structured

Universiti Utara Malaysia

interviews with parliamentary officials. This integrated framework aligns the empirical focus, theoretical lens, and methodological choices with the core problems.

1.3 Research Questions

1. Why has Malaysia engaged in AIPA parliamentary diplomacy from its early involvement in ASEAN parliamentary cooperation to its delegation patterns between 2009 and 2018?
2. What are the challenges have constrained Malaysia's practice of parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA from 2009 to 2018?
3. What prospects does Malaysia gain from its participation in the four key AIPA meetings related to political-security cooperation, when analysed using the principles of parliamentary diplomacy?

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To analyse the origins of ASEAN parliamentary cooperation, including Malaysia's early involvement and delegation patterns in AIPA between 2009 and 2018.
2. To identify the challenges that have constrained Malaysia's practice of parliamentary diplomacy in AIPA between 2009 and 2018.
3. To assess the prospects of Malaysia's involvement in four key AIPA meetings related to political-security cooperation, using the principles of parliamentary diplomacy as the conceptual framework.

1.5 Significance of the Research

This research responds to the limited scholarly understanding of parliamentary diplomacy within the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), particularly

Malaysia's engagement from 2009 to 2018. AIPA represents an emerging regional arena in which parliaments can contribute to dialogue, exchange of knowledge and the democratisation of regional governance. Existing studies on inter-parliamentary institutions (IPIs) tend to focus on Europe and Africa, and only a small number address AIPA in a systematic way, often at a broad institutional level rather than through country-specific analysis (Yildiz, 2024; Costa et al., 2012). By examining Malaysia's participation in AIPA from 2009 to 2018, this research provides new insights into how the relationship between the national parliamentary body and the regional Parliamentary Institution shapes the practice of parliamentary diplomacy in Southeast Asia.

Academically, this research contributes to the growing literature on neo-regionalism and parliamentary diplomacy, two theoretical areas that remain relatively underdeveloped in the Southeast Asian context. It extends neo-regionalism beyond its conventional focus on state executives by incorporating the role of national parliaments and inter-parliamentary institutions as complementary mechanisms of regional cooperation. The study interprets AIPA through a neo-regionalist lens as a semi-formal regional actor and develops a conceptual framework called the Principles of Parliamentary Diplomacy to highlight three core dimensions of Malaysia's involvement in AIPA: institutionalisation, complementary to traditional diplomacy and exchange of knowledge. By applying this framework to the political-security field, the research not only deepens understanding of AIPA's parliamentary dimension but also provides an analytical tool that can be utilised in future studies on the National Legislative body's involvement in IPIs and parliamentary diplomacy.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Methodologically, the study demonstrates how a qualitative thematic approach can be used to investigate sensitive institutional practices in environments where research access is limited. It combines semi-structured elite interviews with the parliamentary officials and triangulated documentary analysis (AIPA documents, ASEAN materials, Malaysian parliamentary records and relevant literature). The reliance on detailed handwritten notes, immediate write-ups and member-checking during interviews shows how credible and context-sensitive qualitative data can be generated even when audio recording is not permitted. This methodological approach offers a practical model for researchers examining diplomatic and legislative institutions in Southeast Asia and other contexts where direct access to policymakers is limited.

Practically, the study offers concrete implications for the Parliament of Malaysia, AIPA and ASEAN policymakers. The findings identified seven key challenges that constrain Malaysia's ability to exercise parliamentary diplomacy effectively and propose strategies to strengthen AIPA's institutional performance. These include, among others, establishing structured report-back mechanisms to the national legislature, enhancing the capacity of parliamentarians to engage in political-security dialogues, improving coordination between legislative and executive bodies, and considering clearer and more balanced guidelines for AIPA delegation composition to ensure more inclusive parliamentary representation. For AIPA and ASEAN, the research provides empirically grounded reflections on how AIPA's parliamentary diplomacy can support the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), thereby reinforcing ASEAN's aspiration for a rules-based and people-centred regional community.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

In alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this research supports two key global objectives. First, it advances SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions by highlighting the role of parliaments in promoting transparent, accountable and inclusive governance at the regional level. Second, it contributes to SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals by emphasising inter-parliamentary cooperation as a platform for regional partnerships, collective decision-making and joint responses to political-security challenges (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.). Through these contributions, the research not only enhances academic understanding but also provides actionable knowledge to support institutional reforms in AIPA and ASEAN.

Finally, the research provides a foundation for future work on the evolving role of parliamentary diplomacy in Southeast Asia. It suggests comparative analysis between AIPA and other regional parliamentary organisations, as well as studies on AIPA's development beyond 2025. Overall, the study contributes both theoretically and practically to understanding how parliamentary diplomacy can advance regional integration and support the achievement of ASEAN's objectives, particularly in the political-security dimension.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

1.6 Scope of the Research

a) The research examines the development of multilateral parliamentary diplomacy within ASEAN's inter-parliamentary setting, focusing on the historical background of Malaysia's involvement in the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), formerly the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation (AIPO), until its delegation patterns during 2009-2018.

b) The empirical timeframe covers between 2009 and 2018, beginning after AIPA's institutional transformation in 2007. Within this decade, Malaysia held prominent roles in ASEAN and AIPA, including hosting the first AIPA Caucus in 2009, serving as ASEAN Chair and AIPA President in 2015, and chairing AIFOCOM meetings. The prominent roles refer to Malaysia's leadership positions and institutional responsibilities in key AIPA parliamentary mechanisms during the selected period.

c) Challenges refer to barriers that hinder Malaysia's effective practice of parliamentary diplomacy in AIPA, specifically within the political-security field. Prospects are examined through outcomes associated with four selected AIPA meeting platforms that contribute to AIPA's political-security agenda. This research discusses Malaysia's challenges and prospects in AIPA between 2009 and 2018.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

1.7 Theoretical Framework

This research adopts neo-regionalism theory and the concept of parliamentary diplomacy to examine the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) as a regional Inter-Parliamentary Institution and Malaysia's engagement in the institution. Neo-regionalism is adopted to understand AIPA as a multidimensional and semi-formal regional actor, while parliamentary diplomacy is used to explain the role of legislative bodies, particularly Malaysia's Parliament, in fostering regional dialogue and cooperation within the region.

Furthermore, this research also implements the parliamentary diplomacy concept to explain Malaysia's legislative body engagement in the ASEAN Inter-

Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), which is considered a focus of this thesis. Researchers explain the parliamentarians' cooperation within AIPA based on neo-regionalism perspectives to provide a theoretical foundation for this research. The research further explains the concept of parliamentary diplomacy, to describe the diplomatic cooperation in the context of AIPA and develop a conceptual framework of the Principles of Parliamentary Diplomacy, to analyse Malaysia's engagement in AIPA.

1.7.1 Regionalism Theory

1.7.1.1 Origins of Regionalism Theory

Regionalism can be understood as cooperation among states located within a particular geographical area. This cooperation may be in the form of intergovernmental, grounded in the principle of sovereign autonomy, or it may develop in a more supranational approach. However, regionalism does not produce uniform outcomes across the world; rather, it provides a framework that facilitates engagement and interaction among states within a region (Sridharan & Raghavan, 2007).

The development of regionalism theory can be divided into two phases. The first phase, which began in the 1950s, focused on describing European integration through regional integration theories. Federalism viewed the nation state as a key source of conflict and argued that durable peace required a strong constitutional and institutional supranational framework capable of restraining nationalism and redistributing authority across regional, national or sub-national levels. Nevertheless, due to federalism's struggle to overcome sovereignty as a foundational political value,

scholarly debate shifted toward more incremental approaches to integration (Wunderlich, 2007).

The functionalist scholar Mitrany (1966) argues sovereign state system is weak under modern technology, warfare and growing social and economic pressure in an anarchic system (Wunderlich, 2007). European practice reflects the functionalist spillover effect, which suggests that cooperation initiated in limited areas creates pressures for further cooperation. However, functionalists proposed a more internationalised cooperation, rather than regional, by explaining that in a regional setting, conflict could be transferred to another level of international relations, which led to the neofunctionalism (Soderbaum, 2012).

Neofunctionalism explains integration as a process in which political actors in different national settings shift their loyalties, expectations, and political activities toward new central institutions. Neofunctionalism supports regionalism by emphasising the deliberate design of regional institutions as the most effective means to solve common problems (Söderbaum F. , 2015). Although states established the institutions and supranational authorities, the regional bureaucrats, interest groups, and self-organised interests within the institutions become prominent actors driving the process forward. These regional institutions then generate spillover effects which push integration into additional areas and can ultimately lead to a redefinition of group identity beyond the nation state around the regional setting (Higgott, 2006).

However, in 1970s, the regionalism theory based on neofunctionalism failed due to the weaknesses in regional integration in Europe and other regions. At the intra-

Universiti Utara Malaysia

European level, the integration process slowed due to nationalist “particularist pull”, domestic political pressures, and strong opposition towards supranational goals, which prevent the achievement of the supranationalism. Outside Europe, the collapse of several functional arrangements in Latin America, East Africa, under-performing Arabic organisations also led to the failure of regionalism based on neofunctionalism (Sridharan & Raghavan, 2007).

During the 1980s, regionalism changed form through horizontal expansion, by the establishment of more regionally based Intergovernmental Organisations. In a non-European context, states increasingly joined Regional Organisations not to achieve supranationalism, but to reinforce national sovereignty. In this case, cooperation remained conditional, because states were willing to cooperate when the costs of involvement stayed within nationally defined limits. This is also supported by the strength of regional cooperation, in addressing the 1980s debt crisis, the advantages of cooperative bargaining, and domestic pressures. Therefore, the new regionalism gains consideration, focusing on diverse forms and depths of regional interaction rather than a single supranational institution, which contribute neo-regionalism (Soderbaum, 2012; Sridharan & Raghavan, 2007).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

1.7.1.2 Understanding Neo-Regionalism Theory

The neo-regionalism theory is a more complex, multidimensional, and diverse form of regional collaboration compared to the old regionalism. The neo-regionalism formed a complex interconnection between economic, political security, and social-cultural fields, which reflects the impacts of globalisation. This theory also proposes various types of institutional models and the active involvement of new non-state actors. One

of the explanations for this theory is “political arrangement within a region, but not necessarily led by the states, the state is not the sole political actor in the neo-regionalism. There are also other regional actors with different aims and ideas that co-exist within the system” (Söderbaum F. , 2003).

Hattne (1999) and Scott (2016) define neo-regionalism as a process of regional construction and a series of policies with several goals, from developing territorial control and democratic governance to the promotion of regional collaboration and integration, as well as uplifting the economic and environmental viability (Jen Daniels, 2024). Furthermore, Hurrell (1995) points out four characteristics of neo-regionalism. First, the development of “North/South Regionalism”, which refers to the rising number of regional economic and political allies between both hemispheres (Hurrell, 1995).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Second, differences in the degree of institutionalisation among Regional Organisations. Different regional groups may exhibit varying degrees of institutional formality, wherein some adopt strict formal structures, while others operate through more flexible procedures. The third characteristic of the new regionalism is multi-dimensional, referring to regional cooperation theory that constitutes multiple fields of cooperation, including political-security and economic and social dimensions. Fourth, rising regional consciousness among citizens, as people or communities are increasingly aware and connected with their region (Hurrell, 1995).

In this study, the researcher also identifies two additional characteristics of the Neo-Regionalism theory: first, the importance of non-state actors. Due to the

complexity of regionalism, the state is not the sole actor in regional cooperation. Although the state actors play a central role in regional engagement, the non-state actors also have important roles not only in promoting their state interests but also in building their regional institutions and working with or without state influence. Moreover, non-state actors also possess a certain degree of liberty compared to state actors, which allows them to bypass the restrictions imposed on state actors, such as ambassadors or diplomatic officials (Söderbaum F. , 2016).

Next, neo-regionalism also promotes democratic norms. The neo-regionalism through the Regional Organisation (RO), which is dominant by democratic members, could contribute to the democratisation process. Furthermore, access to the information within ROs is also one of the mechanisms for promoting democratic practice, as it enables non-state actors to provide input and information to state actors, which could promote democratic practice. Besides that, ROs could pressure members to democratise by protecting their interests through the democratisation process (Söderbaum F. , 2016).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

1.7.2 Neo-Regionalism and ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)

Regionalism has widened the roles of Parliamentary Bodies, especially in the process of regional integration. The national and regional parliaments are acting as significant actors in integrated regions, particularly in Europe, Latin America and Africa (Šabič, 2012). In Southeast Asia, the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) fulfils the Neo-Regionalism theory as a Regional International Parliamentary Institution. Based on the AIPA Statute, Article 3, AIPA aims to foster collaboration and facilitate

the exchange of knowledge to offer contributions from Parliamentarians towards ASEAN Integration (AIPA Secretariat, 2025).

The functions of AIPA as an International Parliamentary Institution (IPI) in Southeast Asia also fulfil the theory of Neo-regionalism. AIPA fosters interaction and dialogue among member states' parliaments. Referring to the AIPA Statutes, the institution aims to promote close cooperation among members by providing a platform to interact and exchange information on matters of mutual interest (AIPA Secretariat, 2025). The ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface during the ASEAN Summit is one of the examples of intra-ASEAN dialogues that discuss challenges within the region, including counterterrorism, security, and illegal activities (ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface Meeting, 2013).

The roles of AIPA in reducing geopolitical crises are important contributions to maintaining the stability of the region. The 44th AIPA General Meeting 2023 theme, "Responsive Parliaments for a Stable and Prosperous ASEAN", represents the significant role of parliaments in addressing numerous global crises and maintaining stability. The collective strategies to overcome regional issues create interdependence, stability, and predictability among the members (Susthira & Resinta, 2023). The AIPA also serves the function of a coordinating instrument to facilitate cooperation among member states' parliaments in resolving mutually concerning issues. The institution adopts this role by assisting parliamentarians to negotiate and achieve a collective resolution of the mutually affecting crisis (Susthira & Adji, 2023).

Thus, from the perspective of neo-regionalism, AIPA is viewed as a multidimensional and semi-formal platform that plays a significant role in Southeast Asia's regional integration through legislative cooperation. The theory emphasises the complex and diverse nature of contemporary regionalism, with a fusion of political-security, economic, and social dimensions. AIPA's functions reflect these characteristics, particularly through mechanisms such as the ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface, as highlighted in the example. The involvement of national parliaments as primary actors in AIPA illustrates a transition from a state-centric diplomacy toward the inclusion of the legislative in regional affairs. Furthermore, by providing a platform to promote mutual understanding and cooperation among the Southeast Asia parliaments, AIPA support the neo-regionalist goals of regional stability and interdependence. Overall, AIPA reflects key features of neo-regionalism by facilitating parliamentary diplomacy in Southeast Asia.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

1.7.3 Defining Parliamentary Diplomacy

The definition provided by Weisglas and Boer (2007) is approved by most scholars. These authors define parliamentary diplomacy as a full range of external activities executed by parliamentarians to improve mutual understanding among states, assist member states in improving government control to effectively represent people, and increase the democratic legitimacy of the institution. This definition is due to the requirement for the parliamentarians to be more 'globalised' to address transnational issues and foreign policy-related decisions. Moreover, the complexity of the external affairs of a country also caused the traditional government-led diplomacy alone to be no longer suitable, which promotes parliamentarians as one of the international actors (Weisglas & Boer, 2007).

Similarly, Stavridis and Jancic (2016) define parliamentary diplomacy as a group or individual parliamentarians' action to begin, facilitate, and strengthen the constitutional functions of parliaments through negotiation with counterparts to obtain appropriate courses of action on various issues at the international level (Stavridis & Jancic, 2016). The Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia (PIC) describes parliamentary diplomacy as international activities involving parliamentary bodies as a whole or by some of the members. Parliament diplomacy could be divided into two categories. First, formal relations include the process of international treaty ratification or specific agreements. Second, informal is different among the countries, including Friendship Groups, which involve activities of invitations and meeting facilitation among members to strengthen friendship ties among parliaments (Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia (PIC), 2019).

Ercan Durdular (2017) explains parliamentary diplomacy as activities involving parliamentary representatives to execute certain roles by involving international parliamentary organisations or bilateral parliamentary relations (Durdular, 2017). This involvement is supported by the goals to improve mutual understanding, effectively represent citizens, and increase the democratic legitimacy and transparency of inter-governmental organisations (AIPA Secretariat, 2025). In general, parliamentary diplomacy refers to the term designated to the involvement of legislative bodies in diplomatic activities. This is also supported by Speaker of the Lower House of the Indian Legislature Rabi Ray (1991), who explains that parliamentary diplomacy is a situation in which parliamentarians execute the roles of diplomats by being involved in the foreign policy formulation process and are likely to influence the foreign policy input (Gotz, 2005).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Based on the analysis above, the researcher strongly agrees with the fact that there is no single definition that could explain the concept of parliamentary diplomacy. Accordingly, in this research, parliamentary diplomacy is defined as all international activities, including foreign policy formulation by a legislative body as a whole or individual members, to complement the existing gaps in traditional diplomacy to achieve certain goals (vary based on the International Parliamentary Institutions) and serving the national interests of their respective states. To conceptualise parliamentary diplomacy, it is significant to understand the principles of the parliamentary diplomacy concept.

1.7.3.1 Development of Parliamentary Diplomacy Principles

Parliamentary diplomacy could be classified as a new concept in International Relations. The advancing global politics and rising international crisis caused the states to be more interdependent, especially in determining foreign policies and resolving shared national issues. These phenomena caused the parliaments as a main legislative body to globalise their activities and require them to be involved in multi-level relations, which form the concept of parliamentary diplomacy.

This concept specifies the political practices of parliamentarians at an international level, equipped with the nature of informality and politics. Recently, most of the parliaments have viewed this type of engagement as a routine practice and significant involvement. There are various thoughts expressed by experts in parliamentary diplomacy (Stavridis & Jancic, 2016).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

The Senate President of the Netherlands, Knol (2014) states:

> Parliamentarians can establish connections between conflicting parties, and they are not restricted by the stances taken by the government, which is part of the advantage of Parliamentary Diplomacy.
>
> (Knol, 2014).

This was also supported by a statement by Jacques Chagnon, President of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA):

> Parliamentary diplomacy is highly significant as it helps to provide a wider network for the parliamentarians to serve as people's representatives. Parliamentarians are also independent of the traditional protocols imposed on the State diplomat, which equip the Parliamentarians with a certain degree of freedom of speech.
>
> (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2012).

There are common elements of parliamentary diplomacy coined by the experts in this field, which could be converted into principles of Parliamentary Diplomacy. Parliamentary diplomacy could function as a complement to traditional state-based diplomacy. This is because parliamentarians possess a certain degree of freedom of speech and independence from formality and protocols compared to state diplomats. Thus, the parliamentarians could build interpersonal connections among representatives from other states, which could contribute to resolving inter-state conflicts (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2012).

Besides that, Christian (2019) coined some of the practices of parliamentary diplomacy, including assisting in conflict management and resolution, maintaining political relations with foreign countries, enhancing and promoting the positive image of a country, and voicing public opinion on an international platform (Association of Accredited Public Policy Advocates to the European Union (AALEP), 2019). Moreover, Mitrović (2021) suggested that the International Parliamentary Institution

aims to promote close cooperation among regional and strategic partners. Besides that, parliamentary diplomacy supports the exchange of knowledge and experiences, which enables the parliamentarians to gain practical experience in particular key policy areas (Mitrović, 2021).

Referring to the aims of two well-known International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs), namely the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and African Parliamentary Union (APU), the researcher found some similarities within the objectives of these institutions. First, the aims of IPU are to build a parliamentarians' international network by coordinating and exchanging experiences among member states' parliamentarians, assist the members to achieve mutual interests, and expressing parliaments' actions toward existing issues. The IPU cooperation also contributes to defence and human rights promotion, which are significant aspects of parliamentary democracy. Lastly, IPU also aims to support a better knowledge of working institutions and improve their course of action (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2023).

Next, the aims of the African Parliamentary Union (APU) could be considered as narrowly focused on regional Parliamentary Diplomacy. First, APU aims to promote unity in action among member states' parliaments in the African region. Besides that, the APU serves as a forum for national parliaments on the African continent to promote peace, democracy, and sustainable development. The APU also attempts to promote systematically established law-based African communities in the fields of politics, economics, and society. Moreover, the APU also aims to build a

Universiti Utara Malaysia

network not only among parliamentarians within the African region but also around the world (African Parliamentary Union (APU), 2020).

Therefore, from this analysis, the researcher found three features of parliamentary diplomacy that could be transferred as a set of principles of parliamentary diplomacy. Thus, Figure 1.1 shows the proposed framework for principles of parliamentary diplomacy that were formulated based on the analysis of the explanation above. To test the reliability of this set of principles, the researcher explains each principle by comparing it with the aims of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), to ensure these principles are applicable to explain the prospects of parliamentary diplomacy conducted through IPIs.

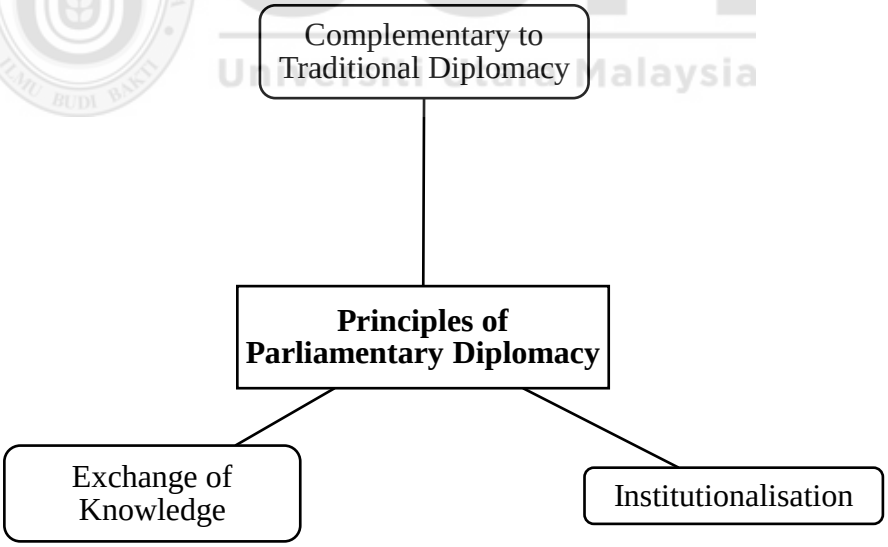


Figure 1.1 Proposed Framework for Parliamentary Diplomacy Principles

Based on Figure 1.1, the researcher found three principles of Parliamentary Diplomacy. These principles could be indicators of the possible prospects that a country could receive by being involved in parliamentary diplomacy. The inability to fulfil these principles would indicate the existence of barriers for a country to properly execute parliamentary diplomacy.

Complementary to traditional diplomacy explain parliamentary diplomacy opened an additional channel of communication. Parliamentarians hold a certain degree of freedom of speech compared to traditional state actors. Parliamentary Diplomacy could support State Diplomacy by providing foreign policy inputs or easing the negotiation process through the legislative body. Referring to AIPA Statutes Part III, Article 3 (2) and (6), the AIPA support the achievement of the goals and serves the interests of ASEAN, which is represented by the States Actor. Through AIPA, the parliamentarians can help the state diplomats promote principles of democracy, human rights, and security. This shows that AIPA is a complementary institution for the international governmental organisation (AIPA Secretariat, 2025).

Institutionalisation refers to International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs) that provide a platform for parliamentarians to engage and express opinions. IPIs promote close cooperation among members, support network building, and provide a suitable climate for parliamentarians to engage in the negotiation process. Based on AIPA Statutes, Article 3 (1) and (5), AIPA is expected to enhance unity, mutual understanding, and close relations among the legislative bodies of ASEAN. Moreover, this institution also ensures all the members are familiar with the progress of each member state's Parliament in fulfilling the goals of AIPA. Thus, through the AIPA,

Universiti Utara Malaysia

the members could strengthen bilateral and multilateral relations (AIPA Secretariat, 2025).

Lastly, parliamentary diplomacy could also benefit a country through the exchange of knowledge. Through the exchange of knowledge, the member states might benefit by gaining practical knowledge on different approaches by the members to addressing domestic or international issues. Besides that, this also supports the executive branch by providing information for policy inputs. This closely related AIPA statute, Article 3 (3), establishes and sustains the exchange of information to offer a legislative contribution to ASEAN integration and familiarise ASEAN citizens with policies as a way to serve the ASEAN community (AIPA Secretariat, 2025).

In this research, the three principles, institutionalisation, complementary to traditional diplomacy, and exchange of knowledge, serve as the analytical framework for assessing Malaysia's prospects in AIPA parliamentary diplomacy in the political-security area. The framework guided the data analysis by structuring how evidence from Malaysia's involvement in four AIPA meetings was reviewed and categorised. Each meeting outcome was analysed in terms of how it institutionalised Malaysia's parliamentary engagement, enabled knowledge exchange, and complemented traditional diplomacy through additional communication and negotiation. The interpretation of findings then connected these patterns to Malaysia's objectives, explaining the extent to which AIPA participation supported Malaysia's diplomatic goals in AIPA parliamentary diplomacy.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

1.7.4 Summary

This research integrates neo-regionalism theory with the concept of parliamentary diplomacy to examine AIPA as a regional Inter-Parliamentary Institution and Malaysia's engagement within it. Neo-regionalism is used to understand AIPA as a complex, multidimensional, and semi-formal regional actor shaped by globalisation and the interaction of political-security, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions. Unlike earlier state-centric regionalism, neo-regionalism recognises that the state is not the sole political actor and regional organisations vary in their degrees of institutionalisation.

In this context, AIPA reflects neo-regionalist features by providing a platform for dialogue, interaction, and the exchange of information among ASEAN parliaments, while remaining consultative and non-binding through resolutions. AIPA's roles in supporting ASEAN integration position it within a regional construction process that seeks regional collaboration and stability, although practices such as consensus requirements, non-interference, and limited public awareness may constrain the effectiveness of its resolutions and broader regional impact.

Parliamentary diplomacy complements this neo-regionalism theory by framing legislative bodies and parliamentarians as international actors in regional cooperation. In this research, parliamentary diplomacy is defined as all international activities, including foreign policy formulation by a legislative body as a whole or individual members, to complement the existing gaps in traditional diplomacy to achieve certain goals and serve the national interests of their respective states.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

These activities are operationalised through three principles: complementary to traditional diplomacy, institutionalisation, and exchange of knowledge. AIPA reflects these principles by opening an additional communication channel alongside state diplomacy, providing an institutional platform for parliamentary interaction and cooperation, and sustaining information exchange that can support legislative contributions to ASEAN integration and provide policy inputs. In short, neo-regionalism provides the lens to interpret AIPA's regional role, while parliamentary diplomacy explains the mechanisms through which Malaysia engages AIPA as a regional parliamentary platform.

1.8 Research Methodology

This research employs a qualitative methodology to examine the background, challenges, and prospects of Malaysia's involvement in the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA). A qualitative design is suitable for exploring complex issues through individual or institutional perspectives, particularly when findings are grounded in experts' views and interpretations (Asenahabi, 2019). It enables an in-depth examination of how Malaysian parliamentary actors involved in AIPA parliamentary diplomacy discuss their roles, constraints, and opportunities. The methodology integrates documentary analysis and semi-structured expert interviews with parliamentary officers to achieve the research objectives.

1.8.1 Research Design

The research adopts a qualitative design focusing on Malaysia's engagement with AIPA over the period 2009 to 2018. This timeframe captures key institutional developments and enables a focused analysis of Malaysia's background in AIPA,

including delegation practices, constraints, and prospects within the empirical scope. To support this analysis, the research combines documentary analysis and semi-structured interviews to connect formal institutional developments with the experiences of experts from the Parliament of Malaysia.

First, documentary analysis is used to examine relevant literature, AIPA resolutions and reports, ASEAN documents, Malaysian parliamentary Hansard records, and other official sources. These materials are used primarily to address the first research question on the background of Malaysia-AIPA parliamentary diplomacy, and to provide contextual support for analysis challenges and prospects. The use of documents as a key source of qualitative evidence is consistent with an approach that develops historical and institutional accounts of Malaysia's involvement in AIPA (Bouchrika, 2022; Saint Mary's University of Minnesota Libraries, n.d.).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with parliamentary officers who have been directly involved in AIPA-related work. These interviews capture experiential knowledge of the challenges and prospects in Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA, providing rich material for addressing the second and third research questions (Palinkas et al., 2015; Vasileiou et al., 2018).

Although Members of Parliament (MPs) are not interviewed directly, their positions and debates related to AIPA between 2009 and 2018 were accessed mainly through the parliamentary Hansard records. Instead, the interviews focus on officers who manage, coordinate, analyse and brief MPs on Malaysia's AIPA engagement.

This reflects the institutional concentration of AIPA-related expertise within the parliamentary administration and is explained further in Section 1.8.3.

Primary data in this research refers to original material generated by the researcher through interviews and the collection of official documents, which contribute to new knowledge, while secondary data refers to information synthesised from existing literature and other published sources (Bouchrika, 2022; Saint Mary's University of Minnesota Libraries, n.d.). Both forms of data are used in an integrated manner to build a comprehensive understanding of Malaysia's involvement in AIPA parliamentary diplomacy.

1.8.2 Data Sources and Instruments

The research uses two main data sources, consisting of documentary materials and semi-structured interviews. Documentary sources include AIPA General Assembly resolutions, reports, Malaysian parliamentary debates, and committee reports that refer to ASEAN and AIPA, as well as official documents and selected secondary literature. These materials are directly related to AIPA parliamentary diplomacy and highlight Malaysia's positions, implementation efforts, and historical engagement in AIPA. The use of documentary sources is consistent with the qualitative approaches that synthesise multiple materials to construct historical and institutional narratives (Bouchrika, 2022; Saint Mary's University of Minnesota Libraries, n.d.). These documents are used to trace Malaysia's formal commitments and to triangulate the interview evidence.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

To collect primary qualitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted using interview questions (Appendix A). The interview questions were organised into three thematic sections aligned with the research questions. Section A (Demography and experience of the Experts) establishes each Expert's institutional role and department, and explores their experience with AIPA and Malaysia's engagement, including how the Experts define Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy in AIPA and Malaysia's objectives in using AIPA as a platform. Section B (Challenges faced by Malaysia in engaging with AIPA) examines Malaysia's modes of parliamentary engagement with AIPA (including relevant guidelines), the influence of the executive on Malaysia-AIPA relations during 2009-2018, barriers to implementing AIPA resolutions, and other constraints linked to parliamentary capacity or AIPA procedures. Section C (Prospects of Malaysia's involvement in AIPA) focuses on the political-security dimension by exploring the political-security activities within AIPA, Malaysia's priority issues, potential underexplored contribution areas, and the extent to which Malaysia's involvement reflects the Principles of Parliamentary Diplomacy.

Interview questions were developed from and aligned with the research questions, then refined through a review of relevant AIPA and Parliament of Malaysia documents and the existing literature to ensure sufficient coverage of key issues and terms reflected in these sources (Roberts, 2020; Smith, 2025). Interviews were conducted in Malay and/or English based on the experts' preferences to support natural communication and contextually grounded responses (Swain & King, 2022). To strengthen credibility, the research applied the member checking approach, whereby Experts confirmed their key points and their answers. In addition, triangulation was

conducted during analysis by comparing interview notes with relevant literature and selected AIPA and Parliament of Malaysia documents.

1.8.3 Sampling and Recruitment of Interviewees

A purposive sampling technique is employed to identify Experts with specialised expertise on Malaysia-AIPA related activities. Purposive sampling is appropriate in qualitative research where the aim is to obtain in-depth information from information-rich sources rather than from statistically representative samples (Palinkas et al., 2015; Vasileiou et al., 2018).

In this research, the population of study comprises Malaysia's parliamentary actors involved in or supporting AIPA parliamentary diplomacy, including Members of Parliament (MPs) and parliamentary officers. Within this population, the sampling frame focuses on parliamentary officers in the International Relations Division and Research Division, who are institutionally responsible for organising, supporting and documenting Malaysia's participation in AIPA.

Three main eligibility criteria were used to select Experts for interview:

i. The Experts must have been directly involved in AIPA inter-parliamentary activities in any year between 2009 and 2018, either through research, coordination, or delegation support roles.
ii. The Experts must possess substantial experience and knowledge of AIPA or parliamentary diplomacy, enabling them to comment meaningfully on institutional procedures, state-parliament relations, and regional dynamics.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

iii. The Experts should be able to speak from a professional and institutional point of view rather than purely from a partisan political position, which is important in studies of elite political actors.

(Prime, 2024; Giri, 2024; Palinkas et al., 2015).

Access to potential Experts was facilitated through the Parliament of Malaysia. A formal email request, together with the data collection letter from the Graduate School, was emailed to the Office of the Chief Administrator of the Parliament of Malaysia (Appendix B and Appendix C). The request was then channelled to the International Relations and Research Divisions, which functioned as institutional gatekeepers, approved the interview request and recommended eleven officers who met the specified criteria (Appendix D**)** (Dovetail Editorial Team, 2023).

The researcher contacted these eleven recommended officers via email or by telephone to arrange for interviews. Out of these eleven recommended officers, seven agreed to participate in and completed the research interview. The final sample consisted of five Research Officers, one Senior Officer from the International Relations Division, and one former Head of the International Relations Division, as shown in Table 1.2. This group provides a broad range of perspectives on Malaysia's AIPA-related work, from research and documentation to coordination and high-level oversight.

Members of Parliament (MPs) were not included as formal interview respondents. This decision was based on methodological considerations regarding where AIPA-related expertise and institutional gatekeeping are located. Although MPs

Universiti Utara Malaysia

represent Malaysia in AIPA, the overall activities that underpin Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy, including arranging AIPA events, coordinating delegations, preparing position papers and speaking notes, documenting proceedings, supplying information and data to MPs, and following up on resolutions, are carried out by parliamentary officers, particularly from Research Division, and International Relations Division, rather than by individual MPs (Sawiyo et al., 2013; Parliament of Malaysia, 2019; Parliament of Malaysia, 2021).

These officers, directly involved with the AIPA as an institution, prepare background materials, and draft notes and statements that MPs deliver in AIPA meetings, which reflect the functions as the main institution behind Malaysia's AIPA parliamentary diplomacy. Their position as parliamentary staff, rather than elected politicians, enables them to provide rich, institutionally focused data that are comparatively less shaped by partisan considerations. MPs' positions and debates on AIPA are instead accessed through Hansard and official records, while the interviews concentrate on officers who possess long-term institutional knowledge and experience of Malaysia's AIPA engagement (Sawiyo et al., 2013; Parliament of Malaysia, 2019; Parliament of Malaysia, 2021).

Given the research's focused scope and the high level of expertise held by these officers, a final sample of seven Experts was sufficient to generate the institutional insights required for this research. The Experts come from different units within a division and from different divisions, and have long-term involvement in AIPA-related works. By the final interviews, the data tended to repeat rather than introduce entirely

Universiti Utara Malaysia

new themes, suggesting that a reasonable degree of thematic saturation had been reached (Naeem et al., 2024).

An anonymised overview of the seven Experts, including their general roles, interview dates and times, and place/mode (in-person or online), is presented in Table 1.2. To protect confidentiality, actual job titles, units and experience were generalised, and each participant was assigned a code from Expert 1 to Expert 7.

Table 1.2

List of Expert Interviewees (Anonymised)

Code	Role/Division (generalised)	Experience in AIPA Parliamentary Diplomacy	Date of Interview & Duration	Place/Mode
Expert 1	Research Officer, Research Division	- Serves as parliamentary Secretariat to the AIPA General Assemblies. - Participated in AIPA-related workshops.	6 August 2024 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	Library, Parliament of Malaysia Building
Expert 2	Research Officer, Research Division	- Involved in AIPA since 2006. - Attended AIPA General Assemblies, including Malaysia's host years (2007, 2015). - Participated in AIPA-related workshops.	6 August 2024 2:00 p.m. – 2:47 p.m.	Research Office Discussion Room, Parliament of Malaysia Building
Expert 3	Research Officer, Research Division	- Involved in AIPA since 2007. - Serves as parliamentary Secretariat to the AIPA General Assemblies.	6 August 2024 3:15 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Research Office Discussion Room, Parliament of Malaysia Building

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Expert 4	Research Officer, Research Division	- Involved in AIPA since 2013. - Serves as parliamentary Secretariat to the AIPA General Assemblies.	6 August 2024 3:15 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Research Office Discussion Room, Parliament of Malaysia Building
Expert 5	Senior officer, International Relations Division	- Involved in AIPA since 2018. - Joined related programmes. - Maintains ongoing liaison with the AIPA Secretariat.	8 August 2024 10:00 a.m. - 10:50 a.m.	International Relations Office, Parliament of Malaysia Building
Expert 6	Former Head of Department, International Relations Division	- Served as acting head and undersecretary of the division that functions as AIPA's national secretariat.	8 August 2024 11:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.	Library, Parliament of Malaysia Building
Expert 7	Research Officer, Research Division	- Involved in AIPA since the 2015 General Assembly as a substantive committee. - Participated in AIPA workshops.	16 August 2024 11:04 a.m. - 11:46 a.m.	Online (Google Meet)

1.8.4 Ethical Approval, Consent and Data Protection

The research was conducted in accordance with ethical principles, as the research involves experts from the Parliament of Malaysia and the use of off-recorded interview data. The research is conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) postgraduate handbook for research involving human participants, including integrity, justice, beneficence, and respect for participants (Universiti Utara Malaysia, 2022).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Prior to data collection, formal permission to conduct interviews with parliamentary officers was obtained via email from the Parliament of Malaysia, through the International and Research Division (Appendix D). This approval authorised data collection, facilitated access to relevant officers, and functioned as an institutional gatekeeper consent (UKRIO Research Integrity Office, 2024).

All the Experts were provided with an interview invitation letter attached with interview questions and the Graduate School data-collection letter, which explained the research title and aims, the nature of participation, the estimated interview duration, and confidentiality assurances (Appendix A and Appendix C). At the beginning of each interview, the researcher explained key points, including participants' right to decline to answer any questions they considered sensitive. Confidentiality, anonymity, and the intended academic use of the data were clearly explained before the interview began.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

At the request of the Experts, all interviews are conducted off record; therefore, no audio recordings are made. Instead, the researcher takes detailed handwritten notes during each session (Appendix E). In such situations, careful note-taking and immediate write-up are recommended to preserve data quality (Rutakumwa et al., 2020). After each interview question or section, the researcher summarised the responses back to the Expert to confirm accuracy and allow clarification, correction, or elaboration. This member-checking procedure is particularly important in the absence of audio recordings and contributes to confirmability (Williams, 2020; Rutakumwa et al., 2020; Clausen, 2012). Anonymity was maintained using Expert codes (Expert 1–7) and generalised roles, divisions, and experiences descriptions as in

Table 1.2. No personally identifying information is reproduced. Data were used solely for academic purposes, including this thesis and related scholarly outputs.

1.8.5 Interview Procedures

The seven interviews are conducted either in person at the Parliament of Malaysia or online via Google Meet, depending on the availability and preference of the Experts. All interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis between the researcher and each Expert, except for Experts 3 and 4 were interviewed together at their request. Six interviews were conducted face-to-face at the Parliament of Malaysia (library, Experts' office or discussion room), while one interview was conducted online. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 50 minutes. The Experts receive the Interview Invitation letter, graduate school letter for data collection, interview questions, and the questions at least one week in advance, allowing for their preparation. Except for Expert 6, who received the interview materials on the same day the interview was conducted.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

During the interviews, the researcher adopted a conversational semi-structured style, using a mix of Malay and English to facilitate natural communication and generate more naturalistic data (Swain & King, 2022). As noted earlier, the Experts preferred the interview not to be audio-recorded; instead, the researcher took detailed notes during each interview. To validate the handwritten notes, the researcher summarised the Experts' answers and key points and reflected them back to the Experts for confirmation, amendments or additional information.

This approach treated the experts as co-interpreters of their answers and reduced the risk of misinterpretation in the absence of an audio recording. The

handwritten notes are also typed and expanded while the interaction is still in memory. The typed notes were then organised into Excel tables, structured by Expert, the interview questions and response feedback. This table provides the main data source for subsequent coding, thematic analysis and construction of the audit trail. The full interview notes are provided in Appendix E. An appreciation frame was presented to each Expert after the interview session to acknowledge their contribution, except for Expert 7, who received the frame prior to the interview (Appendix F).

1.8.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis proceeded in two phases; the first phase involved content analysis of documentary materials and interview notes. The second phase involved thematic analysis of interview data using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach. Both stages are supported by an audit trail that explains the steps taken from raw notes to the development of final themes.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

1.8.6.1 Content Analysis

In the first phase of analysis, documentary materials and interview notes are examined using a content analysis approach. According to Mohajan (2018), content analysis is a systematic and transparent approach for a deep interpretation of the contents of specific sources to identify the themes, patterns, and potential biases related to the research questions (Mohajan, 2018; Bengtsson, 2016). The researcher identifies issues, concepts and patterns that relate to AIPA's institutional design, parliamentary diplomacy, and Malaysia's involvement in AIPA parliamentary diplomacy.

Extracts from AIPA and ASEAN documents, Malaysia House of Representatives Hansard records, news, and existing literature related to subject matter

are collected and grouped in a document according to relevant topics such as historical background, challenges, prospects and Malaysia's roles and commitments. As Lincoln and Denzin (2009) explain, effective content analysis requires clear research questions and is theoretically linked to the material being analysed (Lincoln & Denzin, 2009).

In this research, the content analysis approach provides the basis for developing the historical and institutional background of AIPA and Malaysia's involvement in the institution, and for interpreting the interview evidence within broader regional and domestic contexts. They also serve as a key point of comparison and triangulation for the themes that emerge from the interviews.

1.8.6.2 Six Steps of the Thematic Analysis

This research adopted Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis approach to interpret the interview data and identify themes in a systematic manner. The interview data consist of the Experts' experiences and institutional knowledge. The overall structure of the process is summarised in Figure 1.2:

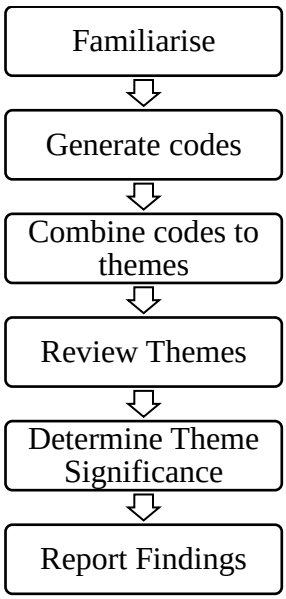


Figure 1.2 Six Steps of the Thematic Analysis
Source: (Applied Doctoral Center, 2025; Caulfield, 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Based on Figure 1.2, thematic analysis begins with step one, familiarisation with the data. At this stage, the researcher reads and rereads the interview notes, making remarks and highlighting key points to develop a deep understanding of the material (Caulfield, 2019). In this research, handwritten notes from each interview were typed and organised into Excel tables to support the familiarisation process. Responses from each Expert were arranged by question and section, enabling easier comparison and providing a foundation for the next stage of analysis.

Step two, generating initial code, involves identifying and labelling significant words or phrases that capture essential ideas in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To differentiate between codes, the researcher uses different colours in the Excel table, with each colour representing a distinct category of ideas. In this research, coding focuses particularly on terms and phrases related to the challenges and prospects of Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy in AIPA (Campbell et al., 2021).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

In step three, searching for themes, the identified codes were analysed and clustered to develop broader themes. Themes are typically more abstract than individual codes and are produced by merging several interrelated codes (Dawadi, 2020; Braun & Clarke, 2006). At this stage, irrelevant or redundant codes were removed. Emerging themes were required to relate clearly to the research questions and represent meaningful patterns in the data (Dawadi, 2020). In this research, coded data were grouped according to the research questions, and relevant AIPA documents or literature were referred to generate suitable theme labels reflecting both the interview material and the institutional context.

Step four, reviewing themes, involves refining and validating the initial themes to ensure clarity, coherence, and distinction (Dawadi, 2020; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher reviewed themes and evaluated their relevance with the coded interview notes. This step helps determine whether themes are too broad or too narrow, or whether they overlap with other themes. Guided by the research questions, the researcher merged related themes, split overly broad themes into sub-themes, or discarded themes that were weakly supported by the data.

In step five, defining and naming themes, each theme was clearly specified, and its significance in relation to the research objectives was articulated (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This step involves organising data within each theme into a coherent narrative that avoids redundancy and supports the overall analysis. In this research, interview findings were arranged according to each theme's relevance to the research questions and were supported with references related to AIPA parliamentary diplomacy. A cross-referencing method was used to justify the inclusion of particular data under specific themes and to link themes to the conceptual framework of neo-regionalism and parliamentary diplomacy.

In step six, producing the report, the findings were written up. This step requires presenting a clear, concise and compelling narrative that uses the themes to address the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Byrne, 2022). The final report goes beyond simple description and instead constructs a logical, evidence-supported discussion. The findings must be supported by sufficient evidence, such as anonymised quotations and documentary references, to demonstrate how the interpretations were grounded in the data (Dawadi, 2020). In this research, the interview findings were

Universiti Utara Malaysia

supported by external sources and illustrative examples and were integrated with the triangulation procedures described in section 1.8.6.3 to validate and strengthen the Experts' viewpoints.

1.8.6.3 Triangulation Analysis

The research employs data triangulation to strengthen the trustworthiness of its findings. Insights derived from interviews were systematically incorporated with evidence from AIPA reports and resolutions, ASEAN documents, parliamentary Hansard records, and relevant literature. Where interview themes were supported by documentary evidence and scholarly analyses, this increased the robustness of the findings.

Where disagreements or tensions arose, these were examined carefully and used to refine the interpretation, reflecting the role of triangulation in reducing bias and enhancing credibility (McLeod, 2024; Donkoh & Mensah, 2023; Morgan, 2024). Credibility was supported through member-checking procedures during interviews, whereby the researcher summarised key points and repeated them back to each Expert at the end of each section for confirmation, clarification, or amendment.

1.8.6.4 Analytic Audit Trail

To enhance transparency, accountability, and credibility, and to demonstrate how the analysis progressed from raw material to the final thematic structure, an analytic audit trail was maintained during the research process (McLeod, 2024). The audit trail records the main stages and decision points through which evidence from expert

interviews and documentary sources was transformed into the themes presented in Chapters Three and Four. Figure 1.3 summarises these stages.

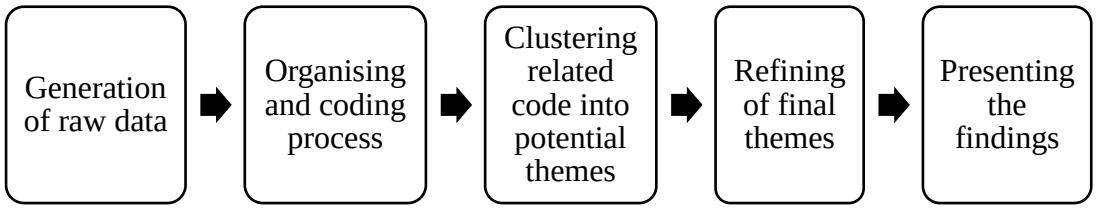


Figure 1.3 Analytic Audit Trail Process

1.8.6.4.1 Generation of Raw Data

The first stage began with the conduct of seven off-record semi-structured interviews with parliamentary officers and the systematic collection of relevant documentary sources, including (but not limited to) AIPA resolutions and reports, ASEAN documents, parliamentary Hansard records, and official parliamentary publications. As requested by the Experts, no audio recordings were made, instead the researcher took detailed handwritten notes during each interview, capturing descriptive content and key phrases (Appendix E). After each session, these notes were typed up. Experts were labelled with Expert codes (Expert 1-7), producing an anonymised textual dataset suitable for systematic analysis.

1.8.6.4.2 Organising and Coding Process

The second stage involved organising anonymised interview notes into an Excel table, with rows representing Experts and columns representing interview questions grouped by interview question sections and filled with Experts' relevant responses. This structure supported familiarisation and enabled systematic comparison across Experts. Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) first two steps, the researcher read and reread the interview notes, highlighted key terms, made initial analytic notes, and applied coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Segments of notes relevant to the research questions

were assigned descriptive codes representing ideas such as ASEAN domination over AIPA, limited parliamentary capacity, weak follow-up mechanisms and prospects for political-security cooperation. As coding progressed, a working codebook was developed to document how each code was defined and how it contributed to theme development (Sibley-White & Oliveira, 2024). Table 1.3 summarises initial codes, description, example quote from interview notes and supporting evidence.

Table 1.3

Summary of Initial Code

Initial Code	Description	Example of Quote	Supporting Evidence
Limited resolution implementation	The resolution adopted in the AIPA GA is only carried out to a limited extent, and not fully implemented in practice	*"It's (resolutions) non-binding. Every country is non-binding"* *"AIPA resolutions are not binding. Only encouraging"*	Role of the Parliamentary Dimension in Regional Integration Process: The Case of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, (Yildiz, 2024) Mimicking of Integration. At the Sources of Under Utilization of Intra-ASEAN Institutions (Dobkowska, 2016)
The government's commitment	The level of dedication of the government to implement the AIPA resolutions.	*"Members consist of diverse political systems and priorities, and level of democratic development. Differences political priorities and governance models can make it challenging to achieve*	The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA): A privileged interlocutor for the European

		consensus on certain resolutions"	Parliament in the South East Asia, (Laurence, 2015) Role of the Parliamentary Dimension in Regional Integration Process: The Case of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, (Yildiz, 2024)
Consensus Requirement	A decision or resolution can only be adopted if all the members agree (or at least no one formally objects)	*"In 2018 Myanmar did not agree. So that issue couldn't go through. For three years we never had a security meeting (political-security)"*	Report of the 39th General Assembly of the AIPA (AIPA Secretariat, 2018) AIPA Statutes, (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), 2025)
Capacity of delegation	Delegation's ability to perform its duties effectively in the AIPA	*"Parliamentary members may have other commitments or lack of the necessary expertise to fully engaged in technical discussions"*	House of Representatives Hansard (No. 46) (Parlimen Malaysia, 2012)
Institutional support	All forms of formal support provided by Parliament	*"Budgetary constraints and competing priorities can limit the resources available for parliamentary diplomacy"*	House of Representatives Hansard (No. 52) (Parlimen Malaysia, 2018)
Report-back activities	Formal actions by delegation returning from AIPA meetings to inform Parliament and	*"The result (outcomes of AIPA meetings) is that it is not presented"*	45th AIPA General Assembly Concludes in Vientiane with Focus on Integration and

Universiti Utara Malaysia

	relevant institutions about outcomes from the events.		Social Issues (KPL, 2024) House of Representatives Hansard (No. 27) (Parliament of Malaysia, 2009) House of Representatives Hansard (No. 23) (Parliament of Malaysia, 2015)
Coordination of resolutions	Approaches to implement the resolutions	*"Minimal effort to link with executive. Once approved (the resolution) don't know who's supposed to follow up"*	House of Representatives Hansard (No. 52) (Parlimen Malaysia, 2019) Report of the 9th AIPA Caucus (AIPA Secretariat, 2017)
Discussion on the AIPA topic	The attention or awareness of Malaysia's involvement in AIPA	*"Despite its importance, operate in background and does not capture much public or academic interest"*	Rethinking AIPA: The Overlooked Assembly in ASEAN's Shadow (Galimberti, 2023)

This codebook was updated continuously throughout the analysis process to ensure coding consistency and accurate interpretation based on the original context of the interview notes. This process also facilitated mapping codes to themes established from existing literature, reports and House of Representatives Hansard records.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

1.8.6.4.3 Clustering Related Code into a Potential Theme

In the third stage, the individual codes were examined for recurring patterns and grouped into broader candidate themes. Codes describing similar or closely related ideas were grouped under sub-themes. Codes that shared related meanings or described interconnected aspects were merged into candidate themes and subsequently categorised into main themes aligned with the research questions and objectives.

1.8.6.4.4 Refining of Final Themes

The fourth stage involved a more detailed review of the thematic structure. Themes that were overly broad or overlapping were split or merged, and ambiguous categories were clarified. The researcher moved between the Excel tables and the documentary corpus to validate the themes. Documentary evidence was drawn from relevant literature, AIPA resolutions and reports, ASEAN documents, and House of Representatives Hansard records. Each theme was then clearly defined and linked to research questions and research objectives, and the conceptual framework ensured that analysis was conceptually and empirically grounded.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

1.8.6.4.5 Presenting the Findings

The final stage involved organising final themes and sub-themes into the structure of Chapters Three and Four and integrating interview evidence, with the documentary material and relevant literature into a coherent analytic narrative. Anonymised quotations from interview notes were used to illustrate key points and support the analysis from existing literature, AIPA resolutions and reports, ASEAN documents, and House of Representatives Hansard records. Quotations were translated into formal English without changing their original meanings. This process demonstrates that the

qualitative analysis was systematic, traceable and triangulated rather than being based on personal judgement.

1.8.7 Methodological Limitations

This research was limited by the absence of audio recordings during the interview sessions, as the Experts preferred the interviews to be conducted off record. This constraint reduced traceability and limited the extent to which exact phrasing, tone, and emphasis could be reproduced in the presentation of findings. To mitigate this limitation, the researcher took detailed handwritten notes throughout each session and conducted real-time member checking by summarising Experts' answers after each question and at the end of each section, allowing participants to reconfirm, clarify, or amend their responses. This strengthened credibility and supported confirmability by reducing the risk of misinterpretation. However, compared with fully recorded and transcribed interviews, the absence of audio recordings still limited the precision of verbatim quotations and the ability to recheck the data in detail.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Participant coverage and breadth of perspectives. Although parliamentary officers met the sampling criteria and provided relevant institutional perspectives, the research did not include interviews with MPs who served as AIPA delegates. This may have limited the breadth of perspectives captured, particularly first-hand insights into delegation dynamics or informal negotiation processes. Accordingly, some of the interpretations relied more heavily on institutional and documentary perspectives than on delegate-level reflections.

The interview questions were effective for identifying challenges affecting Malaysia's involvement in AIPA and clarifying Malaysia's perspectives and objectives in AIPA parliamentary diplomacy. However, it generated less detailed primary evidence regarding prospects gained through the four selected AIPA meetings related to political-security cooperation. As a result, analysis of prospects relied mainly on documentary and secondary sources, which may have reduced the depth of first-hand interview evidence. Future research could strengthen primary evidence by incorporating more target probes on outcomes, mechanisms and platform-specific impacts within AIPA.

The research was also limited by the lack of prior empirical studies directly examining Malaysia's involvement in AIPA related to its background, challenges and prospects. Therefore, the literature review relied on broader scholarship on parliamentary diplomacy and general studies of AIPA. This limitation was mitigated through triangulation of interview notes with official AIPA documents, parliamentary Hansard records, and relevant secondary materials. Nevertheless, the limited number of directly comparable empirical evidence studies may constrain the strength of comparisons with established findings in the existing literature.

1.9 Literature Review

1.9.1 Background of Parliamentary Diplomacy Practice

This section reviews the evolution of parliamentary diplomacy from early inter-parliamentary initiatives to contemporary practices and narrowing to the Southeast Asia through the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA). The literature

provides a strong historical background of parliamentary diplomacy practice, starting from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) as a durable institutional platform and the post-1945 growth of inter-parliamentary bodies. For this thesis, the background of parliamentary diplomacy is important to identify the starting of parliamentary diplomacy, identify recurring significances of parliamentary diplomacy to strengthen the conceptual framework, which includes complementary to traditional diplomacy, exchange of knowledge, and institutionalisation, which become essential for structuring the Principles of Parliamentary Diplomacy framework.

The parliamentary involvement in international cooperation started in a key historical period of the 20th century through the establishment of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in 1889 and the rapid formation of other parliamentary institutions (Mardonovich, 2017). Initially, IPU is commonly treated as an early institutional model of parliamentary cooperation practice featuring dialogue and arbitration-oriented peace initiatives (Lange, 1921; Zinn, 1961).

Lange's (1921) study titled *'Advocate of Peace through Justice: The Inter-Parliamentary Union'*, highlighted the Inter-Parliamentary Union (previously Inter-Parliamentary Union for International Arbitration) supporting parliamentary cooperation since 1889. IPU facilitates parliamentary cooperation by providing a platform for the members from member parliaments to advance arbitration and judicial solutions to disputes, review international law and general issues related to the progress of peaceful relations among the nations. Through this parliamentary cooperation, the IPU contribute to two peace conferences in 1899 and 1907 at The

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Hague. This portrays the IPU as a democratic extension to diplomacy by facilitating contact and dialogue among parliamentarians (Lange, 1921).

Zinn (1961) in *'The Inter-Parliamentary Union'* further traces IPU's historical and institutional evolution, describing organisational and administrative arrangements providing a platform for parliaments to broader international governance mechanisms. Although these early studies do not utilise the term parliamentary diplomacy, it is significant as it shows parliamentary cooperation was institutionalised through recurring interactions and organisational model rather than through one-off contacts. However, these articles are primarily historical and normatively oriented, it tends to legitimise parliamentary engagement as a peace and dialogue-promoting practice but provides limited criteria for measuring how parliamentary diplomacy functions in different contexts and under varying degrees of authority (Zinn, 1961).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Beyond the IPU scholarship identifies the interwar period as an important transition in which parliamentarians increasingly engaged with multilateral diplomacy and coordination practices. Gotz (2005), in *"On the Origins of 'Parliamentary Diplomacy': Scandinavian 'Bloc Politics' and Delegation Policy in the League of Nations"*, shows Scandinavian parliamentarians coordinated engagement within the League of Nations, highlighting the emergence of a parliamentary diplomatic culture that bridged domestic legislative concerns with international representation. This research is analytically significant as it suggests that parliamentary diplomacy not only develops through permanent institutions such as the IPU, but also through coordinated parliamentary practices that shape delegation behaviour and common positioning in multilateral level (Gotz, 2005).

After the Second World War, parliamentary diplomacy was commonly described as expanding through the creation of regional and transnational parliamentary bodies. Stavridis (2006), *"Parliamentary Diplomacy: Any Lessons for Regional Parliaments?"* argues that the emergence of post-war parliamentary forums, including the Council of European Union Assembly, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and Western European Union Parliamentary Assembly, represented a turning point in the formalisation of parliamentary cooperation across borders. In this period, parliamentary diplomacy is portrayed as a mechanism reinforcing security cooperation and democratic governance (Stavridis, 2006). Similarly, Weisglas and de Boer (2007) observe that the rising global interdependence and blurring boundaries among countries, parliamentary involvement in international cooperation gained recognition and legitimacy, particularly through establishments of forum including the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and various European Union inter-parliamentary bodies (Weisglas & Boer, 2007).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Narrowing to Southeast Asia, Yildiz (2024) in the thesis titled *"Role of the Parliamentary Dimension in Regional Integration Process: The Case of The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)"*, positions the IPU within the broader formation of international parliamentary institutions and highlights how regional parliamentary bodies expanded in post-war and post-Cold War alongside democratisation, globalisation, and regionalism. The research discussed Southeast Asia's parliamentary engagement within ASEAN, contributing to the development of a regional parliamentary forum that later evolved from AIPO to AIPA. This paper explicitly identifies a knowledge gap regarding the comprehensiveness of studies examining AIPA's evolution (Yildiz, 2024).

Collectively, in supporting the IPU is the oldest IPI, papers by Lange (1921), Zinn (1961), Mardonovich (2017), and Yildiz (2024) agreed that the origin of parliamentary diplomacy practice started from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in 1889, which focused on conflict resolutions through judicial solutions. This historical focus, transfers to studies the expansion of practice in of Scandinavian parliamentarians' coordinated approach to League of Nations and expansion regional based parliamentary institutions focusing on European region. Additionally, Yildiz (2024) specifically address the development of parliamentary diplomacy in Southeast Asia, by explain the expansion of parliamentary through ASEAN, concentrated on parliamentary cooperation, which contributed to the formation of AIPO, later transformed into AIPA.

Despite these historical discussions of parliamentary diplomacy, there remain limited empirically grounded analyses of parliamentary diplomacy as it operates within Southeast Asia's inter-parliamentary setting through AIPA, particularly from Malaysia's perspective. This review on the background of parliamentary diplomacy provides a bridge to the Principles of Parliamentary Diplomacy framework used in this research. Across the reviewed literature, parliamentary diplomacy is most consistently described through three recurring dimensions, namely institutionalisation, complementary to traditional diplomacy, and knowledge exchange. Institutionalisation is reflected by the formal structures and repeated inter-parliamentary interaction, from the IPU's organisational evolution to the post-war expansion of regional parliamentary assemblies (Zinn, 1961; Stavridis, 2006; Weisglas & Boer, 2007).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Complementary is reflected in that parliamentary diplomacy supports executive diplomacy by enhancing legitimacy, accountability, and dialogue channels rather than replacing state diplomacy (Lange, 1921; Mardonovich, 2017). Knowledge exchange is implied through the interaction, learning, and informational value of parliamentary forums within broader international engagement (Weisglas & Boer, 2007). These three principles are treated as sufficient because they capture the institutional foundation enabling repeated practice, the executive-legislative relations in shaping its diplomatic relevance, and the exchange of knowledge mechanism through which parliamentary engagement generates shared understandings and issue framing in a regional setting.

1.9.2 Development of the Parliamentary Diplomacy Concept

The existing literature shows that parliamentary diplomacy has no single, universally accepted definition and remains an evolving concept with growing academic recognition in International Relations. It generally refers to the involvement of parliaments and parliamentarians in international affairs through dialogue, negotiation, monitoring, and cooperation that complements, rather than replaces, traditional diplomacy. This section reviews key theoretical perspectives and how they define parliamentary diplomacy. This section strengthens the conceptual definition of parliamentary diplomacy and the research's conceptual framework, the Principles of Parliamentary Diplomacy.

Early academic contributions positioned parliamentary diplomacy within the broader expansion of democratic governance and the changing boundaries between domestic and foreign policy. Stavridis (2002) in *"Parliamentary Diplomacy": Some*

Preliminary Findings", presents an early attempt to address the gap between increasing inter-parliamentary practice and limited theoretical attention, linking parliamentary engagement in foreign policy to democratisation, foreign policy domestication, globalisation, and technological change. The paper grounds this view in Kantian democratic peace theory, arguing that parliamentary engagement enhances peace and transparency, and points to the creation of international parliamentary bodies, including AIPA, as evidence of institutionalisation. However, within this framing, parliamentary engagement is treated mainly as an outcome of democratisation, and the research calls for future comparative research rather than providing a consolidated definition with operational criteria (Stavridis, 2002).

Further research by Stavridis (2006), titled *"Parliamentary Diplomacy: Any Lessons for Regional Parliaments?"*, develops this approach by locating parliamentary diplomacy within democratisation, globalisation, and multi-level governance, and by distinguishing technical cooperation, inter-parliamentary cooperation, and parliamentary diplomacy. The paper identifies concrete institutional mechanisms such as multilateral assemblies, bilateral friendship groups, foreign affairs committees, and election observation missions, and highlights constraints such as overlapping mandates, limited resources, procedural inconsistencies, and language barriers. Conceptually, this moves the discussion beyond general claims about international activity by specifying how parliamentary diplomacy operates through institutional mechanisms, while acknowledging coordination and capacity problems created by diversification (Stavridis, 2006).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Beyond democratic theory, parliamentary diplomacy is also emphasised as a socially constructed practice shaped by norms and collective identity. Gotz (2005) in *"The Origins of Parliamentary Diplomacy: Scandinavian 'Bloc Politics' and Delegation Policy in the League of Nations"*, approaches parliamentary diplomacy from a constructivist perspective and argues that the concept challenges realist and institutionalist assumptions of unitary, state-centric actors. Instead, parliamentary diplomacy is conceptualised as emerging through social interaction, identity formation, and shared norms in multilateral settings, where parliamentary actors shape agendas through collective interaction. In this view, parliamentary diplomacy is not only institutional but also symbolic and social, and its relevance lies in how it is produced through interaction and shared ideals rather than solely through formal authority (Gotz, 2005).

A third contribution shifts emphasis toward how parliamentary diplomacy becomes visible through institutional practice and governance structures. Cutler (2006) in "*The OSCE's Parliamentary Diplomacy in Central Asia and the South Caucasus in Comparative Perspective"*, acknowledges the lack of a universally accepted definition but argues that parliamentary diplomacy is observable through International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs) that structure dialogue and problem-solving among parliamentarians. Parliamentary diplomacy is framed as bridging intergovernmental diplomacy and transnational governance by creating an interface between domestic legislatures and the international system, enhancing transparency and inclusivity through the involvement of diverse representatives. Compared to normative-democratic accounts, this framing strengthens conceptual clarity by

Universiti Utara Malaysia

centring institutional design and practice rather than treating parliamentary diplomacy mainly as a democratisation trend (Cutler, 2006).

Attempts at definitional consolidation further strengthen the concept while also exposing persistent uncertainty about operationalisation and impact. Weisglas and Boer (2007) in *"Parliamentary Diplomacy"*, define parliamentary diplomacy as:

> The full range of international activities undertaken by parliamentarians in order to increase mutual understanding between countries, to assist each other in improving the control of governments and the representation of a people, and to increase the democratic legitimacy of inter-governmental institutions.
>
> (Weisglas & Boer, 2007).

The researchers link parliamentary diplomacy to globalisation and blurred boundaries between domestic and foreign policy, and distinguish executive scrutiny supported by inter-parliamentary exchanges and networks from engagement in dialogue, mediation, conflict prevention, and democratisation assistance. However, the research also acknowledges weak institutional capacity, vague mandates, and limited resources, concluding that parliamentary diplomacy still lacks clear definition, methods, purpose, and impacts, and requires clearer linkages between international parliamentary activities and national policy processes. This indicates that even when a comprehensive definition is offered, conceptual uncertainty remains, especially concerning how parliamentary diplomacy should be evaluated and connected to domestic policy processes (Weisglas & Boer, 2007).

Subsequent work strengthens conceptual precision by proposing structured analytical categories. Fiott (2015) in *"The Value of Parliamentary Diplomacy"* argues that traditional diplomatic theory is insufficient to explain parliamentary diplomacy

and adopts Weisglas and Boer's (2007) definition, using the European Parliament as the basis for conceptual development. Fiott (2015) proposes a typology consisting of legislative diplomacy, rhetorical diplomacy, and active diplomacy, differentiating treaty-based influence and institutional mechanisms from debates, resolutions, and meetings, and from tangible actions such as election observation and cooperation initiatives. The paper concludes that parliamentary diplomacy complements traditional diplomacy by reinforcing legitimacy, inclusivity, and transparency in external relations, and its key conceptual contribution is that it provides a structured way to analyse parliamentary diplomatic action beyond broad description (Fiott, 2015).

Sayfullaev (2016) titled *"Parliamentary Diplomacy in Making of Foreign Policy"*, similarly advances conceptual development by defining parliamentary diplomacy as multilateral negotiation characterised by institutionalisation, procedural rules, public deliberation, and voting on resolutions. The paper proposes four dimensions of parliamentary participation in external affairs, namely treaty ratification, oversight mechanisms, fiscal approval, and multilateral engagement and contrasts democratic systems, where parliamentary diplomacy can enhance transparency and accountability, with authoritarian systems, where foreign policy activities remain symbolic and centrally controlled (Sayfullaev, 2016).

Manyi (2017) in *"Role of Parliamentary Institutions in International Relations: The Case of Parliament of Kenya"* conceptualises parliamentary diplomacy as a process and method of international engagement undertaken by parliaments and parliamentarians, covering dialogue, negotiation, representation, oversight, mediation, ratification, and participation in IPIs. The research contrasts neo-realism and world-

Universiti Utara Malaysia

systems theory, frames parliamentary diplomacy as complementary rather than competitive to executive diplomacy, and introduces a two-level analytical framework examining legal-institutional characteristics, including status, institutionalisation, authority, and mandates and political-functional roles, including oversight, legislation, peace promotion, diplomacy, and participation (Manyi, 2017).

More recent literature continues to refine parliamentary diplomacy while emphasising definitional diversity. Jaskiernia (2022) in *"Parliamentary Diplomacy-A New Dimension of Contemporary Parliamentarism"* links parliamentary diplomacy to the democratic deficit in foreign policy and security, where parliamentary control is traditionally weaker, and hypothesises that parliamentary diplomacy is an identifiable factor that does not compete with but complements traditional diplomacy. The research argues that parliamentary diplomacy can help reduce democratic deficit by bringing parliamentarians' democratic mandate into conflict resolution, dispute settlement, and election monitoring. The research adopts Weisglas and Boer's (2007) definition and uses legal-dogmatic, historical, and system analysis, categorising parliamentary diplomacy through definitional debates, its relationship to diplomacy, and typologies of how it occurs (Jaskiernia, 2022).

The study by Guahk and Pepe (2023) in *"Parliamentary diplomacy between the EU and the Republic of Korea"* treats parliamentary diplomacy as a contested concept that evolves from an earlier procedural understanding to a more actor-centred practice. They adopt a middle-ground position that places parliaments between governments and NGOs and define parliamentary diplomacy as a strategic tool to increase cooperation and foster dialogue in sensitive situations where traditional

Universiti Utara Malaysia

diplomacy may be constrained. The analysis proceeds through conceptual review, comparison of European Parliament and Korean National Assembly arrangements, and examination of EP–KNA interaction through the Delegation for Relations with the Korean Peninsula (DKOR) and inter-parliamentary meetings across parliamentary terms (Guahk & Pepe, 2023).

Loureiro (2025), in *"Parliamentary Diplomacy: An Epistemological Analysis"*, examines parliamentary diplomacy through an epistemological and theory-informed approach, aiming to show how the concept is contextualised in International Relations (IR) and whether it can be treated as an instrument of foreign policy in relation to traditional diplomacy. The study applies IR theories within a positivist paradigm to identify patterns in external relations, highlighting Two-Level Game Theory, Neoliberal Institutionalism, Functionalism, Pluralism, and Bureaucratic Theory, and incorporates Constructivism to capture norms, identities, discourse, and trust-building, proceeding through historical contextualisation, conceptual mapping of competing definitions, and theory-guided interpretation. The research concludes that parliamentary diplomacy complements state diplomacy, can serve as an alternative channel when formal diplomatic relations are absent, and remains under-studied (Loureiro, 2025).

Firdaus and Kresnawati (2021), in *"Indonesia Parliamentary Diplomacy: The Leadership of House Representatives Republic of Indonesia in ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) 2011-2012"*, combine parliamentary diplomacy with total diplomacy and multi-track diplomacy, arguing that Indonesia's House of Representatives (DPR-RI) operates as Track 1½ diplomacy in AIPA, positioned

between formal executive diplomacy and informal non-state diplomacy. Referencing Putnam's Two-Level Games and treating parliamentary diplomacy as involving multiple parliamentary actors, the research argues that DPR-RI's AIPA engagement complements executive diplomacy, supports Indonesia's foreign policy, and strengthens oversight, legal compliance, and regional dialogue on issues such as the South China Sea (Firdaus & Kresnawati, 2021).

Yildiz (2024) in "*The Parliamentary Dimension of ASEAN Integration: AIPA and ASEAN Parliamentarization"* frames parliamentary diplomacy as a broad term covering foreign-policy activities of parliaments and parliamentarians and situates it within ASEAN integration by contrasting old regionalism, which is state-centric, with new regionalism, involving non-governmental actors (including parliamentarians) as a conceptual lens. The research applies sociological institutionalism and norm diffusion theory and introduces a three-dimensional framework explaining AIPA's limited influence through structural factors, consisting of advisory and non-binding design, systemic factors, referring to ASEAN's executive dominance and low-democracy environment, and operational factors, AIPA's institutional capacity constraints. It links parliamentary diplomacy to regional dynamics and addresses a scholarly gap on Asia's parliamentary institutions. In this research, the old and new regionalism are used as concepts rather than as a theory (Yildiz, 2024).

Based on the literature reviewed, parliamentary diplomacy is conceptualised through multiple lenses. Early studies frame it through democratic theory and the expansion of parliamentary engagement beyond domestic borders (Stavridis, 2002; Stavridis, 2006), while Gotz (2005) emphasises constructivist processes of interaction,

Universiti Utara Malaysia

identity formation, and shared norms (Gotz, 2005). Cutler (2006) shifts the concept toward institutional practice by locating parliamentary diplomacy in the functions of IPIs within multilevel governance (Cutler, 2006). Weisglas and de Boer (2007) provide a comprehensive definition, but also explicitly highlight unresolved issues concerning definition, methods, purposes, and impacts, including weak linkages between international parliamentary activities and national policy processes (Weisglas & Boer, 2007).

Later scholarly works strengthen conceptual precision by offering typologies and theory-informed analytic approaches (Fiott, 2015; Sayfullaev, 2016; Manyi, 2017; Jaskiernia, 2022; Guahk & Pepe, 2023). However, in the literature reviewed in this section, major definitional and analytical contributions are developed largely through European-centred cases, whereas Southeast Asia is addressed more selectively, with AIPA-related conceptual development discussed mainly through Firdaus and Kresnawati (2021) and Yildiz (2024). A Malaysia-specific conceptual discussion of parliamentary diplomacy in AIPA has not developed, and the conceptual work does not directly operationalise how Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy in AIPA should be assessed within a defined empirical study. To address these gaps, this research develops the Principles of Parliamentary Diplomacy framework, consist of institutionalisation, complementary to traditional diplomacy, and exchange of knowledge as an organising lens to understand the prospects of Malaysia in AIPA parliamentary diplomacy.

Across the literature reviewed, three recurring conceptual elements support the Principles of Parliamentary Diplomacy framework in this research. First,

institutionalisation is reflected in recurring attention to the organisational and procedural settings through which parliamentary diplomacy becomes observable, including IPIs, structured forums, and institutionalised interaction (Stavridis, 2006; Cutler, 2006; Manyi, 2017; Guahk & Pepe, 2023; Yildiz, 2024). Second, complementary to traditional diplomacy is consistently emphasised, with the reviewed studies presenting parliamentary diplomacy as supplementing state diplomacy by widening channels for dialogue, legitimacy, flexibility, and oversight rather than replacing state diplomacy (Fiott, 2015; Sayfullaev, 2016; Manyi, 2017; Jaskiernia, 2022; Guahk & Pepe, 2023; Loureiro, 2025; Firdaus & Kresnawati, 2021). Third, knowledge exchange is captured through the literature's emphasis on dialogue, mutual understanding, and inter-parliamentary exchanges and networks as outcomes of parliamentary engagement (Weisglas & Boer, 2007; Guahk & Pepe, 2023). In this research, these principles guide how the prospects of Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy in AIPA are organised and explained by assessing institutionalisation (structures, continuity, procedural features), complementary to traditional diplomacy (support to executive channels), and knowledge exchange (dialogue-driven information sharing and mutual understanding).

1.9.3 Significant Evidence of Parliamentary Diplomacy

This section reviews institution-based evidence of parliamentary diplomacy to show how it operates through formal organisations and forums. It also identifies gaps motivating this thesis and explains how the evidence supports the Principles of Parliamentary Diplomacy adopted in this research, namely institutionalisation, complementary to traditional diplomacy and exchange of knowledge. Compared with Europe and Africa, the evidence base on Southeast Asia remains limited and relatively

underdeveloped, with only a small number of studies focusing on AIPA. Overall, the literature indicates that parliamentary diplomacy is commonly practised in multilateral settings, where national parliaments participate in or collaborate with International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs) and appoint parliamentary delegates to conduct dialogue and related diplomatic activities.

Evidence from European-centred institutional settings is provided by Cutler (2006) and Fiott (2015). Cutler (2006), in *"The OSCE's Parliamentary Diplomacy in Central Asia and the South Caucasus in Comparative Perspective"* by adopting a qualitative research design, analysing historical documents, policy papers, speech records, and reports as the main sources, demonstrates parliamentary diplomacy through the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE-PA), describing its institutional development and its activities in Central Asia and the South Caucasus. The OSCE-PA is presented as a vehicle for parliamentary dialogue and a mechanism for sustained engagement through collaboration with parliamentary standing committees and non-governmental organisations, as well as field visits undertaken by parliamentarians to observe and support OSCE taskforces. The study also lists seminars and meetings addressing security-related and humanitarian crises, electoral legislation, democratic development, and conflict resolution, concluding that OSCE-PA contributes to confidence-building, agenda-setting, and raising international attention to regional issues (Cutler, 2006).

Fiott (2015) in *"The Diplomatic Role of The European Parliament's Parliamentary Groups"*, discusses that European Parliament political groups maintain

interaction channels and participate in negotiations with external actors, while parliamentary participation generates information and knowledge on foreign policy issues. Fiott (2015) also shows that parliamentary actors can use legislative mechanisms to influence decision-making in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and engage in diplomatic activities such as courtesy visits, inter-parliamentary meetings, and election observation missions. Significantly, the study identifies weaknesses, including insufficient resources, political ideology, and the constraint that political groups do not represent the state but rather the legislative body. These weaknesses are balanced by added value, such as legitimacy in crises and the capacity to access networks and individuals not available to traditional diplomats (Fiott, 2015). This makes the EP case valuable as evidence not only of practice but also of the trade-offs inherent in institution-based parliamentary diplomacy.

Beyond intra-European settings, Guahk and Pepe (2023), in *"Parliamentary diplomacy between the EU and the Republic of Korea"*, examine relations between the European Parliament (EP) and the Korean National Assembly (KNA). Using qualitative document analysis of official EP and KNA documents, the paper traces institutionalised parliamentary interaction since the first joint meeting of the RoK–EU Interparliamentary Council and the EP's establishment of the Delegation for Relations with the Korean Peninsula (DKOR) in 2004. Empirically, it found institutionalisation through the EP's external-relations design, including delegation nomination rules tied to political-group balance and DKOR's mandate to conduct interparliamentary activities, and it details the KNA's institutional arrangements, including parliamentary diplomacy actors, multiple interparliamentary group formats, and administrative support units such as the International Affairs and Protocol Bureau and research

Universiti Utara Malaysia

bodies. In terms of prospects, delegations are framed as complementing broader policies rather than duplicating executive diplomacy, and DKOR enables engagement on sensitive issues through lower-profile interactions. At the same time, recurring weaknesses include executive dominance in foreign policy, autonomy constraints, limited resources, and criticisms such as political tourism, alongside transparency issues from uneven public documentation. The paper further shows that elections and domestic political turmoil can reduce focus and continuity, indicating that institutionalised platforms can sustain dialogue and agenda evolution yet remain vulnerable to discontinuity driven by domestic politics (Guahk & Pepe, 2023).

Institutional evidence from Africa is discussed in *"Role of Parliamentary Institutions in International Relations: The Case of Parliament of Kenya"* by Manyi (2017). The study defines parliamentary diplomacy as legislative involvement in international activities to enhance cooperation among countries. The study examines Kenya's participation in multiple IPIs, including the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), Canada African Parliamentary Association, and the Speakers' Association (Manyi, 2017). These institutions serve as platforms for discussion on peace, sustainable development, and other international issues. The study also explains that IPI engagement supports closer cooperation and enables legislative roles in ratifying treaties and agreements previously handled by diplomatic officials. Manyi (2017) argues that external parliamentary conferences facilitate experience-building and knowledge exchange, improving information access and strengthening parliamentary monitoring roles. At the same time, the study identifies challenges, including non-permanent seating of members, the independent nature of institutions, and difficulties

Universiti Utara Malaysia

relating to ratification suitability across member states (Manyi, 2017). Beyond these regions evidence from other IPIs provides further evidence of parliamentary diplomacy's institutional mechanisms and roles.

Besides European and African, the paper by Durdular (2017), titled *"Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries TurkPA: Beyond Parliamentary Diplomacy"* analyses the TurkPA as an IPI. The study views the parliamentary diplomacy concept as a new phenomenon that increased parliamentary international activity and frames it as serving mutual understanding, citizen representation at international forums, and democratic legitimacy for intergovernmental institutions. TurkPA's establishment is traced through a working group process beginning in 2008 and formalised by the Istanbul Agreement on November 21, 2008. The paper identifies TurkPA's main goals as enhancing inter-parliamentary relations, promoting economic and political dialogue, and strengthening regional and international security, and it concludes that TurkPA resembles other IPIs. The work explicitly states that the parliamentary body becomes a complementary part of traditional diplomacy, since the government is no longer the only actor in international relations (Durdular, 2017).

A more explicitly evaluative institutional analysis is found in "*Parliamentary Deliberation in Inter-Regional Relations: Insights from the ACP-EU JPA"* by Delputte and Williams (2019) examine deliberation and consensus-building in the Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific-European Union Joint Parliamentary Assembly (ACP-EU JPA) regarding Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). Using a qualitative approach involving semi-structured interviews, participant observation and

content analysis, the paper found that the JPA can still reach consensus through resolutions despite contentious EU-ACP relations. By using a five-criteria framework, the paper identifies recurring challenges, including documented weaknesses due to problematic participation, limited transparency, bloc voting that obscures internal differences, debate-quality problems and inequalities maintained through procedural rules. Despite these weaknesses, the study concluded that JPA provides added value by sustaining relations, building trust and understanding, and maintaining inter-parliamentary cooperation, and it argues that its analytical framework can be applied to other assemblies (Delputte & Williams, 2019).

Evidence linked to AIPA and Southeast Asia appears in a limited set of studies but is directly relevant to this research. Mutiara and Landra (2018) in "*Diplomasi Inter-Parlemen Dalam Penyelesaian Konflik Rohingya: Kedudukan Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Republik Indonesia dalam ASEAN Inter-parliamentary Assembly"* examine inter-parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA through Indonesia's parliament (DPR-RI) and the Rohingya conflict and foreground legal-institutional positioning. The findings state that AIPA not been considered an international organisation and is listed in Annexe 2 of the ASEAN Charter as an ASEAN parliamentarian-associated entity. The paper interprets AIPA as an international personality *sui generis* and characterises AIPA as a Government Run/Inspired Non-Governmental Organisation (GRINGOs) intended to expand legislative functions internationally. It further identifies domestic legal bases for DPR-RI's external engagement, showing how domestic law and related regulations underpin parliamentary diplomatic action. The weakness is demonstrated by legal-status ambiguity and institutional positioning, while prospect lies in the

Universiti Utara Malaysia

existence of statutory and legal bases enabling parliamentary engagement (Mutiara & Landra, 2018).

Firdaus and Kresnawati (2021), in *"Indonesia Parliamentary Diplomacy: The Leadership of House Representatives Republic of Indonesia in ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) 2011-2012"*, provide more direct evidence of parliamentary diplomacy practice within AIPA by analysing Indonesia's chairmanship between 2011 and 2012. Using qualitative descriptive analysis and a literature-based approach, the study argues that Indonesia used AIPA as the main organisation for advancing regional parliamentary diplomacy, with priorities linked to ASEAN Community efforts, maintaining a conducive regional environment for development goals, and supporting ASEAN Vision 2015. Indonesia, through AIPA also addresses issues such as the South China Sea dispute and encourages cooperation among ASEAN members. However, the study is limited by its focus on the 2011 to 2012 period and its reliance on written sources (Firdaus & Kresnawati, 2021).

More recent Southeast Asia-focused research is provided by Yildiz (2024) in "*The Parliamentary Dimension of ASEAN Integration: AIPA and ASEAN Parliamentarization"*, which examines AIPA as a parliamentary dimension of ASEAN integration. By using qualitative research design through semi-structured interview and document analysis method, the researcher argues that AIPA has a limited role in ASEAN integration, which explained through a three-dimensional framework, consist of structural factors, referring to AIPA as an advisory body works through non-binding resolutions, systematic factor, due to low democratic maturity in the region, and operational factor, caused by ambiguity in AIPA-ASEAN relations and

institutional weaknesses such as limited budget and low secretariat personnel. The research also discussed constraints, including consensus decision-making, executive-led integration, uneven legislative empowerment, and limited institutional support. Yildiz (2024), through new regionalism, links ASEAN's parliamentary cooperation with the inclusive and multi-layered regionalism involving non-state actors and formalising AIPA as an ASEAN entity (Yildiz, 2024). Beyond region-specific cases, the literature also provides macro-level evidence and broader conceptual accounts of institutional parliamentary diplomacy.

Beyond individual cases, the research title *"Do International Parliaments Matter? An Empirical Analysis of Influences on Foreign Policy and Civil Rights"* by Archibugi and Bareis (2022) offers macro-level institutional evidence by testing whether international parliaments matter through empirical assessment of foreign policy and civil rights. The study hypothesises that interaction among parliamentarians within IPIs contributes to similarity in states' foreign-policy positions and may influence civil rights practices. The findings support the foreign-policy similarity hypothesis, shared IPI membership is associated with more similar foreign-policy stances within a year, but reject the civil-rights influence hypothesis based on the tested data. This mixed result is significant as it suggests that institutional effects may be selective across domains, rather than uniformly diffusing across all governance outcomes (Archibugi & Bareis, 2022).

"Parliamentary Diplomacy-A New Dimension of Contemporary Parliamentarism" by Jaskiernia (2022) strengthens the evidence by describing the importance of parliamentary diplomacy in the foreign policy areas related to security

Universiti Utara Malaysia

and defence, where democratic control is traditionally weaker. The paper identifies parliamentary diplomacy activities, including delegation exchange, participation in parliamentary assemblies, bilateral and multilateral parliamentary meetings, and creating parliamentary friendship groups. It argues that international parliamentary assemblies can enable advisory and controlling roles, build transnational networks, and support information flows that strengthen parliamentary control. At the same time, it records criticisms and constraints, including insufficient coordination with foreign ministries, doubts about whether parliamentary diplomacy exists as diplomacy in a strict sense, limited access to governmental resources, discontinuity of membership, sporadic activity, duplication among regional parliamentary organisations, and conflicting national or ideological interests that limit intervention capacity. This contribution is valuable because it specifies both prospects as additional channels and networks and recurring operational constraints (Jaskiernia, 2022).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

While Cutler (2006) frames the main prospects of institution-based parliamentary diplomacy as parliamentary dialogue, confidence-building, and agenda-setting that raises regional issues to wider international attention, Fiott (2015) extends this institutional value by showing how parliamentary actors can exercise legislative influence and engage foreign policy processes through formal mechanisms (Cutler, 2006; Fiott, 2015). In parallel, several studies emphasise that institutional platforms contribute to knowledge outcomes. Fiott (2015), Manyi (2017), Jaskiernia (2022), and Guahk and Pepe (2023) describe information exchange produced through participation, networking, and transnational information flows (Fiott, 2015; Manyi, 2017; Jaskiernia, 2022; Guahk & Pepe, 2023).

Beyond these functional benefits, Delputte and Williams (2019) demonstrate that inter-parliamentary assemblies can sustain relations and build trust across blocs, suggesting that institutionalised procedures can preserve cooperation when executive relations are strained (Delputte & Williams, 2019). Similarly, Firdaus and Kresnawati (2021) show that AIPA advance regional parliamentary diplomacy and encourages cooperation among ASEAN members (Firdaus & Kresnawati, 2021). These prospects are reinforced by the repeated claim that parliamentary diplomacy operates as an additional channel alongside traditional diplomacy (Durdular, 2017; Guahk & Pepe, 2023).

At the same time, the reviewed studies also show that weaknesses recur alongside these prospects. Fiott (2015), Guahk and Pepe (2023), Jaskiernia (2022), and Yildiz (2024) highlight resource constraints that limit the scope and effectiveness of parliamentary diplomacy, and Delputte and Williams (2019) add that participation and deliberation constraints can undermine the quality of inter-parliamentary outcomes (Fiott, 2015; Guahk & Pepe, 2023; Jaskiernia, 2022; Yildiz, 2024; Delputte & Williams, 2019). In addition, Guahk and Pepe (2023) and Yildiz (2024) emphasise executive dominance in foreign policy, suggesting that parliamentary channels often operate with restricted autonomy (Guahk & Pepe, 2023; Yildiz, 2024).

The problem of discontinuity, including non-permanent membership, is also evident in Manyi (2017) and Jaskiernia (2022). This discontinuity weakens institutional memory and sustained engagement (Manyi, 2017; Jaskiernia, 2022). Concerns about procedural non-transparency, including missing minutes and uneven public records, were raised by Delputte and Williams (2019) and Guahk and Pepe

Universiti Utara Malaysia

(2023), reinforcing the issue of limited visibility in institutional practice (Delputte & Williams, 2019; Guahk & Pepe, 2023). Finally, Guahk and Pepe (2023) recorded criticisms of delegations as political tourism, whereas Mutiara and Landra (2018) point to institutional and legal ambiguity surrounding AIPA's status, indicating that unclear legal positioning can constrain institutionalisation and implementation (Guahk & Pepe, 2023; Mutiara & Landra, 2018).

Based on this review, the institutional evidence base remains uneven and difficult to extend to Southeast Asia. Southeast Asian coverage is limited and mainly centred on Indonesia's engagement in AIPA and AIPA's legal-institutional positioning, while the most recent ASEAN-focused assessment argues that AIPA's role in ASEAN integration remains limited due to structural, systemic, and operational constraints (Mutiara & Landra, 2018; Firdaus & Kresnawati, 2021; Yildiz, 2024). Empirically, some studies describe institutional activities but do not specify weaknesses, which restricts the ability to evaluate institutional balance consistently across cases (Cutler, 2006; Durdular, 2017). At the same time, macro-level evidence suggests that IPI influence may be selective across domains, rather than uniformly shaping all governance outcomes (Koenig-Archibugi & Bareis, 2022).

Most importantly, there is no empirical evidence on Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy in AIPA within the existing literature, and there are no focused empirical studies of Malaysia between 2009 and 2018. Accordingly, this thesis addresses these gaps by providing Malaysia-specific evidence from 2009 to 2018 and interpreting it prospects through the three principles of institutionalisation, complementary to traditional diplomacy, and knowledge exchange, while applying neo-regionalism to

Universiti Utara Malaysia

explain the significance of these practices and constraints in ASEAN's regional setting.

The review of existing literature in this section also shows that institution-based parliamentary diplomacy consistently operates through three recurring mechanisms that align with the Principles of Parliamentary Diplomacy, namely institutionalisation, complementary to traditional diplomacy, and exchange of knowledge. Institutionalisation is supported by repeated evidence of formal organisations, rules, and procedures that sustain engagement over time, such as the OSCE-PA's structured activities, the EP's group-based external interactions and institutional mechanisms, the EP-KNA interparliamentary design through DKOR and nomination rules, and procedural structures in inter-regional assemblies. It is also reflected in AIPA's legal-institutional positioning and domestic legal bases that underpin parliamentary engagement (Cutler, 2006; Fiott, 2015; Guahk & Pepe, 2023; Delputte & Williams, 2019; Mutiara & Landra, 2018).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Complementary to traditional diplomacy is demonstrated when parliamentary actors provide an additional channel alongside executive diplomacy, including legislative engagement with foreign policy processes and the explicit claim that parliamentary bodies become complementary to traditional diplomacy because governments are no longer the only international actors, reinforced by EP-KNA delegations framed as complementing broader policies (Fiott, 2015; Durdular, 2017; Guahk & Pepe, 2023).

Knowledge exchange is supported by evidence that participation generates information, learning, and information flows through institutional interaction (Fiott, 2015; Manyi, 2017; Jaskiernia, 2022). While some studies apply alternative evaluative or constraint-based frameworks, the three principles remain consistently supported across the institutional cases reviewed here and provide a common lens for interpreting these recurring practices.

1.9.4 Research Gap

Based on the literature reviewed in previous sections, this thesis identifies and addresses four gaps that motivate the research. These gaps include the theoretical gap, the knowledge gap, the empirical gap, and the timeframe gap. At the same time, the reviewed literature also highlights recurring elements, namely institutionalisation, complementary to traditional diplomacy and exchange of knowledge, which this thesis unites into the Principles of Parliamentary Diplomacy as an organising analytical framework for examining Malaysia's prospects in AIPA parliamentary diplomacy.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

This research addresses the theoretical gap identified in the reviewed literature, where major definitional and analytical development of parliamentary diplomacy is drawn largely from European-centred settings, while Southeast Asia appears more selectively. Although Yildiz (2024) links AIPA to ASEAN regional dynamics using a regionalism lens, the reviewed literature does not extend this regional-context explanation to a Malaysia-focused analysis of parliamentary diplomacy in AIPA within a defined empirical period, from 2009 to 2018. This thesis addresses this theoretical-context gap by applying neo-regionalism as the interpretive lens to explain

how Malaysia's engagement in AIPA is shaped by ASEAN's regional setting and how that setting structures both constraints and prospects.

Across the reviewed literature, this research also identifies and addresses the knowledge gap as parliamentary diplomacy remains an evolving concept without a single accepted definition, and it repeatedly raises unresolved issues regarding how parliamentary diplomacy should be defined and assessed, particularly how international parliamentary activities connect to national policy processes. Although later studies offer typologies and dimension-based approaches, these do not unite into a shared set of criteria that can be applied consistently across contexts in the literature reviewed. This thesis addresses the knowledge gap by adopting a consistent organising framework called the Principles of Parliamentary Diplomacy to guide how parliamentary diplomacy is identified and interpreted in relation to Malaysia's prospects in AIPA.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Within the reviewed literature, there is no empirical evidence focused on Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy in AIPA. Existing Southeast Asian studies discussed here concentrate mainly on Indonesia's engagement in AIPA and AIPA's legal-institutional positioning, alongside a broader assessment of AIPA's constraints in ASEAN integration. This thesis addresses the empirical gap by producing Malaysia-specific evidence on its involvement in AIPA parliamentary diplomacy. In addition to the lack of Malaysia-focused research, the reviewed literature contains no focused empirical studies of Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy in AIPA for the period 2009 to 2018. This thesis, therefore, addresses the timeframe gap by examining Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy in AIPA specifically across the years 2009 to 2018.

Across the studies reviewed, institutionalisation, complementary to traditional diplomacy, and knowledge exchange appear most consistently and remain applicable across diverse settings. Institutionalisation is reflected in repeated attention to organisational and procedural settings through which parliamentary diplomacy becomes observable. Complementary to traditional diplomacy is consistently emphasised as parliamentary diplomacy operating alongside executive diplomacy rather than replacing it. Knowledge exchange is supported through the literature's emphasis on dialogue, mutual understanding, networks, and information flows as outcomes of inter-parliamentary engagement.

Compared with alternative approaches in the reviewed literature, such as typologies of diplomatic action, participation dimensions, a two-level analytical framework combining legal-institutional and political-functional roles, deliberation-based evaluation criteria, or AIPA-specific explanatory factors, these three principles provide a concise baseline that captures the institutional foundation enabling repeated practice, the executive-legislative relationship shaping diplomatic relevance, and the informational mechanism through which engagement produces shared understanding. Accordingly, this thesis uses these principles to organise and interpret Malaysia's prospects in AIPA parliamentary diplomacy between 2009 and 2018.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

1.10 Chapter Organisation

Chapter 1: The introductory part consists of an introduction of the research topic, problem statement, research questions, research objectives, significance of the research, research scope, theoretical and conceptual framework, research methodology, and literature review.

Chapter 2: Discuss the background of parliamentary diplomacy by explaining the earliest emergence of parliamentary diplomacy and the development of International Parliamentary Institutions. Next, it examines the establishment and roles of AIPA. Third, it discusses the evolution of Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy and analyses the delegation pattern to AIPA GA between 2009 and 2018 and discusses how executive-legislative relations shape the National Parliament's engagement in AIPA.

Chapter 3: Identifies seven key challenges, namely, ASEAN domination, diverse political systems, consensus requirements, limited capacity of Malaysian parliamentary actors, lack of report-back, limited resolution implementation mechanisms, and low popularity, that constrained Malaysia's practice of parliamentary diplomacy in AIPA between 2009 and 2018.

Chapter 4: Outlines Malaysia's perspectives and aims in AIPA, validates the research's conceptual framework for assessing the prospects, and examines how the AIPA General Assembly, ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface, AIFOCOM (AIPACODD), and the AIPA Caucus contribute to Malaysia's engagement in AIPA parliamentary diplomacy based on the conceptual framework between 2009 and 2018.

Chapter 5: Summarises the research by restating the research questions and objectives, outlining the theoretical and conceptual framework and methodology, and synthesising findings from Chapters Two, Three and Four to answer the research questions. It also acknowledges the research limitations and proposes directions for future research.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

1.11 Conclusion

In conclusion, this research focuses on Malaysia's involvement in the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary (AIPA) between the years 2009 and 2018. The main objectives are to understand the background of Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy in AIPA, to identify the major challenges, and explore the prospects of Malaysia's involvement in AIPA. The research examines AIPA's parliamentary diplomacy practice through a neo-regionalist perspective, which supports multidimensional cooperation through flexible institutions and the involvement of non-state actors, in this case, the parliamentarians within AIPA. This research also employs the concept of parliamentary diplomacy to understand the practices within AIPA and develops a conceptual framework that indicates the potential benefits of these practices. A qualitative research design was adopted to address the research questions and achieve the research objectives.

By analysing previous studies, the researcher gained an in-depth understanding of the concept of parliamentary diplomacy. The literature reviews also helped identify existing gaps in the research of AIPA's parliamentary diplomacy. The researcher found that most existing research focuses on issues specific to the timeframe in which they were conducted. Additionally, there is a notable lack of research concerning Malaysia's specific involvement in parliamentary diplomacy. Therefore, this research, by focusing on Malaysia's background, challenges, and prospects within AIPA, aims to fill the existing gaps in this subject matter.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

CHAPTER TWO

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY PRACTICES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the significant development of the parliamentary diplomacy concept, divided into three sections. The first section will explain the initial event of parliamentary diplomacy and the development of International Parliamentary Institutions globally. The second section explains the development of Parliamentary Diplomacy in Southeast Asia and the function of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) in serving the practices. The third section will describe the development of parliamentary diplomacy practices in Malaysia and identify the executive's relation to legislative diplomacy.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

2.2 Background of Parliamentary Diplomacy

2.2.1 Origin of the Parliamentary Diplomacy Concept

The concept of parliamentary diplomacy originated in the late 19th century, during the establishment of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The IPU was initiated in 1889 by British Parliamentarian William Randal Cremer and French parliamentarian Frédéric Passy. The main factor in initiating the first parliamentary diplomacy was due to the chaotic situation during that period, without an established international relation.

In that era, most European nations believed warfare was the only fair way to resolve any differences or conflicts. However, Cremer and Passy sought a peaceful approach, by arbitration and mediation rather than engaging in warfare (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2022).

The idea of Parliamentary Cooperation was started between the 1870s and 1880s separately by Cremer and Passy through gathering support from pacifist parliamentarian groups. In the year 1888, Cremer had gathered support from 234 Members of Parliament to propose a draft of the Arbitration Treaty to the United States. The treaty was initially rejected by the United States Congress; however, in June 1888, the United States Senate considered the possibility of resolving disputes through arbitration. Meanwhile, Passy called on the French government to address international conflict through arbitration. This came to Cremer's attention, and he wrote a suggestion letter to Passy to arrange a meeting to exchange views on forming an International Parliamentary Cooperation (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2022).

This led to the first official bilateral parliamentary meeting between Cremer and Passy and other parliamentarians from Britain and France in October 1888, in Paris; however, only a small number of MPs supported the idea. The effort to form a Parliamentary cooperation was continued by organising an International Conference involving MPs from other countries in Paris on June 29th and 30^{th,} 1889. At this time, the involvement of MPs from Britain and France slightly increased and was joined by representatives from the United States, Spain, Belgium, Denmark, Hungary, and Liberia. Along with this event, the first IPI was established on June 30th, 1889, known as the Inter-Parliamentary Conference, later changed to the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Universiti Utara Malaysia

(Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2022). The establishment of the IPU indicates the beginning of multilateral parliamentary diplomacy practices.

Since its establishment, the IPU has become a central organisation that facilitates dialogues among parliamentarians and contributes to the sustainability of world peace. Although it failed to prevent the First and Second World Wars, the IPU has made numerous contributions in resolving conflicts among states through mutual dialogues and addressing social issues faced by the world society until now. These contributions by the IPU have sustained and significantly contributed to the development of parliamentary diplomacy and International Parliamentary Institutions.

2.2.2 The Growth of International Parliamentary Institutions

Initially, the term parliamentary diplomacy was misemployed by referring to conference diplomacy, as it is conducted based on formal procedures, and the decisions are made based on the voting process, like the national parliamentary business (Friedheim, 1976). However, parliamentary diplomacy with parliamentarians as the main actor comprises more specific activities, including public and informal meetings (Goumenos, 2018). The Inter-Parliamentary Union, as the pioneer of parliamentary diplomacy, contributes to the development of IPI by strengthening the parliaments' democratic and globalising parliamentary relations (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2024). Within the 20th to 21st century, the IPIs rose rapidly and formed more specified groups of parliamentary bodies which work independently or are attached to other International Organisations (IO) (Schimmelfennig et al., 2021).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

During that period, parliamentary diplomacy focused on regional cooperation, influenced by neo-regionalism and the public requirement for transparency in international politics, especially in Europe. During the Cold War, the inter-parliamentary body became a major component of most European Inter-Governmental Organisations (IGOs) to support regional integration. The Hague Congress of the European Movement in 1948 highlights the requirement to form a European Parliamentary Assembly. As an initiative, the Council of Europe was formed in the year 1949 with an Assembly that only works as a consultative body (renamed to Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in 1974) (Cofelice, 2012).

During this period, the Council of Europe became an important model of the IGOs with an inter-parliamentary component. This contributed to the establishment of the European Parliament (formerly known as the Consultative Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community) in 1951, the Parliamentary Assembly under the Western European Union in 1954 and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Parliamentary Assembly (formerly referred to as North Atlantic Assembly) in 1956 (Cofelice, 2012). Since the activities of IPIs in Europe rapidly increased, these have been followed by other regions as well.

These contributed to the formation of non-European regional parliamentary institutions, including the Latin American Parliament, the East African Legislative Assembly, the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Central American Parliament, the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation (currently ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly) and others (Cofelice, 2012). The growth in the number of IPIs during the Cold War period was also supported by the decline of ideological wars that used to

Universiti Utara Malaysia

hinder parliamentary cooperation, the effect of democratisation, and globalisation, which requires stronger legislative cooperation and the growth of region-based IPIs (Cofelice, 2016). A study by Giesen (2017) shows there were 68 Regional Parliamentary Institutions around the world which attached to regional intergovernmental organisations, including AIPA (Giesen, 2017).

2.3 Development of ASEAN Regional Parliamentary Diplomacy

2.3.1 Overview of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

Upon the failure of the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) and MAPHILINDO in the 1960s, the tireless effort by five Southeast Asia (SEA) countries, namely, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia, led to the establishment of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN). Malaysia's involvement started in 1966, through the ratification of the Peace Treaty between Malaysia and Indonesia. This treaty is significant in restoring diplomatic relations among SEA countries and giving way to the formation of ASEAN (National Library Board of Singapore, 2015).

The establishment of ASEAN started at the Bangkok Conference in 1967, with five founding member states. The conference was held in a Beach Resort in Bangkok based on the 'Sport-Shirt Diplomacy' approach. This conference contributed to the formulation and ratification of the Bangkok Declaration on 8 August 1967, with the objectives to strengthen regional cooperation and equality among member states to gain peace, prosperity and development. The declaration is also to avoid external interference in regional matters that could threaten the sovereignty of the states (Keling et al., 2011).

ASEAN also aim to promote political stability, economic and trade relations, and social development among the member states (Keling et al., 2011). ASEAN is also aware of expanding global issues into a larger scope and complex nature. This requires the direct participation of ASEAN citizens to promote its aims and mutual effort to sustain the regional effort to overcome the challenges (AIPA Secretariat, 1975). Therefore, member states realised the inclusion of parliamentarians in regional cooperation could promote regional objectives at the grassroots level of society. In the early 1970s, this idea led the ASEAN members to institutionalise their legislative bodies' activities to promote ASEAN objectives and to support the regional integration process (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization, 1978).

2.3.2 Background of ASEAN Parliamentary Diplomacy

Parliamentary diplomacy in ASEAN was started by its five initial members in the 1970s. During the bilateral visit by Malaysia and Singapore parliamentary delegates to Indonesia in 1973, Indonesia proposed the idea of establishing a parliamentary cooperation for ASEAN Members, which received positive responses from both countries (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Republik Indonesia, Badan Kerja Sama Antar-Parlemen (BKSAP), 2019). This idea is also supported by Thailand and the Philippines during the DPR-RI Special Visit to both of countries in 1974 (Deinla, 2013).

As a result, the first ASEAN Parliamentary Meeting (APM) was held in January 1975, to institutionalise legislative cooperation in ASEAN by forming the Working Committees consisting of not more than three representatives from each ASEAN member's parliament to manage the establishment of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation. Two Working Committees were formed, consisting of

Working Committee I, to structure the institutional setup and draft the Statute for the parliamentary organisation. Meanwhile, the Working Committee II was to formulate the Joint Statement and Press Release related to the APM and future parliamentary organisation (AIPA Secretariat, 1975).

A series of committee sessions and APM were held to plan and manage the establishment of the ASEAN Parliamentary Institution. At the second APM held in Kuala Lumpur in August 1975, the ASEAN parliamentary delegates resolved most of the issues related to the draft statute, which was formulated at the Working Committee session held in May 1975. The members have agreed with the proposal to name the institutional ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation (AIPO). However, due to the issue related to the organisational Statute, the institution was unable to be established during the second session of APM. The parliamentary delegates achieved consensus on the AIPO statute during the third APM session in the Philippines in September 1977. The ratification of the AIPO Statute and the establishment of the Joint Statement indicate the official establishment of Parliamentary Cooperation in the region (Bagian Hubungan Masjarakat DPRGR, 1985).

From the 1990s to the 2000s, the number of AIPO member countries has expanded due to the participation of new members in ASEAN. These new members constitute the legislative body from Brunei, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam, which gained full membership during the 33rd AIPA General Assembly. Additionally, dialogue with the Observer member state Parliaments started since the early establishment and expanded throughout the time (AIPA Secretariat) (AIPA

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Secretariat, 2024). This process of establishing AIPO creation shows the starting point of Parliamentary Diplomacy in Southeast Asia.

After 30 years of establishment, AIPO aimed to enhance its institutional functions to contribute to the ASEAN integration. The institution formed a committee to study the possibility of forming the ASEAN Parliament. Nevertheless, the idea was replaced with the Ad-Hoc Committee on "Transformation of AIPO into a More Effective and Closely Integrated Institution" in 2015. The committee work to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of AIPO for the region (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2020). Thereby, the Committee identified several improvement strategies, including enhancing AIPO's ability to recognise the opportunities and address the challenges in the formation of the ASEAN Community.

The AIPO is also aware of unpredictability in the region and the requirement to improve ASEAN competitiveness. Besides that, the transformation of AIPO also includes the roles of member parliaments of AIPO members to support the regional integration and validate the united action of AIPO that contributes to forming a closely integrated Regional Parliamentary Institution (AIPA Secretariat, 2024). Therefore, the Ad-Hoc Committee has proposed several draft resolutions as follows:

i) The Statutes of AIPO must be amended.

ii) Endorsement of the criteria and guidelines for the AIPA Secretary General.

iii) Implementation of mutual attendance in the AIPA General Assembly and ASEAN Summits.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

This proposal was approved at the 27th AIPO General Assembly, during which the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation (AIPO) statutes were officially amended into the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA). As a result, the 28th AIPA General Assembly was held in Malaysia in 2007 under a new framework (AIPA Secretariat, 2024). These updates include the structure of AIPA, which includes the General Assembly, President, Secretariat, Executive Committee, and Committees. The General Assembly has become a crucial activity of AIPA, as it provides a platform for the legislative members to interact and share policy inputs. Besides that, the members can address the issues that need mutual concern and could assist the government in generating proper solutions (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Republik Indonesia, Badan Kerja Sama Antar-Parlemen (BKSAP), 2019).

Under this new statute, the President of AIPA or the representative can attend the ASEAN Summit. Similarly, the ASEAN representatives could join the AIPA General Assembly as a strategy to support legislative and executive interaction. Moreover, the President of AIPA has the mandate to summon an Executive Committee session based on the recommendation of the members to discuss a matter considered urgent. The General Assembly approves the appointment of the Secretary General, who will serve a three-year term in a rotation determined by alphabetical order. The Secretary-General is required to reside at the location of the AIPA Permanent Secretariat office (currently in Jakarta) (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Republik Indonesia, Badan Kerja Sama Antar-Parlemen (BKSAP), 2019).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

2.3.2.1 Significant Organs of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly

2.3.2.1.1 AIPA General Assembly

The AIPA General Assembly (AIPA GA) is the supreme authority and highest policy-making body of AIPA. It is held annually in accordance with Article 9 of the AIPA Statutes, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee (AIPA Secretariat, 2025). The General Assembly establishes policy guidelines for advancing AIPA's goals and serves as a platform that facilitates interaction among member parliaments. The GA may adopt non-binding resolutions and recommendations. It may also introduce policy initiatives, provide inputs for policy formulation, and propose legislative initiatives on issues of common concern for recommendation to the governments of ASEAN Member States (Yildiz, 2024).

According to Article 12, the Executive Committee may determine the agenda to be addressed by the General Assembly. Nevertheless, the General Assembly may also consider other matters beyond those determined by the Executive Committee, if the necessity arises and after hearing the explanations from the Member proposing the discussion (AIPA Secretariat, 2025).

Participants in the General Assembly include delegations from AIPA member parliaments and observer groups. Each AIPA member parliament may send a maximum of 15 delegates, led by the Speaker of the national parliament, and must include at least three women parliamentarians. The General Assembly is chaired by the AIPA President, who is the Speaker of the AIPA member parliament hosting the General Assembly. The chief delegates of other member parliaments serve as Vice-Presidents. The Statutes further state that if the AIPA President is unable to preside

over the General Assembly, a member elected by the host parliamentary delegation will assume the chair. The AIPA President's term begins immediately after the end of a General Assembly and will continue until the end of the following General Assembly (AIPA Secretariat, 2025).

2.3.2.1.2 Executive Committee

The AIPA Executive Committee is chaired by the President of AIPA and consists of not more than three members from each Member Parliament, one of whom should be the Head of delegation. Based on Article 11, the Executive Committee is required to meet at least three months before the General Assembly to approve the activities of AIPA during the General Assembly. The Executive Committee need to be held at the request of any Member Parliament to deliberate and act on urgent matters of common interest. The decisions of the Executive Committee are based on consensus. If consensus cannot be achieved, the Executive Committee may determine an alternative method for reaching a specific decision (AIPA Secretariat, 2025).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

2.3.2.1.3 Standing Committees

AIPA consist of six standing committees, including the Political Matters, Social Matters, Economic Matters, Organisational Matters, Women Parliamentarians of AIPA (WAIPA) matters, and Young Parliamentarians of AIPA. Based on Article 11 (2.b), the Standing Committees meeting should be held before the Executive Committee, prepare and approve the programme and agenda for the Standing Committees (AIPA Secretariat, 2025).

2.4 The Development of Parliamentary Diplomacy in Malaysia

2.4.1 Background of the Malaysian Legislative Body

Malaysian parliamentary practice is based on the Westminster Parliamentary system from the British. The components of the Parliament of Malaysia consist of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong (YDPA), the House of Representatives, and the Senate. Based on Article 44 of the Federal Constitution, YDPA is the main component of the Malaysian Parliament (Attorney General's Chambers of Malaysia, n.d.). There are 70 members of the Senate, consisting of two members chosen by each of the 13 State Legislative Assemblies and 44 members chosen by the YDPA based on their knowledge, experience, or representation of particular groups, while 222 Members of the House of Representatives are elected every five years to represent their constituencies (Parlimen Malaysia, 2019).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

As a national legislative body, this institution works as a primary actor to pass federal laws, amend existing laws, assess the policies of the government, and endorse the government's budgets and new taxes. The parliament also promotes checks and balances by providing a platform for the government and opposition bloc to interact and debate, showing the traditional functions of the Parliament of Malaysia (Parlimen Malaysia, 2019). However, the impact of globalisation has expanded parliamentary roles and internationalised parliamentary activities, contributing to the development of the concept of Parliamentary Diplomacy (Malamud & Stavridis, 2011).

The Parliament of Malaysia started to be involved in parliamentary diplomacy in the 1970s, which is supported by the interests of legislative cooperation (Parliament

of Malaysia, 1975). Malaysia views AIPA as encouraging interpersonal relations among members of parliaments within the region. Moreover, an institutionalised regional parliamentary cooperation could unite the actions among ASEAN members, contribute to mutual understanding and close cooperation among the member states. Therefore, Malaysia hopes that the formation of AIPO could foster unity among members and address the existing issues within the region, driving the achievement of ASEAN goals (Parliament of Malaysia, 1975).

2.4.2 Initial Phase of Malaysia's Engagement in ASEAN Parliamentary Diplomacy

Malaysia has been involved in ASEAN parliamentary diplomacy since the 1970s, by supporting Indonesia's idea to establish a regional parliamentary institution. The Malaysian Parliament was one of the Legislative Members of ASEAN that actively participated in the APM and conducted the second APM to facilitate the establishment of the ASEAN Parliamentary Cooperation (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2020).

The first APM, Malaysia, led by Tan Sri Datuk Nik Ahmad Kamil, the speaker of the House of Representatives, emphasised that the first APM was an important historical event for ASEAN, for initiating parliamentary cooperation. In 1975, Malaysia hosted the second APM to determine the organisational structure and to approve the draft statute of the ASEAN Parliamentary Cooperation, but, unable to be approved due to the issue on article three of the Statute (AIPA Secretariat, 1975; Bagian Hubungan Masjarakat DPRGR, 1985).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

During this second APM, the Prime Minister of Malaysia emphasised the importance of the ASEAN Parliamentary organisation. Malaysia strongly supports the involvement of non-state actors and people-to-people relations in developing cooperation within Southeast Asia. The establishment of the AIPO provides a new spectrum to promote the involvement of non-state actors (legislative bodies) in ASEAN. Malaysia views the formation of AIPO as opening a new approach to diplomacy involving legislative and people-representative bodies in the region (Hussein, 1981).

For Malaysia, the ASEAN parliamentary cooperation is an opportunity for the MPs to address issues within the region. Through this institution, the legislative members could exchange strategies to address common problems and assist other members in overcoming the issues. Therefore, this parliamentary organisation with consultative and advisory features could complement the executive body by providing policy recommendations upon consultation by the regional legislative forum. This helps the executive branch to plan the strategies to be involved in ASEAN and achieve a closer understanding and cooperation among Southeast Asian countries (Hussein, 1981).

Besides hosting the second ASEAN Parliamentary Meeting (APM) in 1975, Malaysia also contributes to the formulation of the Draft Statute, throughout the both Committees sessions, Malaysia also addressed certain minor amendments, including amendment toward fifth preamble of AIPO, to mention the Second ASEAN Parliamentary Meeting that was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and amendment to the forum name in the Draft Statute from the ASEAN Parliamentary Meeting (APM)

to the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation (AIPO). The completed Statute and Joint Communique statement signed and ratified by each representative declared the official establishment of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation (AIPO) during the third APM in Manila, Philippines, in September 1977 (Bagian Hubungan Masjarakat DPRGR, 1985; ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization, 1978).

The statute would be enforced once the national parliament approves it. In Malaysia, the AIPO Statute was presented in the House of Representatives on 7th April and in the House of Senate on 27th April 1978 with the motion to establish the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation (AIPO). The motion received great support from the MPs, and they believe that through this Parliamentary Cooperation, Malaysia could maintain close relations with the neighbouring countries, unite the actions and foster mutual understanding among ASEAN members (Parliament of Malaysia, 1978). The MPs emphasised that the ASEAN members are facing similar problems and interests. Thus, through this institution, ASEAN members could address the issues with shared actions and achieve mutual interests (Parliament of Malaysia, 1975).

The commitment of Malaysia was also visible during Malaysia's Speaker's Chairmanship, H.E Tan Sri Dato' Seri Diraja Ramli bin Ngah Talib (2007). Upon the approval of the report from the Ad-Hoc Committee on the "transformation of AIPO into a more effective and closely integrated institution" during the 27th General Assembly (GA) of AIPO, Malaysia hosted the GA with a new framework of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA). As a host, the Malaysian House of Representatives published the book titled "30 Years of AIPO" as an acknowledgement of the 30th year of the establishment of AIPO. The GA also continued with the

discussion and adoption of the report from the "Extraordinary Meeting of the Executive Committee" that was held from 16 to 19 April 2007 in Kuala Lumpur (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2007).

The recommendations from the Extraordinary Meeting report include the amendment of the AIPA Statutes title from "The Amendment of the Statutes of AIPO" to 'The Statutes of AIPA', renaming and transforming the AIPA Secretariat structure, which was approved on the 27th GA. The meeting was also attended by Malaysia's former Ambassador Dato' Md. Yusoff bin Md. Zain as the first Permanent Secretary General of AIPA and created the position of Assistant Secretary General (AIPA Secretariat, 2017; ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2007). Besides that, the meeting discussed the financial plan for the AIPA Secretariat, which included the salary increase for the Secretariat staff, increased the membership fees, and required the Secretary-General to prepare the draft budget for the year 2007/08 (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2007).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

This involvement of Malaysia shows the importance of ASEAN parliamentary diplomacy. The speech by H.E. Tan Sri Dato' Seri Diraja Ramli bin Ngah Talib (2007) further shows Malaysia's stance toward the AIPA. The president highlights that the legislative body has significant roles in enhancing bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Parliamentary diplomacy also supports the commitment of parliamentary actors to addressing contemporary issues and contributing to international peace and stability, particularly in addressing regional issues. Therefore, the establishment of AIPA could support the development of mature regionalism and its integration.

Moreover, establishing a permanent Secretariat will form a stable intra-regional system that works as a consultation for the ASEAN parliaments (Talib, 2007).

2.4.3 Malaysia's Commitment to AIPA

Although Malaysia been in AIPA since the 1970s, this involvement has hardly been discussed. Within 2009-2018 specifically, Malaysia held an important position in the new framework of AIPA, after the transformation in 2006. In April 2009, Malaysia hosted the first AIPA Caucus at the Parliament of Malaysia, which was proposed by the House of Representatives of Malaysia during the 28th GA (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2009; ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2007).

In 2015, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tan Sri Datuk Seri Panglima Pandikar Amin Mulia, was the President of AIPA, and Malaysia hosted the 36th AIPA General Assembly. During the GA opening speech, the president highlighted the importance of parliamentary diplomacy within Southeast Asia and saw AIPA as a complementary institution for ASEAN (Mulia P. A., 2015). The GA has passed 25 resolutions on the area of mutual interest, including political, social, economic, and organisational matters of AIPA and matters related to gender equality (Mulia, 2015).

In the same year, the Prime Minister of Malaysia held the position of Chairman of ASEAN, emphasising the contribution of AIPA to implement the objectives of ASEAN. The Chairman ensure that ASEAN will take steps to regularise the interface meeting between AIPA and ASEAN, which is important to support the implementation of ASEAN policies and improve the cohesiveness of the decision-

Universiti Utara Malaysia

making process. This could contribute to attaining the ASEAN Community goals (Razak, 2015).

2.4.4 The Delegation Pattern of Malaysia Delegation to AIPA

In Southeast Asian parliamentary diplomacy, AIPA is often characterised as a state-centric institution in which executive actors tend to influence the parliamentary diplomacy process (Ruland, 2019). Executive predominance in political affairs is also observed across Southeast Asian states, reflecting differences in political systems (Laurence, 2015). In Malaysia, however, the political system operates within a multi-party setting, comprising parties that could be categorised into the government bloc and the opposition bloc (Democracy Web, 2024).

In general, AIPA participation is often associated with relatively low opposition from representatives (Papanagnou et al., 2014). Yildiz (2024) explained that the AIPA Statute does not provide clear guidelines on delegation selection procedures involving the opposition. As a result, delegations are determined by the Speaker of each member's National Parliament, and do not necessarily reflect the composition of the national parliament (Yildiz, 2024).

In the case of the Parliament of Malaysia, although AIPA delegations are appointed by the Speaker, the selection is intended to include representatives from each state and to reflect party composition in the House of Representatives. The delegation typically comprises 14 members and is led by the Speaker (Seifert, 2015). To describe Malaysia's delegation pattern, this section analyses Malaysia's representation at the AIPA General Assembly (GA) from 2009 to 2018. As the AIPA

GA is a crucial meeting, and the proportion of delegates assigned to this meeting shows the pattern of delegation of Malaysia (Ruland, 2019). Table 2.1 presents Malaysia's delegation pattern from 2009 to 2018:

Table 2.1

Malaysia's Delegations to the AIPA General Assembly from 2009 – 2018

Years	Delegation from the Government Bloc	Delegation from the Opposition Bloc	Total
2009	4	3	7
2010	13	3	16
2011	N/A	N/A	N/A
2012	6	3	9
2013	7	2	9
2014	7	2	9
2015	17	4	21
2016	8	2	10
2017	7	4	11
2018	12	4	16
Total	**81**	**27**	**108**

Source: (AIPA Secretariat, 2025; Parliament of Malaysia, n.d.)

Table 2.1 shows that Malaysia's AIPA GA delegations between 2009 and 2018 (2011 excluded) were predominantly composed of ruling-coalition MPs, with 81 of 108 delegates drawn from the government bloc compared to 27 from the opposition bloc (AIPA Secretariat, 2025; Parliament of Malaysia, n.d.). While this indicates a larger number of delegations from ruling coalition MPs, it is also consistent with the stated selection intent that AIPA delegations reflect parliamentary party composition. Since the ruling coalition holds a large majority in the House of Representatives, the delegation that mirrors party composition would be expected to include more government-bloc MPs (Seifert, 2015).

On the other hand, although the selection procedure indicates that the delegation is intended to include representatives from each state and typically comprises 14 members, the number of MPs delegations who representing the states varies across years. In 2010, 2015 and 2018, the total number of delegates exceeded 14. In several other years, however, the size of the MPs delegation below the benchmark, indicating inconsistent involvement and a limited number of Malaysian MPs involvement in AIPA parliamentary diplomacy (Seifert, 2015; Yildiz, 2024).

In addition, Malaysia's preparations for AIPA are conducted through consultative meetings with the relevant ministries, and ASEAN-related engagement is mainly not supported by a regular parliamentary mechanism; instead, inputs are obtained from the relevant ministries. This suggests that although the delegations consist of MPs, the substantive preparation and ASEAN-related policy inputs are relying on the executive institutions. This institutional arrangement helps explain why Malaysia's AIPA engagement may be perceived as executive-influenced, alongside the predominance of government-bloc MPs (Seifert, 2015; Yildiz, 2024).

Collectively, Malaysia's delegation pattern to the AIPA GA between 2009 and 2018 indicates that, while the Speaker-led selection process is intended to represent parties and states, Malaysia's AIPA engagement remains shaped by broader institutional arrangements. These include the predominance of ruling-coalition MPs in delegation composition and the reliance on ministry-based consultation for substantive preparation, both of which contribute to perceptions of executive influence within Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy in AIPA.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

2.5 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter provides a comprehensive background for understanding the development of Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy in AIPA, from its early involvement in ASEAN parliamentary cooperation to its engagement and delegation patterns between 2009 and 2018. The chapter begins by tracing the origins of parliamentary diplomacy through the establishment of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in the late nineteenth century, which marked an early institutional foundation for International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs). This concept later expanded to other regions, including Southeast Asia, where parliamentary cooperation emerged in the 1970s as a platform for legislative collaboration among ASEAN Member States.

The chapter then analyses Malaysia's involvement by examining its foundational role in establishing AIPO, reflecting its roles in supporting parliamentary diplomacy and transforming AIPO into AIPA. It further highlights Malaysia's commitment to AIPA from 2009 to 2018. By analysing Malaysia's delegation pattern to the AIPA General Assembly, the chapter identifies an institutional arrangement that is prone towards executive influence in Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA. This context is important for understanding the constraints that may shape Malaysia's involvement in AIPA, as it may contribute to uneven MP participation and continued reliance on executive consultation for substantive inputs. Accordingly, the next chapter further examines the challenges Malaysia faces in practising parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

CHAPTER THREE

CHALLENGES MALAYSIA FACES IN AIPA PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter analysed Malaysia's historical involvement and commitment in AIPA. The chapter also shows the influence of government-bloc representation and the reliance on executive consultation for substantive preparation. However, despite involvement of Malaysia in AIPA, this chapter identifies and discusses seven main challenges, namely ASEAN domination, diverse political system, consensus requirement, limited capacity of Malaysian parliamentary actors, lack of report-back, limited resolution implementation mechanism, and lack of popularity. These challenges limit Malaysia's contributions towards the regional integration process and the effectiveness of AIPA to address regional political-security issues through a legislative approach.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

3.2 Constraints on Malaysia's Parliamentary Diplomacy in AIPA (2009–2018)

3.2.1 ASEAN Domination over AIPA

The transformation from AIPO to AIPA was accompanied by a revised framework intended to promote human rights, democracy, security, and prosperity within the region. However, this amendment did not improve AIPA's effectiveness (Nuttin, 2016). As a government-driven entity, ASEAN recognises the value of AIPA but does not grant the necessary authority. Parliamentary actors have a limited role in the decision-making process and primarily perform consultative functions. The integration process is largely steered by ASEAN Member States' governments, leaving parliaments with only a marginal role (Heppner, 2016).

For instance, the ASEAN parliamentarians were not directly involved in the formulation of the ASEAN Charter in 2007, and the Charter was not brought to the Malaysian Parliamentary discussion (Parlimen Malaysia, 2009; Laurence, 2015). AIPA itself was only engaged in a brief exchange of views with the High-Level Task Force on Drafting the ASEAN Charter (Laurence, 2015; Nuttin, 2015). This is supported by the list of memberships of the High-Level Task Force, which only involves ASEAN's Foreign Minister and the Secretary-General (ASEAN Secretariat, 2007). The 2009 Hansard record of the House of Representatives of Malaysia shows that the ASEAN Charter has not been presented in the National Parliament, but according to the 2015 Hansard record, only involved by a small number of parliamentary delegates (Parlimen Malaysia, 2009; Parlimen Malaysia, 2015).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

The ASEAN Charter does not emphasise the parliamentary activity or the establishment of a Legislative Institution (Laurence, 2015). The Charter also does not recognise the AIPA as a main force in forming the ASEAN Community. AIPA is only classified as a recommendatory entity associated with ASEAN, rather than an integral part of the institutional structure. As an associated entity of ASEAN, AIPA focuses on regional integration and policy harmonisation, without authority over legislation or oversight (Nuttin, 2016; Papanagnou et al., 2014; ASEAN Secretariat, 2015).

Moreover, as an inherent part of ASEAN, AIPA also strictly upholds the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of the member states. Without legislative power (as a recommendatory forum) and the result of the principle of non-interference, the AIPA is only able to produce non-binding resolutions. This means legislative members cannot be forced to implement the resolution (Laurence, 2015; Šabič, 2012; Yildiz, 2024).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Malaysia is among the AIPA members with a low record of implementing AIPA resolutions. From 2017 to 2024, Malaysia had only 70% of fully implemented resolutions, comparatively lower than 6 other countries (AIPA Secretariat, 2025). Based on the interview data, Expert 1 (2024) mentioned that the non-binding feature could be one of the factors limiting Malaysia's implementation of the resolutions from AIPA (Expert 1, personal communication, August 6, 2024). This is also supported by other Experts:

> *"It's (resolutions) non-binding. Every country is non-binding."*
> (Expert 2, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

> *"Non-Interference principle and divergent national interests result in non-binding resolutions."*
> (Expert 3, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

"AIPA resolutions are not binding. Only encouraging."
(Expert 5, personal communication, August 8, 2024).

"Limitation could be the non-binding policy."
(Expert 6, personal communication, August 8, 2024).

The non-binding policy of AIPA may reduce the resolution implementation (Choon & Pin, 2024). In addition, even though the resolutions are being approved during the General Assembly, the progress report is required to be submitted during the AIPA Caucus. Based on the AIPA Caucus reports for 2011, 2012, 2016, and 2017, no implementation of political-security resolutions was presented for Malaysia (AIPA Secretariat, 2025; AIPA Secretariat, 2017; AIPA Secretariat, 2016; AIPA Secretariat, 2012; AIPA Secretariat, 2011). However, there are no legal charges for Malaysia or any other member that did not implement the resolutions or were unable to provide the report during the AIPA Caucus (Dobkowska, 2016).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

In summary, AIPA's authority is limited to a consultative role, without decision-making power in ASEAN-related discussions. AIPA's status as a recommendatory forum, not a legislative institution, results in non-binding resolutions. This non-binding feature weakens AIPA's influence, as the member states are not legally required to implement the resolutions. Interview findings, AIPA reports and literatures confirm that this non-binding policy limits Malaysia's commitment to implementing AIPA resolutions, weakening regional integration efforts through the legislative consultations.

3.2.2 Diverse Political System in AIPA Members

The principles of Non-Interference require AIPA member states to tolerate diverse political systems among the members. This diversity poses a barrier to sustained commitment by Malaysia and other members. The legislative members of AIPA are determined by ASEAN membership.

Based on Article 4 (1) of AIPA Statutes:

> AIPA membership shall be open to the National Parliaments of the ASEAN Member States.
>
> (AIPA Secretariat, 2025, p. 6).

However, Ruland (2019) argues that several ASEAN Member States were characterised as dictators, and the establishment of AIPA as a legitimising tool for ASEAN's external image, rather than a driver of democratisation. This membership arrangement may constrain the democratisation effort (Ruland, 2019). Therefore, the commitment of parliaments and parliamentarians varies across the ten member states (Laurence, 2015).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

This diversity also brought together parliaments with different ideologies and practices, causing difficulty to uphold a common standard of representative democracy and to build a firm collective position on the issue, particularly that occur within the sovereign borders of the states (Yildiz, 2024). Thus, this becomes a challenge for Malaysia and other members to effectively address issues that occur in member states that also pose regional security threats (Bon & Wana, 2022). This, for instance, is the difficulty of Malaysia to address the Myanmar Military coup, and the Rohingya Crisis, even as the President of AIPA in 2015 (Jones, 2009; The Malaysian Insider, 2015).

The interview findings confirmed that the diversity in the political system among AIPA member states poses a challenge for Malaysia to be involved in AIPA (Expert 1, personal communication, August 6, 2024). Expert 3 (2024) explained this as:

> *"Political will and commitment. Internal political pressures may lead to inconsistent engagement and diverted resources"*
> (Expert 3, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

According to Expert 4 (2024):

> *"Members consist of diverse political systems and priorities, and level of democratic development. Differences political priorities and governance models can make it challenging to achieve consensus on certain resolutions…"*
> (Expert 4, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

This suggests AIPA Members hold different levels of democratic development based on their practice of the political system. Differences in political priorities can affect the process of achieving consensus on certain resolutions and their implementation. In this case, even if a resolution is adopted within the AIPA, the implementation at the domestic level depends on the commitment and priority of the government (Yildiz, 2024). A government that prioritises national interest may affect the commitment to the implementation of AIPA resolutions.

In summary, the diverse political regimes among AIPA member states' Parliaments pose barriers to achieving consensus and implementing AIPA resolutions. In this case, the effectiveness of AIPA resolutions depends on member states' political will. Where governments prioritise national interests over regional parliamentary commitment less likely to demonstrate sustained commitment to implement AIPA resolutions.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

3.2.3 Consensus Requirement in AIPA

The AIPA Statutes are the main legal framework that outlines the aims, structure, procedures and activities of the institution (AIPA Secretariat, 2025). However, the AIPA Statute contain weaknesses in empowering AIPA with the capacity to fulfil its parliamentary functions and facilitate the active performance of Malaysia and other members in AIPA (Dobkowska, 2016). In this case, the consensus requirement is a key procedural challenge. If consensus is not achieved, discussion may be postponed, and agenda items or draft resolutions may be withdrawn (Deinla, 2013; Yildiz, 2024; AIPA Secretariat, 2025).

Consensus for amendment on AIPA Statutes

> Article 2 (3): A proposal to amend any provision in these Statutes shall not be passed by the General Assembly unless it has been supported by a general consensus of all the Member Parliaments.
>
> (AIPA Secretariat, 2025, p. 4).

Consensus on General Assembly Decision-Making

> Article 9 (7): Decisions by the General Assembly on any subject shall be made by Consensus. When consensus cannot be achieved, the General Assembly may decide on how a specific decision can be made.
>
> (AIPA Secretariat, 2025, p. 9).

Consensus on Executive Committee Decision-Making

> Article 11 (5): Decisions by the Executive Committee on any subject shall be made by consensus. When consensus cannot be achieved, the Executive Committee may decide on how a specific decision can be made.
>
> (AIPA Secretariat, 2025, p. 11).

These articles indicate that consensus is the default decision-making rule in three crucial areas of AIPA, namely, AIPA Statutes, AIPA General Assembly and AIPA Executive Committee. Expert 6 (2024) described AIPA's practice as requiring all member parliaments to agree before a topic can be discussed (Expert 6, personal communication, August 8, 2024). An objection by at least one member may prevent

Universiti Utara Malaysia

consensus, which can postpone or stop progress on proposed resolutions (AIPA Secretariat, 2025).

This consensus requirement constrained Malaysia's efforts to raise and sustain discussion on regional issues, for instance, the Rohingya crisis, within AIPA. Malaysia actively initiated discussions and raised questions regarding the Rohingya issues within AIPA, but the Myanmar delegation reportedly tried to avoid discussions and questions on this matter (Parlimen Malaysia, 2017). Myanmar's objection prevented consensus on draft resolutions related to the Rohingya Crisis.

In 2017, Malaysia co-sponsored a draft resolution titled *"Resolution on Strengthening Parliamentary Efforts in Addressing Humanitarian Issues in Southeast Asia"* alongside Indonesia's primary draft resolution, *"Resolution on Violent Attacks on Rohingya and Humanitarian Crisis in Myanmar"* (Fatmawati, 2017; ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2017). However, Myanmar's objection at the Executive Committee level prevented consensus on the Political Committee agenda, resulting in the Political Committee meeting not being convened and the draft resolutions not being proceeded further (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2017; Colcol, 2017). According to the Executive Committee report:

> The Executive Committee deferred the approval of the agenda of the Committee on Political Matters in its meeting of 15 September 2017 and reconvened on 16 September 2017 at 5:45 p.m. to further discuss and approve the proposed agenda of the Committee on Political Matters...The Executive Committee, after exhaustive deliberations, failed to reach a consensus on the approval of the agenda of the Committee on Political Matters.
>
> (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2017, pp. 5-6).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

According to Expert 5 (2024):

> *"In 2018 Myanmar did not agree. So that issue couldn't go through. For three years we never had a security meeting (political-security) ..."*
>
> (Expert 5, personal communication, August 8, 2024).

Expert 5 (2024) explained that Malaysia and Indonesia consistently proposed draft resolutions on the Myanmar issue. However, with the consensus requirement, Myanmar could block the resolution from being discussed further. As a result, the inability to secure a consensus contributed to the absence of a Political Committee meeting for three consecutive years (Expert 5, personal communication, August 8, 2024).

Further findings on the explanation given by Expert 5 (2024), this research found in 2018, as a form of protest against Myanmar's refusal to discuss the Rohingya-related draft resolution, Indonesia withdrew its consent to proceed with the Political meeting without discussing the Rohingya-related resolution (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Republik Indonesia, 2018). As a result, other draft resolutions related to sea piracy, terrorism, and terrorism financing were withdrawn without discussion, and the political committee meeting was unable to be conducted (Parlimen Malaysia, 2018; AIPA Secretariat, 2018; The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 2018).

This continued in 2019, Indonesia, as the primary sponsor for the draft resolution of the Humanitarian Crisis of the Rohingya People, used this consensus requirement to protest Myanmar's refusal by rejecting discussion on other resolutions in political matters. This resulted in the Political Committee meeting being unable to proceed and eventually disrupting the parliamentary diplomacy process (AIPA

Secretariat, 2019; Ratomo, 2019). Thus, the consensus requirement constraints Malaysia and other members from effectively addressing the Rohingya issue.

This continuing crisis shows that AIPA members may use the consensus rule to prevent discussion on sensitive issues or to withdraw consensus on other agenda items as a form of protest against another member (Koran Sindo, 2018; Idrus, 2018). The Malaysian delegation views this as a significant barrier arising from the consensus requirement and the principle of non-interference, thereby reducing the effectiveness of AIPA's decision-making process (Parlimen Malaysia, 2018). Additionally, the 10th and 11th AIPA Caucus Meetings were unable to submit reports on the status of implementing resolutions on political matters from 2018 to 2020. This was due to the previous Political Committee Meetings being unable to discuss any draft resolutions, collapsing the overall agenda of the Committee on Political Matters (AIPA Secretariat, 2020; AIPA Secretariat, 2019).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

3.2.4 Limited Capacity of Malaysia's Parliamentary Actors

Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA consists of two main actors, Members of Parliament (MPs) and Malaysia's parliamentary institution (AIPA Secretariat, 2025). The cooperation among MPs from various countries provides new channels for dialogue and offers flexibility in addressing complex issues. In a formal arrangement of parliamentary diplomacy, the MPs are often engaged in external official visits and meetings involving knowledge exchanges among foreign MPs (Indicators for Democratic Parliaments, 2023).

Parliamentary diplomacy enables MPs to play collective roles in representing the national parliament and gathering policy inputs for discussion during the national parliamentary session (Indicators for Democratic Parliaments, 2023). This highlights the importance of MPs' capacity, particularly their knowledge and commitment to engage effectively in these activities. However, parliamentary actor tends to face limited access to key resources, including financial support, expertise and intelligence (Jaskiernia, 2022). In AIPA, MPs may therefore face capacity and resources constraints, which hinder their ability to fulfil parliamentary roles and effectively represent the legislative perspectives in AIPA parliamentary diplomacy (Singh, 2024; Yildiz, 2024).

In Malaysia's case, Expert 3 (2024) categorised this as an institutional capacity issue, explaining that limited staffing, expertise, financial resources and inter-agency coordination can hinder participation (Expert 3, personal communication, August 6, 2024). This is supported by Expert 4 (2024), stating that:

> *"Parliamentary members may have other commitments or lack of the necessary expertise to fully engaged in technical discussions…"*
> (Expert 4, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

Expert 5 (2024) stated:

> *"Difficulty securing parliamentary members for AIPA activities due to limited participation, varying knowledge levels, and language constraints"*
> (Expert 5, personal communication, August 8, 2024).

From a parliamentary diplomacy standards perspective, the MP delegations are typically framed as representation of the Parliament rather than the executive (Indicators for Democratic Parliaments, 2023). However, Malaysian parliamentarians may be unclear about their roles at the AIPA event. For example, the 2012 Hansard

records an opposition MP highlighting uncertainty about his mandate when assigned to represent the Economic Committee during an AIPA annual meeting (Parlimen Malaysia, 2012).

> …. I had the experience and the opportunity, like several other Honourable Members, to go and represent our Parliament at the annual meeting of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Association Assembly in Lombok, Indonesia … I represented and chaired the economic committee, and I was asked to speak. I wanted to speak on behalf of whom? On behalf of the Government of Malaysia? I am not qualified to represent the Government of Malaysia because I am in the Opposition.
>
> (Parlimen Malaysia, 2012, p. 86).

In this context, the MP does not represent the executive but represents the national parliament's position within the committee (Indicators for Democratic Parliaments, 2023). The MP also highlighted the need for a dedicated parliamentary committee on foreign affairs, which would enable Parliament to develop its own institutional identity, views, and policy stance (Parlimen Malaysia, 2012).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

This example suggests that some MPs may have limited clarity about their roles in AIPA, and that the absence of dedicated parliamentary committees may constrain the practice of parliamentary diplomacy in AIPA. The Malaysian MPs also rely on assistance from Parliament Secretariats for preparing for AIPA discussions and developing draft resolutions. However, the secretariats also handle multiple tasks, including logistics and welfare, which affect their ability to provide inputs and assist the MPs. During the AIPA events, the Parliament Secretariats have to refer to relevant ministries to acquire input for MPs' speeches and carry multiple workloads (Parlimen Malaysia, 2012).

Additionally, limited institutional support constrains MPs' roles in AIPA and, consequently, limits the scope and effectiveness of AIPA-related activities (Yildiz, 2024). While Expert 5 (2024) stated that funding is not a problem, and Expert 6 (2024) similarly did not emphasise funding as a specific constraint. Expert 4 (2024) explained that:

> *"Budgetary constraints and competing priorities can limit the resources available for parliamentary diplomacy"*
> (Expert 4, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

At the AIPA level, the Secretariat faces financial constraints, which require adjustments to the annual budget (AIPA Secretariat, 2021). Contribution from Member Parliaments, both in human resources and financial capacity remain insufficient to enable AIPA to operate effectively (Yildiz, 2024). At the National Parliament level, during the House of Representatives Committee level discussion on the Supply Bill 2013, an MP highlighted the impact of insufficient resources dedicated to AIPA by asking:

> …the Minister, whether we will allocate funding to improve Parliament, particularly by establishing committees.
> (Parlimen Malaysia, 2012, p. 53).

The MP noted that Malaysian delegations rely heavily on ministries for inputs and the preparation of motions. At the same time, the parliamentary secretariat is overburdened with logistics and welfare arrangements, leaving limited dedicated capacity to provide substantive policy input. Accordingly, the MP called for allocations to establish dedicated parliamentary committees for AIPA participation, supported by research officers and staff to assist the committees' work (Parlimen Malaysia, 2012).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Similarly, in Committee level discussion on the Supply Bill 2019, an MP highlights insufficient allocation:

> An annual allocation of RM2 million to attend five conferences, namely AIPA, IPU, CSPOC, CPA, and PUIC, would cover only a single trip.
>
> (Parlimen Malaysia, 2018, p. 89).

The MPs argued that the RM2 million allocation, which had been provided for many years, was insufficient to support participation in five international parliamentary meetings, including AIPA. The MPs further stated that RM2 million would cover only a single trip to the conference and therefore called for an increase in the allocation for parliamentary external involvement (Parlimen Malaysia, 2018).

These examples suggest the existence of resource constraints in terms of information access, human resource and financial support. In addition, an MP highlighted a lack of technical support during his participation in an AIPA meeting, noting that delegations from other AIPA members are more advanced with their own Parliamentary Committee, which effectively reduces the workload of Ministries to provide inputs for AIPA meetings. The MP expressed that they felt awkward during the meeting with other AIPA representatives introducing themselves with business cards, which suggested the delegation perceived themselves as comparatively under-resourced (Parlimen Malaysia, 2012).

In summary, from 2009 to 2018, the limited capacity in terms of acquiring input, human resources, financial and MPs' capacity faced by Malaysian Parliamentary actors, namely MPs and the National Parliament, including parliamentary secretariats, has affected Malaysia's participation in AIPA. Some MPs

face constraints in knowledge and understanding their roles in representing the parliament, which affects effective engagement in parliamentary diplomacy. At the institutional level, the Malaysian Parliament lacked dedicated mechanisms to support consistent parliamentary external involvement. Parliamentary Secretariats, responsible for assisting MPs, are often burdened with various tasks, reducing their ability to provide effective support. These findings, based on interviews, Hansard record and existing literature, indicate that the limited capacity of Malaysian parliamentary actors affects the country's role in AIPA.

3.2.5 Lack of Report-Back Activities

AIPA events aim to foster understanding and collaboration among the ASEAN member parliaments while also enhancing public awareness of regional policies intended to accelerate the realisation of the ASEAN Community (AIPA Secretariat, 2023). The outcomes and resolutions from AIPA are part of the regional policies to strengthen the ASEAN community and the regional integration process. Therefore, parliamentary representatives to AIPA are expected to present the outcomes from AIPA events in their National Parliamentary discussions to form concrete actions by the legislative body (KPL, 2024).

In the case between 2009 and 2018, AIPA-related topics were only occasionally raised during Malaysia's House of Representatives sessions, consistent with the low annual frequencies reported in Figure 3.1 and Table 3.1. Based on a content analysis of the House of Representatives Hansard record from 2009 to 2018, Figure 3.1 and Table 3.1 summarise the annual frequency of AIPA-related discussions across parliamentary sessions during this period:

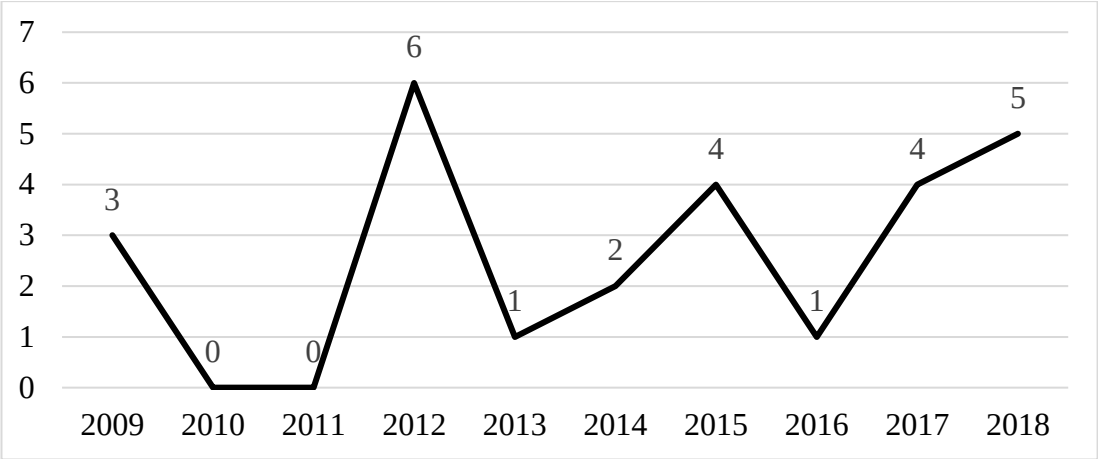


Figure 3.1 Frequency of AIPA topics discussed in the House of Representatives sessions (2009–2018)

Table 3.1

AIPA-Related discussions in the House of Representatives (2009–2018)

Year	Topics	Initiator
2009	1. The House of Representatives received a visit from AIPA representatives.	Speaker/ Deputy Speaker
	1. MPs were not involved in the formulation of the ASEAN Charter (2008). 2. AIPA Caucus outcomes were discussed in relation to human trafficking.	Opposition/Independent Party
2010	**No discussion recorded**	
2011	**No discussion recorded**	
2012	1. The AIPA Caucus was described as aiming to harmonise laws across ASEAN.	Speaker/ Deputy Speaker
	1. The AIPA General Assembly (GA) was cited to show informal interaction between Malaysian and Indonesian representatives. 2. AIPA was proposed as a platform to promote GMM/Wasatiyyah in global parliamentary conferences. 3. An MP proposed establishing parliamentary committees for each ministry, arguing that Malaysia lacks committees compared to other ASEAN parliaments when attending AIPA meetings, which causes embarrassment and limits effectiveness.	Government Party

Universiti Utara Malaysia

	1. MPs called for funding to strengthen parliamentary research capacity, reduce reliance on ministries, and ease the secretariat's workload 2. Role ambiguity for opposition MPs was highlighted when speaking in AIPA committee sessions.	Opposition/Independent Party
2013	1. AIPA was mentioned briefly as part of a remark comparing petrol prices in Brunei.	Opposition/Independent Party
2014	1. The Minister urged Parliament to use inter-parliamentary organisations, including AIPA, to condemn the attack on MH17. 2. Preparations to host AIPA included recommending overseas training for parliamentary researchers to strengthen hosting capacity.	Government Party
2015	1. AIPA was mentioned to note Malaysia's chairing role in 2015. 2. An MP cited an AIFOCOM meeting in Kuala Lumpur and shared a report from UNODC on drug trafficking, production, and consumption trends. 3. Another MP cited AIFOCOM and UNODC to state that drug trafficking increased by 50% over ten years and increasingly involved synthetic drugs. 4. An MP raised the Rohingya issue and discussed limitations of the non-interference principle, noting that he led an AIPA delegation to meet the High-Level Task Force involved in drafting the ASEAN Charter in 2008.	Government Party
2016	1. An MP briefly described participation in the Field Mission and Networking Dialogue on Conservation Enforcement.	Government Party

Universiti Utara Malaysia

2017	1. MPs reported representing Malaysia at AIFOCOM in Manila, describing drug trafficking as a major security threat, noting the growing number of synthetic drugs, and highlighting that legal harmonisation across ASEAN is difficult because member states follow different legal systems. 2. An MP urged parliamentarians involved in inter-parliamentary bodies, including AIPA, to raise and discuss the EU palm oil issue. 3. MPs described raising Myanmar-related issues at the AIPA GA in Manila, where Myanmar MPs were refused to engage, indicating strong sensitivity and constraint in discussion. 4. MP stated that Myanmar representatives tended to avoid discussion of the Rohingya issue at the AIPA GA and questioned whether the government would raise the matter at the 31st ASEAN Summit.	Government Party
2018	1. Three MPs cited Political Committee discussions at the AIPA GA in Singapore, explaining that Myanmar's objection to a draft resolution on the Rohingya issue led to other draft resolutions, including maritime security, terror financing, and transnational crime being withdrawn due to the consensus requirement. 2. An MP noted that Malaysia's delegation to the AIPA GA in Singapore had opportunities to engage in discussions with other ASEAN MPs. 3. Following the cancellation of Political Committee outcomes due to Myanmar's refusal, MPs questioned the ministries' roles in ensuring that if one resolution is rejected, other resolutions can still proceed.	Government Party

Universiti Utara Malaysia

	1. MPs argued that the RM2 million budget is insufficient to cover attendance at inter-parliamentary events, including AIPA. 2. MPs argued that Parliament lacks operational independence because sending delegations to AIPA or IPU requires approval from the Ministry of Finance, which they said should instead be authorised by the Speaker.	Opposition/Independent Party

Source: (Parliament of Malaysia, n.d.)

Based on Figure 3.1 and Table 3.1, the highest frequency occurred in 2012, six AIPA-related topics were discussed. In that year, government MPs raised three items, opposition/independent MPs raised two, and the Speaker initiated one topic. The 2012 topics included the AIPA Caucus, which was framed as a platform for legal harmonisation across ASEAN, cited the AIPA General Assembly (GA) to illustrate informal interaction between Malaysian and Indonesian representatives, and proposed AIPA as a platform to promote GMM/Wasatiyyah in global parliamentary conferences (Parlimen Malaysia, 2012; Parlimen Malaysia, 2012; Parlimen Malaysia, 2012). The debates also included institutional capacity proposals, such as establishing parliamentary committees for each ministry, and strengthening research capacity to reduce reliance on ministries and ease the secretariat's workload during AIPA events, suggesting increasing funding to strengthen parliamentary capacity for external engagements, including AIPA (Parlimen Malaysia, 2012; Parlimen Malaysia, 2012; Parlimen Malaysia, 2012). However, the proposal to establish a parliamentary committee was rejected because the Select Committees at the Ministry level could narrow MPs' participation by shifting substantive debate into small committees, thereby reducing opportunities for broader MPs' involvement (Parlimen Malaysia, 2012).

In 2018, AIPA-related topics were raised five times, representing the second-highest frequency. Three government MPs focused on Political Committee discussions at the AIPA GA in Singapore, specifically the implications of Myanmar's objection to a draft resolution on Rohingya issue and the subsequent withdrawal of other draft resolutions due to the consensus requirement, opportunity for delegation engagement with other ASEAN MPs, and suggestion to the ministries' roles in ensuring that other draft resolutions can proceed even if consensus is not achieved on one item (Parlimen Malaysia, 2018; Parlimen Malaysia, 2018). Two topics raised by opposition/independent MPs related to concerns regarding the RM2 million annual budget were insufficient to support participation in inter-parliamentary events, including AIPA, and Parliament lacked operational independence because delegations to AIPA or the IPU required approval from the Ministry of Finance rather than authorisation by the Speaker (Parlimen Malaysia, 2018; Parlimen Malaysia, 2018).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

In 2015, AIPA-related topics were mentioned four times, all by government MPs. These topics focused on Malaysia's chairing role in AIPA, reporting from the AIFOCOM meeting in Kuala Lumpur including references to UNODC trends on drug trafficking, such as claims of a 50% increase over ten years and the growing prominence of synthetic drugs in the region, and discussion of the Rohingya issue and the limitations of the non-interference principle, including an MPs also referred to having led an AIPA delegation to meet the High-Level Task Force involved in drafting the ASEAN Charter in 2008 (Parlimen Malaysia, 2015; Parlimen Malaysia, 2015; Parlimen Malaysia, 2015; Parlimen Malaysia, 2015).

In 2017, four AIPA-related topics were mentioned by government MPs. These related to participation in AIFOCOM in Manila, where drug trafficking was described as a major security threat and legal harmonisation across the region was noted as challenging. MPs also suggested that parliamentarians involved in inter-parliamentary bodies (including AIPA) raise the EU palm oil issue. Two additional topics concerned constraints in discussing the Rohingya crisis during the AIPA GA in Manila, and questioned whether the issue would be raised at the 31st ASEAN Summit (Parlimen Malaysia, 2017; Parlimen Malaysia, 2017; Parlimen Malaysia, 2017; Parlimen Malaysia, 2017).

In 2009, three AIPA-related topics were discussed. These included the Speaker's announcement of an AIPA delegation visit to the House of Representatives sessions, MPs' exclusion from the formulation of the ASEAN Charter in 2008, and opposition/independent MPs' discussion of AIPA Caucus outcomes related to human trafficking (Parlimen Malaysia, 2009; Parlimen Malaysia, 2009; Parlimen Malaysia, 2009).

In 2014, an AIPA-related discussion occurred, both initiated by government MPs. These included a call for MPs to use AIPA to condemn the MH17 attack, and a recommendation for overseas training for parliamentary research officers in preparation for Malaysia's 2015 AIPA chairing role (Parlimen Malaysia, 2014; Parlimen Malaysia, 2014). In 2013, an opposition/independent MP briefly mentioned AIPA in a comparison of petrol prices in Brunei (Parlimen Malaysia, 2013). In 2016, a government MP briefly described participation in the Field Mission and Networking

Dialogue-Conservation Enforcement, highlighting risks faced by forest rangers in AIPA members (Parlimen Malaysia, 2016).

There was no mention of AIPA in 2010 and 2011. Overall, the analysis found that although some report-back references to AIPA appeared in Malaysia's House of Representatives between 2009 and 2018, these mentions rarely developed into sustained discussions focused on the outcomes of AIPA meetings. Instead, MPs tended to cite AIPA experiences as personal examples to support broader arguments. This is also supported by interview evidence, which suggests limited diffusion of AIPA-related awareness among MPs who were not directly involved in AIPA delegations. Only those directly involved in AIPA appear to possess a comprehensive understanding of its activities and outcomes.

> According to Expert 3 (2024):
> *"Only those who are involved know, those who are not involved may not know…"*
> (Expert 3, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

> Similarly, Expert 4 (2024) stated that:
> *"The result (outcomes of AIPA meetings) is that it is not presented"*
> (Expert 4, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

The impact of a lack of a report back was indicated during the 2009 session of the House of Representatives, where opposition MPs questioned the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the formulation of the ASEAN Charter, which did not involve Malaysian legislative-level discussions. In response, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs explained the roles of AIPA in supporting MPs' regional cooperation. However, the Deputy Minister did not address specific details concerning Malaysian MPs' participation in the Charter's drafting process, which led to a heated debate with the response by the opposition MPs:

> Thank you, Mr Speaker… Honourable Deputy Minister's answer … does not address the question. We are discussing how we want to draft the ASEAN Charter so that it is more effective and impactful, and determines the direction of ASEAN in the future. There are many things we can discuss if we involve Members of Parliament of the Dewan Rakyat, including those from Barisan Nasional and Pakatan Rakyat
>
> (Parlimen Malaysia, 2009, p. 18).

The MP clarified the question:

> Why is the ministry unwilling to involve Members of Parliament in drafting such an important charter? In Indonesia, Mr Speaker, the ASEAN Charter was brought to Parliament to be debated and discussed and to obtain the views of Members of Parliament, but the Malaysian Parliament is quite unique. Something this important has never been brought up for discussion in Parliament. Does the ministry have no confidence in the Members of Parliament in our country? Thank you.
>
> (Parlimen Malaysia, 2009, p. 18).

The Deputy Minister's response:

> Actually, if we look at it, I already mentioned earlier that AIPA is chaired by our own Speaker, Tan Sri Datuk Seri Utama Pandikar Amin. So, through those meetings, it would be possible…, I do not know whether the Honourable Member is a member or not, but I see that there are 13 members in AIPA. So, I believe that through this, certainly a great deal of input can be provided through AIPA.
>
> (Parlimen Malaysia, 2009, p. 19).

The Deputy Minister's response suggested uncertainty about the delegation membership of AIPA, stating that he did not know whether the MP is part of the delegation to AIPA-related meetings (Parlimen Malaysia, 2009). However, the House of Representatives session in 2015 shows that there were number of MPs were involved in the ASEAN Charter drafting process:

> I was involved in the drafting of the ASEAN Charter. It is contained in the charter itself, Honourable Member. I led a delegation for AIPA to meet the high-level task force that drafted the ASEAN Charter before it was implemented in August 2008. I met the high-level task force in May. One of our members was the Honourable Member for

> Kepong, who came with me, and we had ten members from across ASEAN.
>
> (Parlimen Malaysia, 2015, p. 64).

The statement shows a Malaysian MP having led the AIPA delegation to a meeting with the High-Level Task Force (HLTF) on the Drafting of the ASEAN Charter before its enforcement in 2008. The delegation also included an opposition MP from Kepong (Parlimen Malaysia, 2015). Taken together, the 2009 and 2015 discussions indicate that while AIPA is presented as a channel of parliamentary input, detailed engagement with AIPA-related events appears to be concentrated among MPs who participate in AIPA delegations. The absence of a formal feedback mechanism between 2009 and 2018 further led to a lack of updates within the Malaysian Parliament. As a result, non-delegation MPs are excluded from meaningful participation in AIPA-related discussions or from forming collective parliamentary positions toward AIPA parliamentary diplomacy (Parlimen Malaysia, 2009; Parlimen Malaysia, 2015).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

3.2.6 Limited AIPA Resolutions Implementation Mechanism

AIPA member parliaments do not have a central mechanism to enforce adopted resolutions. This limitation aligns with broader claims that collective implementation among members remains limited (Sathirathai, 2015). At the level of member parliaments, Seifert (2015) described preparations for the AIPA General Assembly; however, the reports generally provide limited detail on formal mechanisms for implementing adopted AIPA resolutions, including in Malaysia. Similarly, Myanmar reported that there were normally no follow-up activities conducted, while Vietnam explicitly noted that there was hardly any follow-up of adopted resolutions after the General Assembly (Seifert, 2015).

Consistent with these observations, triangulated evidence from interview notes, House of Representatives Hansard records, and AIPA Caucus reports indicates that the Parliament of Malaysia faces coordination challenges in implementing AIPA resolutions effectively. As Expert 2 (2024) stated:

> *"Minimal effort to link with executive. Once approved (the resolution) don't know who's supposed to follow up."*
> (Expert 2, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

Expert 4 (2024) also framed this as a coordination challenge, stating that:

> *"Effective implementation of resolutions requires coordination various of ministries, agencies and the parliament. Insufficient coordination can impede smooth execution of agreed policies."*
> (Expert 4, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

From a bureaucratic and domestic policy perspective, Expert 3 (2024) provided a similar explanation:

> *"Resistance within the bureaucracy to adopt new practices, complexity in harmonising Malaysian laws with regional agreements… Aligning domestic law with AIPA resolutions is complex and time consuming"*
> (Expert 3, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

In addition, Expert 5 (2024) stated that:

> *"Our laws, if they are not aligned with AIPA resolutions…"*
> (Expert 5, personal communication, August 8, 2024).

This extended to 2019, when a Member of Parliament advocated the need for a coordination mechanism during a House of Representatives session, stating:

> Every year, Malaysia will send a delegation of Members of Parliament, led by the Chair, to attend AIPA conferences… As a result of that participation, Malaysian Members of Parliament took part by providing input and feedback on issues occurring or raised within the ASEAN region. To what extent are those issues brought to the attention of the Ministry of Home Affairs and subsequently raised at the level of other foreign ministers within ASEAN for discussion…

> So I would like to know, does the ministry have a plan to ensure that all the conferences attended by Members of Parliament throughout the country, or those related to ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR), related to AIPA, related to IPPFORB, related to PGA, will they be given a platform to present what has been raised in those conferences
>
> (Parlimen Malaysia, 2019).

The MP also raised concerns about whether the outcomes of the meetings have reached the ministries' attention, emphasised the absence of a structured platform for parliamentarians to officially present the outcomes from their external involvement, including AIPA (Parlimen Malaysia, 2019). This concern is aligned with interview evidence and existing literature, which indicate limited follow-up and absence of formalised procedures for transmitting AIPA outcomes to relevant ministries and agencies (Expert 2; Expert 3; Expert 4, personal communication, August 6, 2024; Expert 5, personal communication, August 8, 2024; Parlimen Malaysia, 2019). Yildiz's (2024) argument that the AIPA's absence of a formal mechanism to ensure parliamentary input is brought to executive attention limiting the translation of parliamentary input into executive regional processes (Yildiz, 2024).

Furthermore, AIPA Caucus, as a monitoring mechanism of implementation of AIPA resolutions, the effectiveness of this Caucus is constrained by how implementation is measured due to unilateral declaration by the member countries as the sole basis for measuring the status of implementation (Yildiz, 2024).

Expert 5 (2024) also mentioned regarding the monitoring mechanism, stating that:

> *"Other countries are high. Because they sponsor that draft resolution, and they have already done it."*
>
> (Expert 5, personal communication, August 8, 2024).

This statement suggests that sponsor countries may have a higher implementation record, potentially because relevant actions were already in practice at the national level (Expert 5, personal communication, August 8, 2024). Based on AIPA Caucus reports, Malaysia's updates are often drawn directly from related ministries and agencies, with limited specification of monitoring mechanisms (AIPA Secretariat, 2025). Collectively, the findings suggest persistent coordination challenges and limited formalisation of follow-up and reporting procedures, which constrain the implementation of AIPA resolutions in Malaysia.

3.2.7 Lack of Popularity of the Topic

AIPA parliamentary diplomacy has limited public visibility. During the 9th AIPA Caucus meeting, AIPA members, including Malaysia, acknowledged that public knowledge of AIPA and its functions remains limited (Natasha, 2017). In Malaysia, the Senate Speaker, during the Malaysian Parliament Open Day ceremony, similarly noted that parliamentary diplomacy is not commonly discussed (Shahid, 2023). Interview evidence suggests that public interest may be limited because the benefits of AIPA's are not always perceived as directly relevant to general public concerns. According to Expert 2 (2024):

> *"Probably they don't see the importance (of) AIPA…"*
> (Expert 2, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

Expert 4 (2024) stated:

> *"Despite its importance, operate in background and does not capture much public or academic interest."*
> (Expert 4, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

Expert 7 explained that:

> *"Not everyone knows the existence of AIPA. The roles of AIPA. Potential of AIPA to strengthen or unite whole member states not everyone acknowledges."*
> (Expert 7, personal communication, August 16, 2024).

In this sense, limited visibility may contribute to a weak understanding of AIPA's role in regional diplomacy and reinforce the view that the topic remains under-researched (Yildiz, 2024). Expert 3 (2024) further suggested that media coverage of AIPA is occasional and becomes more visible during Malaysia's hosting the AIPA (Expert 3, personal communication, August 6, 2024). Low public awareness and limited access to information on AIPA and its activities may reduce public engagement and, in turn, discourage sustained academic interest in the topic (Galimberti, 2023; Stavridis, 2002; Yildiz, 2024).

The interview data also indicate that limited visibility, resource constraints, and the perception of marginal impact contribute to the low exposure of Parliament's participation in AIPA, resulting in limited publicly available information on this diplomatic engagement. Expert 3 (2024) explained that the public is generally more familiar with ASEAN and often conflates AIPA with ASEAN (Expert 3, personal communication, August 6, 2024). These constraints reduce opportunities for academic research on Malaysia's involvement in AIPA.

Given these constraints, increased public awareness and scholarly attention may contribute to improving Malaysia's engagement in AIPA by generating research based in inputs and identifying overlooked areas of cooperation (Šabič, 2012). Enhancing awareness, improving access to relevant data, and communicating the

importance of parliamentary diplomacy to regional integration may further encourage research in this area (Expert 3, personal communication, August 6, 2024). The interview data also highlight that low public awareness can indirectly affect parliamentary diplomacy outcomes. Expert 4 (2024) suggested that:

> *"Low public awareness and support can impact momentum to implement resolutions"*
> (Expert 4, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

In summary, AIPA parliamentary diplomacy remains under-researched in Malaysia and at the regional level. Minimal public awareness, with limited media coverage, and confusion between AIPA and ASEAN contribute to low visibility and limited academic attention compared to state-led diplomacy. Greater accessibility of information and increased research attention could strengthen Malaysia's involvement in AIPA and in identifying potential areas for more effective regional cooperation.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

3.3 Chapter Summary

Based on findings, this chapter concludes there were seven key challenges that constrained Malaysia's practices of parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA during the years 2009 to 2018. These challenges include ASEAN domination over AIPA, a diverse political system, a consensus requirement, limited capacity of Malaysian parliamentary actors, a lack of report-back activities, a limited resolution implementation mechanism and a lack of popularity of AIPA topics. Collectively, these challenges limit the ability of the Malaysian Parliament to fully commit to AIPA, particularly in Political Security cooperation and result in comparatively lower in resolution adopted in this field.

Among these challenges, the researcher identified the non-binding principles and the consensus requirement as the main challenges that hold back the effective adoption and implementation of AIPA resolutions, particularly in Political Security Cooperation. Despite these challenges, Malaysia's continuous involvement in AIPA also indicates possible prospects and benefits as a member of AIPA, which will be explored further in the next chapter.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

CHAPTER FOUR

PROSPECTS THAT MALAYSIA GAINED AIPA PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY

4.1 Introduction

Besides the seven challenges that constrain Malaysia's practices of parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA, this chapter further assesses the prospects of Malaysia's involvement in four key AIPA meetings related to political-security cooperation, categorised according to principles of parliamentary diplomacy. First, this chapter explains Malaysia's perspectives on AIPA parliamentary diplomacy to understand the aims of Malaysia in AIPA. The second section validates the conceptual framework developed in this research to assess the prospects of parliamentary diplomacy. The final section explains the four AIPA meetings related to the political-security field, namely, AIPA General Assembly, ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface, AIFOCOM (AIPACODD) and AIPA Caucus and how it fulfils the aims of Malaysia to be involved in AIPA.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

4.2 Malaysia's Views on Parliamentary Diplomacy Within AIPA

Malaysia views AIPA as a platform for ASEAN parliamentarians to discuss matters that affect ASEAN in the political, economic, and social fields. Through AIPA, the Parliament of Malaysia seeks consensus to adopt resolutions proposed by member states' parliaments. This is consistent with Malaysia's commitment to regional stability, economic integration, and social development (Abdul Samad et al., 2022).

According to the former Speaker of the Malaysian House of Representatives, Talib (2007), while external affairs are traditionally dominated by the executive branch, parliaments can play a significant role in diplomatic affairs through their approaches. In this context, AIPA's parliamentary diplomacy provides an additional channel that can support ASEAN's regional integration process (Talib, 2007).

Former Prime Minister of Malaysia and ASEAN in 2015, Razak (2015), described AIPA as a mechanism to strengthen citizens' participation in Southeast Asian affairs. Supporting diplomatic engagement among legislative members, who are also representatives of the people, can contribute to the achievement of ASEAN's objectives. Furthermore, parliamentary diplomacy through AIPA has been described as playing a role in promoting ASEAN policies (Razak, 2015).

This view is also reflected in the contemporary perspective, in which Malaysia views AIPA as a key platform for ASEAN parliamentarians to promote cooperation, dialogue, and mutual understanding in Southeast Asia. Malaysia also frames AIPA as an instrument in promoting inclusive growth from regional integration, supported by policy harmonisation and the reduction of trade barriers to accelerate integration.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Malaysia's positions parliamentary diplomacy through AIPA is complementary to governmental efforts, calling for close collaboration with ASEAN bodies to build a more prosperous and secure ASEAN (Bernama, 2024).

Interview evidence further reflects Malaysia's views and aims within AIPA. Based on interview findings, Expert 1 (2024) described Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy in AIPA as a form of second-track diplomacy, through which MPs are able to collaborate in addressing regional issues through meetings and dialogue (Expert 1, personal communication, August 6, 2024). This is also reflected by Expert 3 (2024), by stating:

> *"Malaysia has consistently contributed to parliamentary diplomacy. Aligning AIPA with ASEAN's vision of maintaining peace and stability. Support of the ASEAN community-building and integration process."*
>
> (Expert 3, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

Relatedly, Expert 4 (2024) explained the objectives of Malaysia in AIPA as:

> *"Promote regional integration. Harmonising trade economic policies. Enhance collaborative efforts to address regional security challenges. Enhance legislative harmonisation, legal framework. Aligning laws and regulation."*
>
> (Expert 4, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

Additionally, Expert 5 (2024) described AIPA as a platform to advance Malaysia's foreign policy, stating:

> *"We want to support Malaysia's foreign policy. Maintain good relationship with all entities. Objective is to achieve the ASEAN Community 2025."*
>
> (Expert 5, personal communication, August 8, 2024).

In addition, Expert 7 (2024) further explained that Malaysia's objectives in AIPA include strengthening Malaysia's collaborations with other members, learn best

practices from other states, share idea and good practices (Expert 7, personal communication, August 16, 2024).

Overall, the interview findings support the view that Malaysia's objectives in AIPA include promoting regional integration, addressing regional challenges through parliamentary engagement and coordination, and strengthening parliamentary capacity through cooperation and knowledge-sharing. In summary, Malaysia views AIPA as a legislative platform that complements and reinforces executive-led diplomacy while supporting ASEAN integration and broader regionalism. In this context, Malaysia's objectives include strengthening regional parliamentary cooperation to support ASEAN community-building and integration goals. Malaysia also uses AIPA to support foreign policy priorities and promote consensus with other ASEAN parliaments. In addition, Malaysia aims to advance policy and legislative coordination through harmonisation and shared best practices, address regional challenges through parliamentary dialogue and resolutions and strengthen parliamentary capacity through networking, workshops, and training.

4.3 Validating the Principles of Parliamentary Diplomacy

The AIPA's activities, which focus on meetings and dialogues, play a crucial role in advancing parliamentary diplomacy (AIPA Secretariat, 2025). By using the Principles of Parliamentary Diplomacy, namely, institutionalisation, complementary to traditional diplomacy, and the exchange of knowledge, this research explains the prospects of Malaysia by its involvement in AIPA. The reliability of these concepts has been confirmed by the Expert interview, supported by primary and secondary

Universiti Utara Malaysia

sources related to AIPA, as well as supported by the 1.9 Literature Review section of this thesis.

This research identified four main AIPA meetings that support political-security cooperation with the institution, categorised as high-level and ad-hoc. The high-level meetings consist of the AIPA General Assembly (GA) and ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface, while the ad-hoc meetings consist of AIPACODD and AIPA Caucus (AIPA Secretariat, 2025; AIPA Secretariat, 2026; AIPA Secretariat, 2025; AIPA Secretariat, 2025). The researcher also uses the 'Principles of Parliamentary Diplomacy' to explain how these meetings benefit Malaysia in political-security cooperation.

4.3.1 Institutionalisation

In general, parliamentary diplomacy is characterised by institutionalisation and rules of procedure, which support multilateral negotiations (Sayfullaev, 2016; Guahk & Pepe, 2023). In this context, AIPA supports institutionalisation and rules of procedure by establishing permanent structures and rules that guide member participation (AIPA Secretariat, 2025). This is supported by interview evidence. Expert 1 (2024) noted that Malaysia's engagement is guided by the AIPA Statute and that member parliaments should follow the Statute (Expert 1, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

This institutional framework is also consistent with Expert 4's (2024) explanation that:

> *"AIPA Statutes, fundamental legal and procedural framework. This document outlines the structure, functions and procedure of AIPA, ensuring common and standard practices."*
>
> (Expert 4, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

Similarly, Expert 6 (2024) emphasised the role of the Statute, stating that AIPA:

> *"Have a very comprehensive statute. Governs how we engage with AIPA"*
>
> (Expert 6, personal communication, August 8, 2024).

Additionally, Expert 2 (2024) highlighted AIPA's organisational structure, noting the existence of the AIPA Secretariat in Jakarta (Expert 2, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

AIPA also functions as a strategic partner of ASEAN that fosters cooperation among parliamentarians and helps sustain regional parliamentary interaction (AIPA Secretariat, 2015; Yildiz, 2024). For Malaysia, this institutionalises parliamentary diplomacy practices by providing a structured regional parliamentary forum and a standardised platform for engagement, including interactions with external partners and the development of mutual understanding. Therefore, AIPA supports collective parliamentary cooperation and enables Malaysian parliamentarians to develop international networks as part of their political identity and responsibility (AIPA Secretariat, 2010; Bernama, 2025).

Interview evidence reinforces this institutional-platform function. Expert 1 (2024) stated that AIPA is a platform for MPs (Expert 1, personal communication, August 6, 2024). Similarly, Expert 5 (2024) agreed that AIPA provides an institutionalised platform by explaining:

> *"Platform for parliamentarians engage and express opinion, building network"*
>
> (Expert 5, personal communication, August 8, 2024).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Expert 7 (2024) supported the institutionalisation and networking dimension, stating:

> *"Institutionalisation, yes, network collaborate"*
> (Expert 7, personal communication, August 16, 2024).

Expert 3 (2024) further described institutionalisation as a structured interaction that ensures sustained engagement among ASEAN member states, explaining:

> *"AIPA provides a formal and regular platform for parliamentary interactions, institutionalising the process of regional parliamentary diplomacy, and sustained engagement."*
> (Expert 3, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

Overall, the evidence emphasises that AIPA provides a structured platform for parliamentary interactions that is formal and consistent, which helps regulate and enhance cooperation among parliamentarians. Taken together, the existing literature and interview evidence support that AIPA provides an institutionalised platform that facilitates parliamentary cooperation, networking, and sustained regional engagement. Which consistent with the AIPA functions, serving as a platform for parliamentarians to practice parliamentary diplomacy functions and address regional challenges that have contributed to regional integration, sustaining peace, stability, cooperation and development (AIPA Secretariat, 2023).

4.3.1.1 Institutionalisation of AIPA General Assembly

The AIPA General Assembly has progressively reinforced the institutionalisation of parliamentary diplomacy through structured mechanisms by facilitating thematic committee discussions and a strategic decision-making process in adopting resolutions. The leadership transactions and formal governance processes also reflect the institutionalised nature of the AIPA GA. In addition, the AIPA GA provides an

institutionalised platform for ASEAN Parliaments to engage with other external bodies and observer parliaments. This supports AIPA in extending its influence and forming a diplomatic bridge with the international community (AIPA Secretariat, 2016; AIPA Secretariat, 2025).

4.3.1.2 Institutionalisation of ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface

The ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface Meeting serves as an institutionalised channel to support communication between the legislative and executive branches of ASEAN (AIPA Secretariat, 2026). These regularised ASEAN-AIPA annual meetings are held during ASEAN Summits. The Interface allows AIPA to institutionalise parliamentary input into regional policy discussions with the regional executive body. This enhances institutional mechanisms for ongoing engagement and follow-up on ASEAN decisions (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2016).

4.3.1.3 Institutionalisation of AIPA Fact Finding Committee to Combat Drug Menace

The AIPA Fact Finding Committee to Combat Drug Menace (AIFOCOM) (AIPA Advisory Council on Dangerous Drugs (AIPACODD)) also demonstrates the institutionalisation of parliamentary diplomacy through an organised framework that facilitates parliamentary cooperation to address drug issues (AIPA Secretariat, 2025). The formulation and adoption of resolutions, as well as reporting activities, enhance the institutional character of parliamentary engagement. Furthermore, the transformation of AIFOCOM into the AIPACODD in 2017 solidified the committee's continuing role in ASEAN's political-security agenda, particularly in addressing drug-related issues. Collaboration with regional and international organisations focused on

eradicating drug abuse further reinforces this institutionalisation (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2017; AIPA Secretariat, 2025).

4.3.1.4 Institutionalisation of AIPA Caucus

The AIPA Caucus institutionalises parliamentary diplomacy by conducting annual, structured meetings to support the exchange of knowledge among members. Its roles include monitoring the implementation of resolutions and facilitating discussions on emerging regional issues, by presenting the member countries' reports. The Caucus promotes legislative harmonisation and mutual understanding among member parliaments. This process not only reinforces legislative cooperation but also contributes to building a more integrated regional legal framework in support of ASEAN's broader objectives (AIPA Secretariat, 2025).

In summary, AIPA plays a vital role in institutionalising parliamentary diplomacy within ASEAN by providing Malaysia and other member states with a structured platform for sustained legislative cooperation and regional integration. Through mechanisms such as the General Assembly, ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface, AIPA Caucus, and AIFOCOM (AIPACODD), AIPA establishes formal rules, processes, and regularised interactions that encourage dialogue, accountability, and mutual understanding among parliamentarians. These institutional frameworks not only support the harmonisation of legislative practices across ASEAN but also reinforce the role of parliaments in contributing to regional affairs.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

4.3.2 Complementary to Traditional Diplomacy

Complementary to traditional diplomacy is a core aspect of parliamentary diplomacy, as it provides an additional communication channel. Parliamentarians possess a certain degree of freedom compared to state actors, which supports state diplomacy by offering foreign policy inputs or facilitating legislative engagement (Oleksandra Mamchii, 2023). Interview data further reflect that AIPA complements traditional diplomacy is a fundamental feature of parliamentary diplomacy. For instance, Expert 2 (2024) stated:

> *"Can provide additional communication."*
> (Expert 2, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

This additional communication role is also consistent with Expert 1's (2024) framing of AIPA as:

> *"Second track diplomacy. Bring issue to the foreign parliament"*
> (Expert 1, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

This demonstrates how AIPA functions to support state-led diplomacy by opening an alternative channel between legislatures. This complementary function is further reinforced by Expert 3 (2024), stating that AIPA:

> *"Allowing legislators to engage directly with their counterparts in other ASEAN countries. Supports and reinforces the work of executive-led diplomacy. Provide additional avenues for dialogue and cooperation on issues that may not fully addressed through traditional diplomacy."*
> (Expert 3, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

In this context, parliamentary diplomacy through AIPA operates as a parallel diplomatic channel that can widen dialogue space and strengthen cooperation beyond conventional executive-to-executive interactions (Parliamentary Centre of Asia

(PCAsia), 2021). Besides that, Expert 5 (2024) agreed that AIPA complements traditional diplomacy, stating:

> *"Complementary to traditional diplomacy, of course. The main task is to support traditional diplomacy. It is the basic concept of Parliamentary Diplomacy itself"*
> (Expert 5, personal communication, August 8, 2024).

In the national context, Malaysia views parliamentary diplomacy as an important approach to support the executive branch and strengthen the country's diplomatic relations. According to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Abdul (2023), the purposes of Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy are aligned with the government's diplomatic objectives, including reinforcing outcomes from state-level engagement and assisting the executive in clarifying the country's foreign policy positions. This approach allows Parliament to enhance Malaysia's diplomatic messaging, foster deeper political goodwill with foreign counterparts, and contribute to the broader goals of national development (The Star, 2023).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

The former Speaker of the Malaysian House of Representatives, Mulia (2015), emphasised Malaysia's role in AIPA in supporting the implementation of ASEAN policies. Malaysia views AIPA as a platform that supports the executive and legislative branches' cooperation, rather than as a strict separation of powers (Mulia P. A., 2015).

In this context, the AIPA's role in supporting ASEAN policies reflects Malaysia's view on parliamentary diplomacy as an alternative channel that complements state diplomacy (AIPA Secretariat, 2015). Moreover, AIPA's parliamentary diplomacy practices are also described as operating differently from traditional diplomacy, offering greater flexibility in communication (Yildiz, 2024).

Expert 6 (2024), for example, described the executive-alignment element by stating that:

> *"MOFA set our Foreign Policy, Parliament complement whatever MOFA sets"*
> (Expert 6, personal communication, August 8, 2024).

Expert 6 (2024) also emphasised the flexible and informal diplomatic space created through parliamentary engagement:

> *"Allows to address informal matters in a private setting"*
> (Expert 6, personal communication, August 8, 2024).

Vice versa, the executive branch supports the parliamentary diplomacy by providing financial support and contributing to the preparation for AIPA meetings (AIPA Secretariat, 2025). During the resolution drafting process, the Parliament of Malaysia engages relevant ministries to review draft resolutions, to ensure alignment with national policies and avoid overlaps, before bringing to the AIPA GA (Seifert, 2015).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

This coordination is also reflected in the interview evidence, where Expert 4 (2024) noted that parliamentary diplomacy is conducted in alignment with national foreign policy, stating:

> *"Ensure parliamentary efforts aligned with national foreign policy objectives"*
> (Expert 4, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

Collectively, the evidence supports that Malaysia's involvement in AIPA complements traditional diplomacy by expanding communication channels and strengthening regional engagement. AIPA provides an additional channel of communication, enabling legislators to engage counterparts directly while still

reinforcing national foreign policy objectives. At the national level, Malaysia frames parliamentary diplomacy as supportive of the executive branch by aligning parliamentary engagement with state diplomatic priorities and ASEAN policy implementation.

The section also highlights AIPA's more flexible and informal diplomatic space, including private settings where issues can be discussed beyond formal executive-to-executive platforms. Overall, these findings indicate that AIPA enhances Malaysia's diplomatic capacity by supplementing traditional diplomacy through parallel legislative engagement, coordination with ministries, and broader avenues for dialogue and cooperation.

4.3.2.1 AIPA General Assembly Complements Traditional Diplomacy

The AIPA General Assembly complements traditional diplomacy by promoting parliamentary involvement in ASEAN's regional integration and political processes (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2025). AIPA GA act as a supporting mechanism for ASEAN agreements and blueprints by translating ASEAN's executive decisions into legislative action through its resolutions. Furthermore, the GA sessions support state diplomacy by building informal dialogue networks and facilitating discussions across sensitive regional (AIPA Secretariat, 2016).

4.3.2.2 ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface Complements Traditional Diplomacy

The ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface Meeting complement state diplomacy by bridging the executive and legislative branches to enhance direct interaction and provide input on ASEAN priorities (Office of the Speaker of the House of

Representatives, 2025). To ensure that ASEAN policies reflect the concerns of citizens, the interface also promotes legislative support for ASEAN agreements by ratifying ASEAN treaties and aligning national laws according to the policies. Thus, while traditional diplomacy often focuses on state interests, the interface offers an inclusive approach by engaging the legislative body in regional executive discussions (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2016).

4.3.2.3 AIPA Fact-Finding Committee to Combat Drug Menace (AIFOCOM) Complements Traditional Diplomacy

AIFOCOM (now AIPA Advisory Council on Dangerous Drugs (AIPACODD)) supports and complements traditional diplomacy by involving the legislative body in addressing regional issues that are often handled by the executive body. In addition to promoting intra-AIPA engagement, AIFOCOM facilitates AIPA members to collaborate with external organisations working on drug control. This enables AIPA to contribute to ASEAN legislative initiatives and support implementation efforts through national parliaments (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2018).

4.3.2.4 AIPA Caucus Complements Traditional Diplomacy

The AIPA Caucus complements traditional diplomacy by providing a platform for parliamentarians to monitor and discuss the implementation of AIPA resolutions, which often align with ASEAN policies. By facilitating the exchange of national strategies and best practices, the Caucus promotes the harmonisation of laws and policies, supporting ASEAN's broader objectives. Additionally, discussions within the Caucus can help identify practical challenges in existing national policies, thus

Universiti Utara Malaysia

supporting the executive body in advancing regional integration efforts (AIPA Secretariat, 2025).

Thus, AIPA's parliamentary diplomacy complements traditional diplomacy by offering an alternative communication channel that promotes Malaysia's foreign policy efforts. Malaysia's parliamentarians, through AIPA GA, ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface, AIPA Caucus and AIFOCOM, support the executive branch by engaging in regional discussion, influencing foreign policy, and reinforcing diplomatic outcomes. AIPA allows legislators to explore informal, sensitive issues and build political goodwill in ways that may be inaccessible to state actors, which is supported by the executive branch in funding and preparing for AIPA meetings. Collectively, these efforts illustrate how AIPA enhances ASEAN's regional integration and reinforces Malaysia's diplomatic objectives through legislative engagement.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

4.3.3 Exchange of Knowledge

Parliamentary diplomacy can also benefit a country through the exchange of knowledge, enabling the members to gain insights and best practice strategies from one another to address mutual issues. Additionally, it supports the parliamentarians by providing information and inputs for regional policy formulation and discussions in national parliamentary sessions (AIPA Secretariat, 2025). This enhances access to information and strengthens parliamentary oversight at the national level (Manyi, 2017).

Interview data support this by showing that AIPA enables best practice sharing, mutual learning, and the exchange of legislative experience among member

parliaments. Expert 1 (2024) linked AIPA's knowledge exchange to sharing best practices (Expert 1, personal communication, August 6, 2024). This dimension is also supported by Expert 3 (2024) emphasising sustained learning and legislative development through shared experiences:

> *"Facilitate exchange of legislative experiences and best practices. Mutual learning, learn from other ASEAN countries. Regional legislative development. These enhance Malaysia's ability to address regional issues collaboratively"*
> (Expert 3, personal communication, August 6, 2024).

Similarly, Expert 7 (2024) framed AIPA's engagement involving both sharing and a learning process:

> *"To learn best practices from other states. To share idea and good practices."*
> (Expert 7, personal communication, August 16, 2024).

By analysing reports of the four main AIPA meetings, namely AIPA General Assembly, ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface, AIFOCOM to Combat Drug Menace, and AIPA Caucus, the knowledge exchange takes place across all these meetings (AIPA Secretariat, 2025; AIPA Secretariat, 2025; ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2017). Knowledge exchange occurs through formal sessions, where AIPA allocates time for participants to address their issues (Expert 5, personal communication, August 8, 2024). In addition, knowledge exchange is strengthened through informal and semi-formal interactions during AIPA events. As Expert 6 (2024) highlighted:

> *"Small side meetings, a lot of knowledge sharing"*
> (Expert 6, personal communication, August 8, 2024).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Expert 7 (2024) similarly highlighted that knowledge exchange extends beyond MPs and includes staff development:

> *"A lot, in terms of training, staff development, and workshops. Not only for parliamentarians, but also for staff. Training in terms of preparing resolutions."*
>
> (Expert 7, personal communication, August 16, 2024).

This interview evidence is also consistent with AIPA's aims to establish and maintain the exchange and dissemination of information, as stated in Article 3 (3) of the AIPA Statutes (AIPA Secretariat, 2025). Regular meetings within AIPA, including General Assemblies and committee meetings, provide a platform for parliamentarians to discuss various issues through formal or informal approaches (Yildiz, 2024). Facilitating exchange of best practice, mutual learning and training could foster mutual understanding and promote collective initiatives for harmonising of laws on common issues, which contribute to the building of the ASEAN Community (AIPA Secretariat, 2022).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Based on the findings, this section supports that AIPA parliamentary diplomacy contributes to the exchange of knowledge between Malaysia and other AIPA member parliaments. This exchange can occur through formal platforms such as the AIPA General Assembly, the ASEAN–AIPA Leaders' Interface, AIFOCOM (AIPACODD), and the AIPA Caucus, as well as through informal interactions during these meetings. Collectively, these processes strengthen mutual understanding and support collective actions to address issues of mutual concern.

4.3.3.1 Exchange of Knowledge during AIPA General Assembly

The AIPA General Assembly (GA) fosters knowledge exchange across member parliaments and their partners, including external parliaments, such as International Parliamentary Institutions, International Organisations, and other legislative bodies. This diverse representation allows both formal and informal interaction with the AIPA members (AIPA Secretariat, 2025). The meetings within GA also promote the sharing of ideas and strategies during the decision-making process and formulation of resolutions. These activities contribute to capacity building among AIPA members and facilitate consensus-building (AIPA Secretariat, 2015).

4.3.3.2 Exchange of Knowledge during ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface

The ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface Meeting also facilitates knowledge sharing among regional parliamentarians and executive bodies. In this meeting, the AIPA President presents a collective statement from AIPA members, reflecting an exchange of perspectives between legislative and executive actors (AIPA Secretariat, 2026). Furthermore, the interface contributes to legislative alignment by enabling ASEAN Leaders and AIPA Delegates to discuss the strategies of ASEAN member states' parliaments to support the alignment of laws within ASEAN frameworks through learning and exchange of best practices (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2017).

4.3.3.3 Exchange of Knowledge during AIFOCOM to Combat Drug Menace

The AIFOCOM (currently AIPACODD) primarily facilitate knowledge exchange among legislative bodies to address regional drug-related issues. Through AIFOCOM, the members present their countries' progress reports on drug matters, including drug

control, rehabilitation strategies, and legislative measures. This process allows parliaments to learn the successful strategies to be suggested in national parliamentary sessions. Furthermore, AIFOCOM also engages parliamentarians with international experts related to drug prevention. These engagements allow MPs to acquire vital information beyond the political sphere, contributing valuable input to policy development (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2017).

4.3.3.4 Exchange of Knowledge during AIPA Caucus

The AIPA Caucus supports knowledge exchange by facilitating discussions among members on regional issues, including the presentation of national reports on the implementation of AIPA resolutions. The Caucus also organises Working Group discussions, in which delegates are divided according to thematic areas and engage in in-depth sharing of national initiatives, legislative frameworks, and challenges. These exchanges allow delegates to compare national strategies, share best practices and identify common challenges, leading to the formulation of more effective, cooperative solutions for regional issues (AIPA Secretariat, 2025).

Together, AIPA plays a crucial role in facilitating the exchange of knowledge among the parliamentarians, enhancing both regional cooperation and national legislative capacity. Through its structured meetings, including AIPA GA, ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface, AIFOCOM and AIPA Caucus, members share best practices, legislative experiences, and policy strategies to address common issues. Additionally, AIPA's engagement with external experts during workshops and forums facilitates the sharing of experts' insights on complex regional issues. Overall, AIPA

Universiti Utara Malaysia

supports knowledge-sharing for both legislative development and alignment of national laws with broader ASEAN objectives.

Therefore, the Principles of Parliamentary Diplomacy, namely institutionalisation, complementary to traditional diplomacy and knowledge exchange, help to understand Malaysia's prospects through these meetings. These principles also serve as a framework for analysing AIPA's activities, functions and impact on Malaysia's practice of parliamentary diplomacy. Interview findings further support and validate the credibility of these principles in describing parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA. This section confirms that the Principles of Parliamentary Diplomacy are valid for analysing Malaysia's involvement in AIPA.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

4.4 AIPA Political-Security Discussions: Serving Parliamentary Diplomacy Concept (2009-2018)

4.4.1 High-level Meetings

4.4.1.1 AIPA General Assembly

The AIPA General Assembly (GA) is the highest decision-making meeting of AIPA, that held annually under Article 9 of the AIPA Statutes. The AIPA GA provides policy direction to achieve its objectives and fosters member interaction. According to Article 12 of the Statutes, the GA agenda is set by the Executive Committee; however, it may also address other issues beyond those decided by the Committee if necessary (AIPA Secretariat, 2025).

Aligned with the concept of parliamentary diplomacy, the AIPA GA serves as an institutionalised platform for the member states' parliaments to foster regional parliamentary diplomacy and strengthen ties with observer countries and external partners. The GA follows a structured process, including meetings and informal sessions. It begins with Executive Committee meetings to set the agenda, discuss priorities, and refer previous reports to relevant committees for further discussion (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2017).

The GA proceeds with the Plenary Sessions. The First Plenary Session focuses on national statements from AIPA Member Delegation leaders, the ASEAN Secretary-General, Observer Delegations, and thematic discussions, including Committee Meetings on Political, Economic, Social, and Organisational Matters. The Political Committee specifically discuss and adopts the reports and resolutions related to the Political Security field (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2015).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

The Second Plenary Session focuses on presenting reports from the committee meetings, announcing the date and venue of the next AIPA GA, and ratifying the Joint Communique by Leaders of AIPA Member Delegations. Additionally, the session also includes other activities, such as speeches by the President of AIPA and the Prime Minister of the host country, which help promote the host country's foreign policy and position on parliamentary cooperation (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2015).

The inclusion of executive bodies and informal activities in the AIPA GA shows the feature of parliamentary diplomacy in complementing traditional diplomacy. During the 36th General Assembly in 2015, the Malaysian Prime Minister,

as ASEAN Chairman, emphasised AIPA's role in supporting ASEAN's objectives and implementing its policies at the national level. The synergy between ASEAN and AIPA is crucial for the effective implementation of ASEAN policies and agreements (Razak, 2015).

During Malaysia's presidency of AIPA in 2015, informal activities such as solidarity dinners, visits to the Royal Palace, golf activities and conference tours were organised to promote local culture and facilitate informal discussions among the parliamentary delegates (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2015). This informal approach also reflects the concept of 'The ASEAN Way" refers to a discussion strategy that is informal and without drawing public attention (Masilamani & Peterson, 2014).

The AIPA GA supports the knowledge exchange aspect of parliamentary diplomacy. It facilitates committee-level discussions on key areas of AIPA and ASEAN cooperation, including the Committee on Political Matters, which plays a vital role in knowledge exchange within AIPA. The Political Committee discussion includes security issues, collecting legal information, and facilitating knowledge-sharing among AIPA Members, which are crucial for the formation of AIPA resolutions (AIPA Secretariat, 2015).

Between 2009 and 2018, the AIPA GA approved 248 resolutions. Within the political security field, 24 resolutions were adopted between 2009 to 2016, addressing issues including regional and global security, democracy, governance, human rights, inclusivity, the ASEAN Political-Security Community, confidence-building, and maritime and environmental protection (AIPA Secretariat, 2025). However, in 2017

and 2018, no resolutions were adopted on political-security subjects due to the barrier discussed in Chapter 3.

In terms of Malaysia's prospects, AIPA GA provides an institutionalised platform for engaging in parliamentary diplomacy. Through formal and informal activities, Malaysia has utilised the assembly to support political and security cooperation. For instance, the former Malaysian Deputy Speaker during the 37th AIPA GA in 2016, emphasised Malaysia's stance in countering terrorism, by advocating collective security measures rather than individual approaches (AIPA Secretariat, 2016).

The GA helps Malaysia complement traditional diplomacy by providing an additional diplomatic channel beyond state-led diplomacy (Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia (PIC), 2020). Malaysia also benefits from informal interactions during the AIPA GA, where parliamentary diplomacy extends beyond formal sessions. As Expert 6 (2024) noted:

> *"Parliamentarians have more liberty, and this allows to address informal matters in a private setting"*
> (Expert 6, personal communication, August 8, 2024).

Similarly, Expert 5 (2024) explained that:

> *"Parliamentary diplomacy takes place at the dining table, during coffee sessions"*
> (Expert 5, personal communication, August 8, 2024).

Through knowledge exchange in the AIPA GA, Malaysian parliamentarians gain insights from counterparts on emerging regional issues. This input is important for policy formulation and parliamentary sessions. During the 38th AIPA, Malaysia

and other members joined dialogues on combating transnational crimes, which emphasised the importance of sharing best practices in developing security policies. The exchange helps Malaysia in gaining regional expertise to tackle security threats (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2017).

In summary, the AIPA General Assembly (GA) functions as an institutionalised, statute-based platform that enables ASEAN parliaments to engage in parliamentary diplomacy through structured plenary and committee processes, including the Political Committee that discusses and adopts political-security reports and resolutions. This supports Malaysia's objectives of strengthening regional parliamentary cooperation and addressing regional security challenges through resolutions and collective security positions, as reflected in Malaysia's advocacy on counter-terrorism at the 37th AIPA GA (2016). The GA also complements executive-led diplomacy by incorporating executive actors and speeches that promote host-country foreign policy positions and ASEAN policy implementation. Knowledge exchange is facilitated through committee-level discussions that collect legal information and share best practices on security issues, supporting Malaysia's learning and policy inputs.

4.4.1.2 ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface

The establishment of the ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface is a key recommended strategy in the resolution to transform AIPA into a more effective and integrated institution. The resolution aimed to institutionalise regular interaction between AIPA and ASEAN through mutual attendance of the AIPA President at the ASEAN Summit

Universiti Utara Malaysia

and the ASEAN Chairman at the AIPA GA (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2005).

To support the institutionalisation of the ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface, in 2006, the AIPA GA adopted a resolution establishing Regular Reciprocal Attendance by AIPA and ASEAN Leaders at AIPA GA and ASEAN Summits. This reciprocal attendance fosters interaction, cooperation, and policy alignment to achieve regional goals. It strengthens ties between AIPA and ASEAN, ensuring both entities work collectively to achieve shared interests (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2006).

At the early stages, this meeting was referred to as an "Informal Meeting Between AIPA and the ASEAN heads of Government" and was held without a structured procedure. Currently, the meeting has an enhanced structure and preparation process (National Assembly of the Kingdom of Thailand, 2009). It is recognised as a formal communication channel for improving cooperation between the executive and legislative bodies (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2016). Malaysia's Prime Minister (ASEAN Chair) advocated the institutionalisation of the Interface to strengthen ASEAN-AIPA cooperation and enhance AIPA's roles in ASEAN affairs, contributing to policy harmonisation and ASEAN integration (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2015).

The ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface begins with a preparatory meeting to review and finalise delegates' statements and adopt the event schedule. In the main session, the AIPA delegates present their perspectives and engage in dialogue with

ASEAN leaders, supporting knowledge exchange. In this context, the AIPA leader delivers a statement on behalf of AIPA, followed by ASEAN leaders sharing their views on strengthening ASEAN-AIPA cooperation (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2016).

The ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface also complements traditional diplomacy. Malaysia views this approach as a means of strengthening cooperation between ASEAN's executive and legislative bodies, promoting ASEAN Community Vision 2025, and addressing regional challenges. Since AIPA aims to support ASEAN goals, synchronising AIPA and ASEAN is essential for bridging gaps between the legislative and executive branches in the region (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2016). Malaysia's Former Senate Speaker (Acting AIPA President) at the 7th ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface emphasised AIPA's support for ASEAN policies and community vision (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2016).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Furthermore, through the ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface, the Malaysian parliament complements state diplomacy and strengthens its leadership role in regional parliamentary diplomacy. In 2015, Malaysia chaired the meeting, enhancing its influence by showcasing its commitment to aligning legislative and executive efforts. This strengthens Malaysia's leadership within ASEAN (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2015).

Malaysia uses the ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface to promote its state diplomatic agenda in the region. The ASEAN Chairman (also the Prime Minister of Malaysia), Datuk Seri Najib Razak, utilised the meeting to express Malaysia's stance

on the ASEAN Political-Security Community, particularly in counterterrorism and regional security. The Prime Minister also strongly supported the implementation of the ASEAN Convention and the Comprehensive Plan of Action on Counterterrorism to combat extremist ideologies within the region (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2015).

As a result of knowledge exchange, Malaysia is able to influence regional policies by proposing amendments to draft resolutions to achieve harmonisation among members. During the 4th ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface, Malaysia proposed revisions to the draft statement concerning the nuclear treaty, which gained support from other members. In the same meeting, Malaysia's Prime Minister highlighted parliamentarians' role as intermediaries between people and government, and their potential to help harmonise laws across the region (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2012).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Moreover, through an exchange of knowledge in this Interface, Malaysia benefits by gaining policy inputs and best practices to address regional issues. By facilitating communication between the regional executive and legislative branches, the interface allows Malaysia to receive policy inputs and strategies from both parties. This enables Malaysia's parliamentarians to ensure that national policies align with regional goals, improving compliance and strengthening its approach toward ASEAN-level initiatives (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2017).

Additionally, the Prime Minister advocated for maritime security and the adoption of international law regarding overlapping claims in the South China Sea,

which pose a major regional challenge. Therefore, the Prime Minister emphasised the importance of strengthening regional cooperation, resolving disputes through an international legal framework, and ensuring the effective implementation of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea to maintain regional stability (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2015).

In summary, the ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface has developed into an institutionalised communication channel that regularises interaction between ASEAN executives and AIPA legislatures through reciprocal attendance and structured preparation, strengthening policy alignment and ASEAN-AIPA cooperation. This fulfils Malaysia's objectives of supporting ASEAN Community Vision 2025, enhancing regional cooperation, and strengthening parliamentary-executive coordination. The Interface also complements traditional diplomacy by enabling Malaysia to advance state diplomatic agendas and political-security priorities, including counterterrorism and maritime security, as articulated by Malaysia's Prime Minister in 2015. Knowledge exchange occurs through delegates' statements and dialogue with ASEAN leaders, providing Malaysia with policy inputs and best practices while enabling it to influence regional policy harmonisation, for example, by proposing revisions to draft statements, including those related to the nuclear treaty.

4.4.2 AIPA Ad-Hoc Committees

4.4.2.1 AIPA Advisory Council on Dangerous Drugs (AIPACODD)

The AIPACODD, initially known as the AIPA Fact Finding Committee (AIFOCOM) to Combat Drug Menace, primarily aims to facilitate knowledge exchange and

strengthen cooperation among ASEAN member states in the fight against drug-related issues (AIPA Secretariat, 2025). AIFOCOM's functions include promoting mutual understanding among members in combating drug-related challenges and collecting and disseminating regional laws related to drug control (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2002).

The Terms of Reference (ToR) describe the institutionalisation of AIFOCOM, which consists of a chairman, representatives from each AIPA (previously AIPA) member, and Special Observer Members. This committee is required to meet at least once a year to assist the executive body in ensuring the accessibility of policies, programs and strategic actions related to drug control. Besides receiving consultation and assistance from external organisations, the committee collaborates with both governmental and non-governmental organisations in combating drugs (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2002).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

The resolution on the harmonisation of laws to combat drug-related challenges highlights AIFOCOM's role in the political security field. This resolution solidifies AIFOCOM's position and enables it to develop a common parliamentary initiative to harmonise strategies for combating drug-related issues across ASEAN countries (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2007). Thus, the institutionalisation of parliamentarians in harmonising policies to address drug issues shows the complementary aspect of parliamentary diplomacy to state diplomacy.

The activities of this committee contribute to Malaysia's prospects, especially in political security matters. These activities emphasise knowledge exchange among

members, through which Malaysia has gained valuable information and strategies employed by other member states to address drug issues. Malaysia has also utilised this platform to showcase its strategies for tackling drug-related issues (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2015).

This meeting also involves external representatives, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD), the National Authority for Combating Drugs (NACD), and other entities related to drug control. This engagement is crucial for sharing knowledge and strategies to curb drug issues. Parliamentarians can use this information to formulate drug policies or raise discussions during national parliamentary sessions (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2015).

As a result, during the House of Representatives session in June 2015, Malaysian Members of Parliament referred to information from the UNODC's statement at the 12th AIFOCOM meeting to highlight issues related to drug trafficking and the production of chemical-based drugs (Parlimen Malaysia, 2015). A Member of Parliament also emphasised concerns raised in that meeting, noting that Malaysia and other Asian countries were experiencing a rise in drug-related issues, including the existence of illegal drug laboratories in Malaysia (Parlimen Malaysia, 2015).

ASEAN Parliamentarians were optimistic about transforming AIFOCOM into an effective body to tackle regional drug issues. The rise in drug cases requires AIPA's full commitment to implement strategies that contribute to achieving a drug-free ASEAN community by 2025. Commitment from AIPA is crucial in developing a

common legal framework to combat the drug menace (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2017). Thus, AIPA members intend to expand the institutionalisation of AIFOCOM to address regional drug issues effectively.

In 2012, the AIPA GA passed a resolution on the establishment of the Technical Working Group (TWG) of AIFOCOM to intensify efforts in combating drug abuse. The TWG aims to strengthen legal and mutual cooperation through the harmonisation of laws on drug abuse. Besides that, the TWG facilitates further coordination by conducting field studies, research, and teleconferences to ensure effective and practical outcomes in the fight against drug abuse (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2012).

During the 13th AIFOCOM meeting, parliamentarians recognised that the AIFOCOM TWG was less effective and proposed transforming it into the AIPA Advisory Council on Dangerous Drugs (AIPACODD) to move beyond a fact-finding role. This enhances effectiveness and solidifies the institutionalisation of AIPACODD as a parliamentary tool for combating drug issues (AIPA Secretariat, 2025).

The AIPACODD was officially established on September 19, 2017, retaining some of AIFOCOM's functions, and added roles of focusing on legislative reforms, community engagement, and regional coordination. Unlike AIFOCOM and TWG, which mainly focused on research and dialogues, AIPACODD is a more action-oriented committee, advocating for policy reform and public awareness initiatives (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2018; ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2002).

In summary, AIPACODD (formerly AIFOCOM) functions as an institutionalised committee in AIPA's political-security field that strengthens legislative cooperation on drug control through its Terms of Reference, annual meetings, and structured membership, including external observers. It supports Malaysia's objectives by enabling regional cooperation and, policy coordination, by harmonise laws and develop common strategies against drug-related threats. This mechanism also complements state diplomacy by facilitating parliamentary involvement in aligning drug-control policies and strategies across ASEAN. Knowledge exchange is central, AIPACODD collects and disseminates regional drug laws, shares best practices with bodies such as UNODC and ASOD, and provides policy inputs that Malaysian MPs have referenced in Parliament.

4.4.2.2 AIPA Caucus

The AIPA Caucus aims to strengthen cooperation among AIPA member parliaments by harmonising laws within ASEAN. This committee supports institutionalisation by developing a common legislative framework to monitor the implementation of AIPA GA resolutions by member parliaments. AIPA therefore provides a platform for efficient information sharing and legal harmonisation (AIPA Secretariat, 2025).

The establishment of the AIPA Caucus began during the Political Committee meeting at the 28th AIPA General Assembly in 2007. Malaysia proposed that ASEAN adopt an inward-looking approach to address regional challenges. Singapore suggested forming an ad-hoc committee that would be suitable for operationalising Malaysia's proposal. These recommendations led to the formulation and adoption of a resolution establishing the AIPA Caucus (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2007).

The AIPA Caucus serves as a mechanism for knowledge exchange and legislative collaboration to address transnational issues in the region. Meetings are held as determined by the President of AIPA, and the outcomes are submitted to the AIPA Executive Committee for review and approval by the General Assembly (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2008). In general, the AIPA Caucus works toward harmonising laws on transnational crime (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2009).

The AIPA Caucus was officially established on August 6, 2008, to complement state diplomacy by assisting the Executive Committee in monitoring the implementation of AIPA resolutions. It also evaluates existing legal frameworks and identifies areas for harmonisation. In addition, the committee explores potential partnerships with external bodies that share similar interests with AIPA (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2008).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

The institutionalisation of the AIPA Caucus was further strengthened through an amendment to the Terms of Reference (ToR), requiring member parliaments to submit reports on the implementation of AIPA resolutions. The amendment also recommended small-group discussions to facilitate in-depth sharing of the scheduled topics. In addition, the AIPA Caucus adopted a standardised format for the implementation status reports (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2013).

The AIPA Caucus meeting consists of three main phases, namely, the opening session, plenary session and closing session. The opening session begins with remarks by the AIPA Secretary-General (or Deputy), an opening speech by the AIPA Caucus

Chairperson, and the appointment of the Vice-Chairperson. The first plenary session focuses on presenting the status of the implementation of the AIPA resolutions (AIPA Secretariat, 2017).

This session includes a Working Group discussion in which parliamentary delegates engage in small-group discussions on specific regional issues. These discussions involve presenting country reports on relevant topics and assessing national initiatives. Delegates also explore potential common legislation to enhance legal harmonisation within AIPA (AIPA Secretariat, 2017). This meeting process reflects the institutionalisation of the AIPA Caucus.

From Malaysia's perspective, the AIPA Caucus serves as a crucial platform for regional cooperation, dialogue, and problem-solving within AIPA and ASEAN. It enables ASEAN parliamentarians to exchange knowledge and ideas while addressing rising regional challenges. Members engage in discussions to explore both broad and targeted solutions, focusing on collaborative policymaking (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2019).

Moreover, the AIPA Caucus helps Malaysia promote its national interests in regional diplomacy. At the 6th AIPA Caucus in 2014, an information paper related to Malaysia's preparations for the ASEAN Community 2015 outlined Malaysia's priorities as ASEAN Chair in 2015, including advancing a people-centred ASEAN, expressing ASEAN aspirations in more concrete terms, and strengthening ASEAN institutions and funding. The paper also emphasised that deeper ASEAN integration and stronger regional architecture would support regional peace and stability through

transparency, dialogue, and predictable behaviour (AIPA Secretariat, 2015; ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2014). This highlights the AIPA Caucus as an additional channel in promoting national interests.

Thus, the AIPA Caucus supports Malaysia's objectives by advancing policy and legislative coordination by harmonising laws, monitoring implementation of AIPA GA resolutions, and addressing transnational issues. It reflects institutionalisation through a formal Terms of Reference, structured meeting phases, and requiring member parliaments to submit standardised implementation reports, supported by small-group discussions for in-depth sharing. Knowledge exchange occurs through working-group discussions in which delegates present country reports, assess national initiatives, and explore potential common legislation to enhance legal harmonisation. From Malaysia's perspective, the Caucus functions as a platform for regional cooperation, dialogue, and collaborative problem-solving. It also provides an additional channel to articulate national priorities, as illustrated by the 6th AIPA Caucus (2014) information paper outlining Malaysia's ASEAN Community 2015 preparations and integration-related priorities (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 2014).

Universiti Utara Malaysia

4.5 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter examined the prospects Malaysia gains from AIPA parliamentary diplomacy by first clarifying Malaysia's views and objectives within AIPA, and then explaining how these aims are pursued through AIPA's political-security related meetings. Malaysia views AIPA as a legislative platform for ASEAN parliamentarians to deliberate multi-dimensional issues, pursue consensus-based

resolutions, and support ASEAN integration. In this context, Malaysia's objectives include supporting ASEAN integration, strengthening regional parliamentary cooperation, advancing policy and legislative coordination, addressing regional political-security challenges, and enhancing parliamentary capacity. The chapter also validates the Principles of Parliamentary Diplomacy, namely institutionalisation, complementary to traditional diplomacy, and exchange of knowledge, as a reliable conceptual framework for analysing Malaysia's prospects in AIPA, supported by interview evidence and AIPA-related sources.

Applying these principles, the chapter shows that Malaysia pursues its objectives through four core AIPA platforms, specifically the AIPA General Assembly, which facilitates deliberation and resolution-making, the ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface, which regularises executive-legislative engagement, AIPACODD (AIFOCOM), which supports legislative cooperation on drug-related security issues, and the AIPA Caucus, which facilitates monitoring, reporting, and harmonisation through structured discussions and knowledge exchange. Taken together, these four political-security related AIPA meetings show that Malaysia achieves its objectives through three core principles of parliamentary diplomacy, namely institutionalisation, complement to traditional diplomacy and exchange of knowledge.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the research and provides an overview of the research. It restates the research questions and objectives, and briefly outlines the theoretical and conceptual framework and the methodological approach adopted. The chapter then synthesises the findings from Chapters Two, Three and Four, demonstrating how these findings address the research questions. It also acknowledges the limitations of the research, identifies the gaps emerging from this research and proposes several directions for future research.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

5.2 Summary

This research examines Malaysia's involvement in the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) between 2009 and 2018, focusing on three core questions: Why has Malaysia engaged in AIPA parliamentary diplomacy from its early involvement in ASEAN parliamentary cooperation to its delegation patterns between 2009 and 2018? What are the challenges have constrained Malaysia's practice of parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA from 2009 to 2018? And what prospects does Malaysia gain from its participation in the four key AIPA meetings related to political-security cooperation, when analysed using the principles of parliamentary diplomacy?

These questions are translated into the research objectives, which are to analyse the origins ASEAN parliamentary cooperation, including Malaysia's early involvement and delegation patterns in AIPA between 2009 and 2018, to identify the challenges that have constrained Malaysia's practice of parliamentary diplomacy in AIPA between 2009 and 2018, and to assess the prospects of Malaysia's involvement in four key AIPA meetings related to political-security cooperation, using the principles of parliamentary diplomacy framework.

The AIPA's parliamentary diplomacy reflects the neo-regionalism theory by serving as a flexible, institutionalised platform that promotes regional cooperation among national parliaments. Its norm-based approach, promoting mutual understanding and regional integration, aligns with neo-regionalist principles of multidimensional integration beyond traditional state-centric diplomacy. The concept of parliamentary diplomacy forms the basis for analysing the Malaysian Parliament's involvement in AIPA. It highlights the expanding role of parliaments in foreign affairs, driven by global challenges beyond the capacity of traditional diplomacy. Based on this concept, the researcher developed a framework that outlines the prospects of parliamentary diplomacy in AIPA across three dimensions, namely, institutionalisation, complementary to traditional diplomacy, and knowledge exchanges.

To answer the research questions, a qualitative design was employed using both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was obtained through semi-structured interviews and analysis of official documents related to AIPA, Parliament of Malaysia, and other relevant secondary sources from existing literature. Purposive

sampling was used to select Experts with expertise in Malaysia's engagement in AIPA from 2009 to 2018. To ensure data accuracy and reliability, the research employed collaborative interviewing, Braun and Clarke's six-step thematic analysis, data triangulation, and explained the audit trail process.

This research addresses theoretical gaps, empirical gaps, knowledge gap and timeframe gap in the existing literature of parliamentary diplomacy by examining Malaysia's involvement in AIPA through a neo-regionalist lens and concept of parliamentary diplomacy by introducing a replicable framework to assess its prospects. It also contributes to Southeast Asian studies by exploring the evolution of parliamentary diplomacy and Malaysia's role within it. The findings are divided into three chapters based on the research questions.

The findings in Chapter Two answer why Malaysia has engaged in AIPA parliamentary diplomacy from its early involvement in ASEAN parliamentary cooperation to its delegation patterns between 2009 and 2018. The chapter highlights ASEAN's early recognition that involving parliamentarians could advance regional objectives, alongside Malaysia's sustained support for institutionalised legislative cooperation. Malaysia supported Indonesia's proposal to establish ASEAN parliamentary cooperation, participated in the early ASEAN Parliamentary Meetings, and hosted the second APM in Kuala Lumpur in 1975 to advance the organisational structure and draft statute, later endorsing the AIPO Statute in Parliament in April 1978. Malaysia consistently framed AIPO (later AIPA) as a platform to foster interpersonal relations among MPs, unite ASEAN action, and exchange strategies to address shared regional issues. Between 2009 and 2018, this engagement continued

through Malaysia's hosting of the first AIPA Caucus in 2009 and holding the AIPA Presidency and hosting the 36th General Assembly in 2015. However, the chapter also identifies an institutional arrangement that is prone to executive influence in Malaysia's involvement in AIPA, indicating the need to understand the constraints that may shape Malaysia's legislative participation in AIPA.

The findings in Chapter Three identify seven challenges that constrained Malaysia's practice of parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA between 2009 and 2018. First, ASEAN domination limits AIPA's authority to a consultative role, producing non-binding resolutions that affect implementation incentives. Second, diverse political systems among AIPA members, reinforced by non-interference and varying democratic development, weaken collective commitment and complicate agreement on sensitive issues. Third, the consensus requirement functions as a procedural barrier, as a single objection can delay or block agenda approval and draft resolutions, exemplified by repeated constraints on Rohingya-related discussions and disruptions to Political Committee proceedings. Fourth, the limited capacity of Malaysia's parliamentary actors, including expertise, staffing, role clarity, secretariat workload, and resource constraints, reduces effective participation and preparation. Fifth, a lack of report-back is evident from irregular and inconsistent AIPA-related debates in Parliament, which limit awareness among MPs. Sixth, limited implementation mechanisms hinder follow-up and domestic alignment of AIPA-related resolutions. Seventh, the low popularity and visibility of AIPA reduce public and academic attention, affecting momentum and support for implementation. Collectively, these constraints reduce Malaysia's capacity to contribute consistently, particularly in political-security cooperation.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

The findings in Chapter Four directly answer the research question and fulfil the objective by assessing the prospects Malaysia gains from participating in four key AIPA political-security meetings through the principles of parliamentary diplomacy, namely institutionalisation, complementary to traditional diplomacy, and exchange of knowledge. Malaysia views AIPA as a legislative platform to discuss and address regional challenges, pursue consensus-based resolutions, promote regional integration, advance policy harmonisation, and support foreign policy priorities. This chapter also validates that the principles of parliamentary diplomacy provide a reliable framework for analysing Malaysia's prospects. Under institutionalisation, AIPA provides statute-based rules, permanent structures, and regularised platforms, including the AIPA General Assembly, ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface, AIPACODD (AIFOCOM), and the AIPA Caucus, that sustain parliamentary engagement and networking. Complementary to traditional diplomacy, these meetings widen communication beyond state diplomacy, align parliamentary engagement with foreign policy priorities, and strengthen executive-legislative interaction. Under the exchange of knowledge, Malaysia benefits from formal and informal interaction, which facilitate sharing of best practices, training, staff development, and expert engagement. Collectively, these platforms demonstrate how AIPA operationalises parliamentary diplomacy and helps Malaysia achieve its objectives within AIPA.

5.3 Research Limitations

This research has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, interview evidence was collected without audio recordings because the Experts preferred off-record interviews. While this reduced traceability and limited the use of fully verbatim quotations, the researcher mitigated this constraint through

detailed handwritten notes and real-time member checking during interviews (allowing the Experts to confirm, clarify, or amend restate responses). Nevertheless, compared with recorded and transcribed interviews, the absence of audio recordings limited the precision with which some interview-based interpretations could be verified.

Second, the research did not include interviews with MPs who served as AIPA delegates. This may have limited the breadth of perspectives, particularly experiential insights into delegation practices and informal negotiation processes. In addition, the interview evidence supported the explanation of challenges and understanding Malaysia's perspectives and objectives in AIPA, compared to detail related to prospects from AIPA's four main meetings related to political-security cooperation. Therefore, conclusions regarding prospects relied relatively more on documentary sources.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Fourth, the limited availability of prior empirical research directly examining Malaysia's involvement in AIPA constrained the extent of direct empirical comparison. Although this was mitigated through triangulation using interview notes, AIPA-related documents, parliamentary Hansard records and relevant literature, the niche nature of the topic reduced the range of directly comparable studies, which may limit how strongly the findings can be positioned against established empirical evidence.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Based on findings, this research on Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy within the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), focuses on historical background, challenges and prospects between 2009-2018. While the research contributes to a better understanding of Malaysia's engagement in regional parliamentary diplomacy, by addressing its background, challenges and prospects, it also highlights several gaps that present valuable opportunities for future research.

Future research on parliamentary diplomacy should aim to clarify its conceptual boundaries by distinguishing it from traditional diplomacy. This distinction would enhance analytical precision and provide a more coherent framework for assessing the significance of parliamentary diplomacy within ASEAN and beyond. Additionally, while this research focused on parliamentary diplomacy in Southeast Asia, comparative research involving other regional parliamentary institutions, such as the European Union (EU) and the African Parliamentary Union (APU), is needed. Such comparisons could reveal institutional differences, policy outcomes, and practices, offering valuable insights into AIPA's development and prospects for reform.

As this research focused on Malaysia, future studies should explore the parliamentary diplomacy practices in other ASEAN members' Parliaments. Country-specific analyses can uncover national variations and offer deeper insights into regional dynamics and cooperation through AIPA. Expanding such research across ASEAN would provide a more comprehensive understanding of inter-parliamentary engagement in the region. Additionally, besides a multilateral platform, Malaysia's

bilateral parliamentary diplomacy with other ASEAN members or strategic international partners is worth further study. This could reveal how legislative channels contribute to diplomacy, soft power, and regional trust-building.

Future studies should also explore AIPA's broader contribution beyond the political-security area. While this research focuses on political-security cooperation, AIPA is actively engaged in economic, social, and women's involvement. Exploring these areas would provide a more comprehensive assessment of parliamentary diplomacy's wider impact within AIPA. Additionally, since this research covers the period from 2009 to 2018, future research should consider more recent developments, particularly in the context of post-COVID-19 regionalism and the evolving ASEAN political landscape.

Methodologically, future studies should incorporate empirical evidence that directly engages Members of Parliament (MPs), rather than parliamentary officers' perspectives. MP perspectives would provide deeper insights into the internal dynamics and practical challenges of parliamentary diplomacy. Furthermore, the conceptual framework developed in this research could be applied to other contexts, such as different international parliamentary institutions, thematic areas of cooperation, or bilateral relations. This would test its analytical flexibility and contribute to the broader theoretical development of the field.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

5.5 Conclusion

This research fulfilled its objectives by tracing Malaysia's engagement in AIPA from its support for ASEAN parliamentary cooperation in the 1970s to its continued commitment through hosting key AIPA-related events between 2009 and 2018, while also noting institutional arrangements that are prone to executive influence. The research identified seven challenges that limit Malaysia's involvement in AIPA, including ASEAN dominance, diverse political systems, consensus requirements, limited capacity of parliamentary actors, lack of report-back, limited implementation mechanisms and low public awareness. Despite these challenges, Malaysia gains prospects in AIPA's political-security cooperation through four key platforms, AIPA General Assembly, ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface, AIPACODD, and AIPA Caucus, which demonstrate the three principles of parliamentary diplomacy by sustaining institutionalised structures, complement traditional diplomacy and enable the exchange of knowledge.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Overall, this research contributes to the theoretical development of parliamentary diplomacy within a neo-regionalist framework, while also addressing gaps in the empirical study of Southeast Asian inter-parliamentary cooperation. It offers a conceptual foundation and analytical model that future research can refine, replicate, or apply to broader regional or comparative contexts. As ASEAN continues to evolve in a changing geopolitical environment, Malaysia's role in AIPA remains a promising avenue for advancing regional integration, democratic norms, and exchange of best practices to address security issues.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Request Letter and Interview Questions

Thirukaliarasan a/l Kannu
School of International Studies (SoIS)
Universiti Utara Malaysia,
06010 Sintok,
Kedah Darul Aman.

DATE

EXPERTS ADDRESS

Dear **NAME**,

REQUEST FOR AN INTERVIEW SESSION FOR RESEARCH ON MALAYSIA-AIPA PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Thirukaliarasan s/o Kannu, and I am currently collecting data for my Master's degree in International Relations at Universiti Utara Malaysia. I am writing to request your participation in an interview for my research on **"Malaysia's Engagement in the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA): Prospects and Challenges During Najib Razak Administration".**

The interview would cover topics such as the experts' experience and the challenges and prospects of Malaysia in AIPA **(Annexure I)**. Your insights and experiences would be precious to my study. I estimate the interview would take approximately 30 to 45 minutes. I assure you that all information provided is confidential.

We greatly appreciate your time and cooperation in this regard. We eagerly anticipate the opportunity to work with you in this endeavour. For further details, please contact me via email at thirukaliarasan_k@gsgsg.uum.edu.my or by phone at +6017-5451897.

Yours sincerely,

Thirukaliarasan Kannu
School of International Studies (SoIS)
Universiti Utara Malaysia,
06010 Sintok, Kedah Darul Aman.

ANNEXURE I: OVERVIEW OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

SECTION A: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE EXPERT

This section aims to understand the expert experience with Malaysia's involvement in the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA). Furthermore, this section also gathers the experts' views and opinions on the Parliamentary Diplomacy of Malaysia in AIPA by specifically focusing on its definitions, Malaysia's interests, and the scope of parliamentary diplomacy in the political security field.

SECTION B: THE CHALLENGES FACED BY MALAYSIA IN INVOLVING IN THE ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (AIPA)

In this Section, the researcher aims to understand the specific challenges faced by Malaysia in involving AIPA. The challenges could exist at the domestic level within the legislative body of Malaysia or at the international level caused by AIPA or ASEAN itself. By exploring these challenges, the researcher could analyse the factors that become barriers for Malaysia to be actively involved in AIPA. Therefore, the researcher could identify strategic actions to address the challenges.

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SECTION C: THE PROSPECTS GAINED BY MALAYSIA BY INVOLVING IN THE AIPA POLITICAL SECURITY FIELD

The Last Section, focuses on the prospects that Malaysia has gained by being involved in Parliamentary Diplomacy at the ASEAN level. This part is to understand the benefits and opportunities that Malaysia received by involving in Parliamentary Diplomacy in AIPA with a specific focus on the political security field. The data from this section will assist the researcher in analysing the potential benefits that Malaysia has within AIPA that could boost Malaysia's involvement within the beneficial area.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The aim of this research interview:

i. To identify the challenges faced by Malaysia in actively involved in the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) in the years 2009-2018.

ii. To describe the prospects gained by Malaysia by involving AIPA Parliamentary Diplomacy.

Section A: Demography and Experience of the Experts

1. Name of department:

   _____

2. How would you describe your experience with Malaysia and AIPA Parliamentary Diplomacy?
3. How do you define Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA?
4. What are Malaysia's objectives in parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA?

Section B: The Challenges Faced by Malaysia in Involving in The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)

1. How does the Parliament of Malaysia engage with the AIPA, and are there any specific guidelines or frameworks, that govern this engagement?
2. Can you explain the executive body's influence on Malaysia-AIPA parliamentary relations between 2009 and 2018?
3. What factors limit Malaysia from implementing the resolution from AIPA?
4. From your perspective, what are Malaysia's key challenges in actively participating in AIPA-Parliamentary Diplomacy?

5. Based on your opinion, why the AIPA-Malaysia Parliamentary Diplomacy topic is under-researched?

Section C: The Prospects Gained by Malaysia by Involving in The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)

1. Can you categorise the political security activities within AIPA?
2. Are there any particular political-security issues that Malaysia prioritizes within AIPA discussions?
    i. If yes, How AIPA help Malaysia resolve these issues?
    ii. Can you provide examples of successful collaboration or initiatives?
    iii. Are there any underexplored areas where Malaysia could make significant contributions?
3. Based on your experience what are the key prospects Malaysia has gained from 2009 until 2018?
4. From your point of view, do you agree that Malaysia's involvement in AIPA serves the concept of Parliamentary Diplomacy as below:
    i. Complementary to traditional diplomacy.
    ii. Institutionalisation.
    iii. Exchange of knowledge.
    iv. Conflict Management.

Thank you for the feedback.

-Questions End-

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Appendix B
Interview Request Letter

Outlook

MEMOHON KEBENARAN UNTUK MENJALANKAN TEMU BUAL BAGI PENYELIDIKAN IJAZAH SARJANA (HUBUNGAN ANTARABANGSA) BERSAMA PEGAWAI DI PARLIMEN MALAYSIA

From Thirukaliarasan A/l Kannu <thirukaliarasan_k@gsgsg.uum.edu.my>
Date Mon 01/07/2024 15:19
To zamani@parlimen.gov.my <zamani@parlimen.gov.my>
Cc marzila@parlimen.gov.my <marzila@parlimen.gov.my>

2 attachments (78 KB)
Kebenaran Mengumpul Data_Thirukaliarasan.pdf; Senarai Cadangan Nama Pegawai Parlimen untuk Ditemu Bual_Thirukaliarasan.pdf;

Thirukaliarasan a/l Kannu
School of International Studies (SoIS)
Universiti Utara Malaysia,
06010 Sintok, Kedah Darul Aman.

Tarikh: 1 Julai 2024

Yang Berbahagia Datuk Haji Muhamad Zamani bin Mohd Ali
Ketua Pentadbir
Parlimen Malaysia,
Bangunan Parlimen,
Jalan Parlimen,
50680 Kuala Lumpur
(u.p: [redacted]

MEMOHON KEBENARAN UNTUK MENJALANKAN TEMU BUAL BAGI PENYELIDIKAN IJAZAH SARJANA (HUBUNGAN ANTARABANGSA) BERSAMA PEGAWAI DI PARLIMEN MALAYSIA

Dengan segala hormatnya perkara di atas adalah dirujuk.

2. Dimaklumkan bahawa saya Thirukaliarasan a/l Kannu (829510) merupakan pelajar Ijazah Sarjana di *School of International Studies (SoIS),* Universiti Utara Malaysia. Untuk makluman pihak YBhg. Datuk, saya sedang menjalankan kajian bagi tesis peringkat **Ijazah Sarjana (Hubungan Antarabangsa)** yang bertajuk:

Malaysia's Engagement in the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA): Prospects and Challenges During Najib Razak Administration

3. Sehubungan itu, saya ingin mendapatkan kebenaran YBhg. Datuk untuk menemu bual pegawai-pegawai di Parlimen Malaysia bagi mendapatkan pandangan dan maklumat berkaitan dengan kajian tersebut. Bersama-sama ini disertakan surat kebenaran mengumpul data dari Fakulti Pascasiswazah *Ghazali Shafie Graduate School of Government (GSGSG)*, Universiti Utara Malaysia untuk menjalankan kajian ini dan senarai cadangan nama-nama pegawai yang akan dijemput untuk ditemu bual.

4. Untuk sebarang pertanyaan dan maklumat lanjut, pihak YBhg. Datuk boleh hubungi saya melalui emel thirukaliarasan_kannu@gsgsg.uum.edu.my atau nombor telefon 017-5451897.

Segala pertimbangan dan kerjasama pihak YBhg. Datuk amatlah dihargai dan didahului dengan ucapan terima kasih.

Sekian dan salam hormat,

Yang benar,



THIRUKALIARASAN A/L KANNU
Pelajar Ijazah Sarjana,
School of International Studies (SoIS)
Universiti Utara Malaysia.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Appendix C
Graduate School Letter for Data Collection

GHAZALI SHAFIE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT
UUM Kolej Undang-Undang, Kerajaan dan Pengajian Antarabangsa
Universiti Utara Malaysia
06010 UUM SINTOK
KEDAH DARUL AMAN
MALAYSIA

Tel: 604 - 928 7751/7752
Faks (Fax): 604 - 928 7799
Laman Web (Web): www.gsgsg.uum.edu.my

Ref. No. : UUM/COLGIS/GSGSG/ 829510
Date: February 6, 2024

Sir/Madam

DATA COLLECTION FOR MASTER THESIS

This is to certify that **THIRUKALIARASAN A/L KANNU (Matric Number: 829510)** is a full time Master student at Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Kedah.

2. He needs to collect data for his research to fulfill the requirements of his Master programme. (Title: Malaysia's Engagement in the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA): Prospects and Challenges During Najib Razak Administration).

3. It is sincerely appreciated that your organization will be able to assist him in getting the necessary information and grant his permission to collect the data for his Master research thesis.

Thank you.

"MALAYSIA MADANI"
"KEDAH SEJAHTERA - NIKMAT UNTUK SEMUA"
"KNOWLEDGE, VIRTUE, SERVICE"

Yours faithfully,

PROF. DR. RUSDI BIN OMAR
Dean
Ghazali Shafie Graduate School of Government
Universiti Utara Malaysia
Tel : 04-9287752 Fax: 04-9287799
Email : rusdiomar@uum.edu.my

Universiti Pengurusan Terkemuka
The Eminent Management University

Appendix D
Approval Email from Parliament of Malaysia



Firefox https://outlook.office365.com/mail/id/AAQkADJmOGY3ZmY1L...

Outlook

Temu Bual bagi Penyelidikan Ijazah Sarjana (Hubungan Antarabangsa) Bersama Pegawai di Parlimen Malaysia

From [redacted]@parlimen.gov.my>
Date Tue 16/07/2024 13:39
To Thirukaliarasan A/l Kannu <thirukaliarasan_k@gsgsg.uum.edu.my>
Cc [redacted]@parlimen.gov.my>

En Thirukaliarasan,

Salam Sejahtera.

Dengan hormatnya saya merujuk kepada perkara tersebut di atas dan emel Tuan kepada Ketua Pentadbir Parlimen Malaysia bertarikh 1 Julai 2024.

2. Sukacita dimaklumkan Tuan dibenarkan untuk menemu bual pegawai-pegawai Parlimen Malaysia untuk mendapatkan pandangan dan maklumat berkaitan dengan kajian bertajuk, '*Malaysia's Engagement in the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA): Prospects and Challenges During Najib Razak Administration*'.

3. Bagi tujuan temu bual tersebut, kami mencadangkan seramai 11 orang pegawai Parlimen yang telah terlibat secara langsung semasa Persidangan AIPA Ke-36 di Kuala Lumpur pada tahun 2015, tertakluk kepada ketersediaan mereka. Berikut adalah senarai pegawai tersebut:

a) [redacted]
b) [redacted]
c) [redacted]
d) [redacted]
e) [redacted]
f) [redacted]
g) [redacted]
h) [redacted]
i) [redacted]
j) [redacted]
k) [redacted]

1 of 3 20/1/2026, 6:42 pm

3. Tuan boleh menghubungi saya di talian [redacted] bagi urusan selanjutnya.

Sekian, terima kasih.

"MALAYSIA MADANI"
"BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA"

Saya yang menjalankan amanah,

[redacted]
Bahagian Antarabangsa dan Penyelidikan
Parlimen Malaysia

From: "Thirukaliarasan A/l Kannu" <thirukaliarasan_k@gsgsg.uum.edu.my>
To: [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, July 9, 2024 5:04:38 PM
Subject: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE RESEARCH ON MALAYSIA'S ENGAGEMENT IN THE ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (AIPA)

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Greetings,

Madam [redacted]

Please find the interview questions attached to this email for your consideration.

Thank you.

THIRUKALIARASAN KANNU
Postgraduate Student,
School of International Studies (SoIS),
Universiti Utara Malaysia.

Appendix E

Notes Taken During the Interview Sessions

Appendix Overview

This appendix presents the interview notes taken during the data collection process involving seven relevant experts. As an audio recording was not used, the interview data in this appendix are presented as immediate handwritten notes, organised into bullet-point tables according to each interview question and any follow-up questions.

The length and level of detail in the notes vary across interviews. For example, Expert 1 and Expert 2 were interviewed separately and responded directly to the interview questions prepared by the researcher. As their answers were provided spontaneously and captured in real time, the notes for these interviews are presented primarily as concise bullet points that summarise key ideas and statements.

Expert 3 and Expert 4 were interviewed together and referred to prepared notes by themselves when addressing the interview questions. As a result, their responses were more structured and could be recorded in detail. Some explanations also include a mix of Malay and English, reflecting Experts' natural language use during the interview. Similarly, Expert 5 was interviewed in a private setting in the Expert's office and responded to the interview questions with additional examples and elaborations, therefore, the notes from this interview are comparatively more detailed.

For Expert 6, the interview was arranged shortly before it was conducted, and the interview materials were provided on the day of the session. The participant asked for clarification on the research topic prior to answering the questions, and the responses provided were sufficiently detailed to be recorded comprehensively in the notes. For Expert 7, the interview was conducted online through Google Meet, and the responses were based on the Expert's personal experience in AIPA-related activities. The Expert also responded spontaneously, with occasional use of both Malay and English.

Overall, variations in note length reflect differences in participants' preferred communication styles and the extent of elaboration provided during the sessions. Although the notes are formatted as bullet points for consistency, the level of detail varies, and several responses are recorded as extended, multi-line bullet points reflecting more elaborate explanations.

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Interview Notes

Interviewee	**: Expert 1 (Research Officer, Research Division)**
Interview Date	**: 6 August 2024**
Interview Time	**: 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.**
Place of Interview	**: Library, Parliament of Malaysia**

Section A: Demography and Experience of the Experts

Question 1: How would you describe your experience with Malaysia and AIPA Parliamentary Diplomacy?

Noted answers:

- Serves as parliamentary Secretariat to AIPA General Assemblies.
- AIPA workshops.

Question 2: How do you define Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA?

Noted answers:

- Second track diplomacy. Complements state diplomacy through additional channel.

Question 3: What are Malaysia's objectives in parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA?

Noted answers:

- AIPA Platform for MPs.
- Serves-Collaboration on various of issue, regional issues, Meetings and dialogue.

Section B: The Challenges Faced by Malaysia in Involving in The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)

Question 1: How does the Parliament of Malaysia engage with the AIPA, and are there any specific guidelines or frameworks, that govern this engagement?

Noted answers:

- AIPA Statute, Guideline.
- Parliaments should follow that Statute.
- Even since 2008.
- Parliament have own group.

Question 2: Can you explain the executive body's influence on Malaysia-AIPA parliamentary relations between 2009 and 2018?

Noted answers:

- We proposed resolution in line with government policies. Need Ministries opinion.
- Caucus (Specific). We refer to other parliamentarian. Haze matter.
- Second track diplomacy. Bring issue to the foreign parliament.

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Question 3: What factors limit Malaysia from implementing the resolution from AIPA?

Noted answers:

- Resolution non-binding.
- AIPA monitoring the implementation of Resolutions.
- Malaysia have updated the project.
- Check and balance ministry, implement by resolutions.
- We fulfil the resolutions.
- Sometimes need to check in parallel need to ensure line with government policies.
- The wording.

Question 4: From your perspective, what are Malaysia's key challenges in actively participating in AIPA-Parliamentary Diplomacy?

Noted answers:

- Financially, government already set.
- More staff.
- Language barriers, the resolutions/idea.
- Issue of sovereignty.
- Non-interference policy.
- Limited resources.
- Diverse in political system
- Regional disparities, economic.

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Question 5: Based on your opinion, why the AIPA-Malaysia Parliamentary Diplomacy topic is under-researched?

Noted answers:

- AIPA need public awareness and understanding of public, to enhance.
- When public alert, public could contribute.

Section C: The Prospects Gained by Malaysia by Involving in The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)

Question 1: Can you categorise the political security activities within AIPA?

Noted answers:

- Matter meeting, aways bring up during GA/AIPA meeting.
- Discussion on resolution, AIFOCOM, Caucus.
- During General Assembly (GA) Political session., Political meeting
- AIFOCOM, before General Assembly (GA) they'll have. General Assembly GA will endorse.
- General Assembly (October): Speaker & ASEAN, Caucus Meeting (Status of implementation) normally we discussed, AIFOCOM (this will change, 2015 Malaysia) political, General Assembly.

Question 2: Are there any particular political-security issues that Malaysia prioritizes within AIPA discussions?

i. If yes, How AIPA help Malaysia resolve these issues?
ii. Can you provide examples of successful collaboration or initiatives?
iii. Are there any underexplored areas where Malaysia could make significant contributions?

Noted answers:

- AIPA discussion various of issues accordingly
- Expert 2 and Expert 3.

Question 3: Based on your experience what are the key prospects Malaysia has gained from 2009 until 2018?

Noted answers:

- Formation of AIFOCOM – 2015 Malaysia suggest to have a specific committee to discuss on drug.
- Encourage Integrated platform to discuss the matter.
- Regional Consensus, every resolution agreed. If not agree with the resolution.
- Mutual understand, can see on AIPA resolutions.

Question 4: From your point of view, do you agree that Malaysia's involvement in AIPA serves the concept of Parliamentary Diplomacy as below:

i. Complementary to traditional diplomacy.
ii. Institutionalisation.
iii. Exchange of knowledge.

Noted answers:

- Complementary to traditional diplomacy, second track diplomacy.
- Institutionalisation, to have consensus.
- Exchange of knowledge, in sharing best practices.

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Interviewee	**: Expert 2 (Research Officer, Research Division)**
Interview Date	**: 6 August 2024**
Interview Time	**: 2:00 p.m. – 2.47 p.m.**
Place of Interview	**: Discussion Room, Research Office, Parliament of Malaysia**

Section A: Demography and Experience of the Experts

Question 1: How would you describe your experience with Malaysia and AIPA Parliamentary Diplomacy?

Noted answers:

- Involved in AIPA since 2006/2007
- Attended multiple AIPA GA… 7-8 (GA meeting)
- Malaysia hosted AIPA GA in 2007 & 2015 (Involved)
- AIPA GA virtually (During Covid)
- Came back from Brunei AIPA Caucus. June.
- Also attend workshop & training (2014)

Question 2: How do you define Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA?

Noted answers:

- Structure: AIPA Secretariat in Jakarta.
- Each country has national secretary.
- Building work relation with other countries.
- Everything go back to executive.

Question 3: What are Malaysia's objectives in parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA?

Noted answers:

- I see history. Why AIPA formed.
- Tun Abdul Razak.
- Parliament got together.

Section B: The Challenges Faced by Malaysia in Involving in The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)

Question 1: How does the Parliament of Malaysia engage with the AIPA, and are there any specific guidelines or frameworks, that govern this engagement?

Noted answers:

- Check the statute (AIPA Statute).
- Guiding principle.
- Protocol might have.

Question 2: Can you explain the executive body's influence on Malaysia-AIPA parliamentary relations between 2009 and 2018?

Noted answers:

- Very tangible influence.

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Question 3: What factors limit Malaysia from implementing the resolution from AIPA?

Noted answers:

- It's non-binding. Every country is non-binding.
- Minimal effort to link with executive.
- Working procedure.
- Once approved don't know who's supposed to follow up.

Question 4: From your perspective, what are Malaysia's key challenges in actively participating in AIPA-Parliamentary Diplomacy?

Noted answers:

- It's a commitment. No structure.
- Suggest Expert 5.

Question 5: Based on your opinion, why the AIPA-Malaysia Parliamentary Diplomacy topic is under-researched?

Noted answers:

- Not like European Parliament.
- We don't have much power to do much.
- Probably they don't see the importance of AIPA
- Even they aware, it goes back to what they gain.
- Not like the European Parliament. They vote.
- Resolutions by our own.

Section C: The Prospects Gained by Malaysia by Involving in The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)

Question 1: Can you categorise the political security activities within AIPA?

Noted answers:

- Political Security. South China Sea, Myanmar issue, transboundary crime.
- Getting caught in trafficking.
- Haze-social
- We have five: Women, youth, political, economic, social.
- Discussed as a resolution.

Question 2: Are there any particular political-security issues that Malaysia prioritizes within AIPA discussions?

i. If yes, How AIPA help Malaysia resolve these issues?
ii. Can you provide examples of successful collaboration or initiatives?
iii. Are there any underexplored areas where Malaysia could make significant contributions?

Noted answers:

- Climate change.
- More on economic.
- Indonesia has a follow-up, we don't.

- Right now, we have JKPK. 2009-2018, don't think there's anything.
- Last year, YB… some of them involved.
- ASEAN entity, 80 over entities.
- This year went to Brunei in AIPA Caucus.

Question 3: Based on your experience what are the key prospects Malaysia has gained from 2009 until 2018?

Noted answers:

- Good will with the other 10 countries
- ASEAN Integration of economic community.

Question 4: From your point of view, do you agree that Malaysia's involvement in AIPA serves the concept of Parliamentary Diplomacy as below:

i. Complementary to traditional diplomacy.
ii. Institutionalisation.
iii. Exchange of knowledge.

Noted answers:

- Can provide additional communication.
- 1,2,3

Additional Question: Related to conflict management.

Noted answers:

- Conflict management, we try to resolve. Myanmar issue. Didn't hear anything official is going on.

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Interviewee : **Expert 3 (Research Officer, Research Division)**
Interview Date : **6 August 2024**
Interview Time : **3:15 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**
Place of Interview : **Discussion Room, Research Office, Parliament of Malaysia**

Section A: Demography and Experience of the Experts

Question 1: How would you describe your experience with Malaysia and AIPA Parliamentary Diplomacy?

Noted answers:

- Involved in AIPA GA, Kuala Lumpur. As a Secretariat in 2007 and 2015.
- Drafting resolution sponsored by Malaysia, 2008 onwards.
- Malaysia participation, commitment to regional stability, economic integration, and social development.
- Malaysia has consistently contributed to parliamentary diplomacy.
- Aligning AIPA with ASEAN's vision of maintaining peace and stability
- Support of the ASEAN community-building and integration process.

Question 2: How do you define Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA?

Noted answers:

- Cantered on fostering regional cooperation, legislative harmonisation, policy advocacy.
- Address regional challenges through sharing best practices.
- Collaborative legislative efforts and developing collective strategies.
- Commitment to regional stability and prosperity, leveraging parliamentary diplomacy to influence policy.
- Enhance governance and strengthening the ASEAN community.

Question 3: What are Malaysia's objectives in parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA?

Noted answers:

- Enhance regional cooperation, promote legislative harmonisation, and advocate policy.
- Support ASEAN stability, economic integration.
- Address transnational challenges, sharing best practices and develop collective strategies, that benefit region.

Section B: The Challenges Faced by Malaysia in Involving in The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)

Question 1: How does the Parliament of Malaysia engage with the AIPA, and are there any specific guidelines or frameworks, that govern this engagement?

Noted answers:

- Signing statute of AIPO (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation) 2 Sept 1977. By 10 ASEAN parliaments.
- Transform into more effective and integrated institution (AIPA).
- AIPA Statute, Article 9 Executive Committee. Article 12 General Assembly agenda.

Question 2: Can you explain the executive body's influence on Malaysia-AIPA parliamentary relations between 2009 and 2018?

Noted answers:

- 2009-2018, Profound impact.
- Strategic policy direction, coordination legislative efforts, and robust institutional support.
- Executive ensure Malaysia participation aligned with national priorities and contribute to regional integration.
- Verify with Ministries, Suggestions for wordings
- 2009-2018, regional stability, economic integration, address transnational issues.
- Coordinated effort legislative and executive, to ensure Malaysia participation aligned with national interest and broader ASEAN goals.

Question 3: What factors limit Malaysia from implementing the resolution from AIPA?

Noted answers:

- Challenges: Political, institutional, socio-economic, and regional factors.
- To address, requires enhance capacity, political will, and regional cooperation.
- Example: Implementation challenges. Specific to Malaysia.
- Resistance within the bureaucracy to adopt new practices.
- Complexity in harmonising Malaysian laws with regional agreements.
- Resistance from national security stakeholder on sensitive issues.

Question 4: From your perspective, what are Malaysia's key challenges in actively participating in AIPA-Parliamentary Diplomacy?

Noted answers:

- Non-Interference principle and divergent national interests
- result in non-binding, and diluted resolutions.
- Political will and commitment.
- Frequent leadership changes.
- Internal political pressures.
- May lead to inconsistent engagement and diverted resources.
- Aligning domestic law with AIPA resolutions is complex and time consuming.
- Institutional capacity: limited staffing, expertise, financial resources
- Interagency coordination, hinder effective participation, implementation of resolution.
- Low public awareness, support undermine implementation efforts.
- Resolution *tak boleh* simply agree.
- Implementation, *Kerajaan rasa buat, baru buat.*
- Myanmar

English translation:

- Resolution cannot be simply agreed to.
- Implementation will only be carried out if the government feels it should be done.

Question 5: Based on your opinion, why the AIPA-Malaysia Parliamentary Diplomacy topic is under-researched?

Noted answers:

- Limited visibility, resources constraints, marginal impact, interdisciplinary complexity.
- Enhance awareness, accessibility data and highlighting importance of parliamentary diplomacy in regional integration could encourage more research in this area.
- AIPA has five meetings (*dua bulan 1* meeting), *tapi yang* involved *sahaja.*
- *Yang pergi tahu, yang tak pergi mungkin tak tahu…*
- In news, *mungkin* when Malaysia hosting.
- People might confuse *sama ada* ASEAN or AIPA, *Orang* assume it is ASEAN.

English translation:

- AIPA has five meetings (one meeting every two months), but only those involved.
- Only those who are involved know, those who are not involved may not know…
- In the news, maybe when Malaysia is hosting.
- People might be confused whether it is ASEAN or AIPA, but people assume it is ASEAN.

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Section C: The Prospects Gained by Malaysia by Involving in The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)

Question 1: Can you categorise the political security activities within AIPA?

Noted answers:

- Regional security cooperation,
- Human rights and justice human rights advocacy.
- Political stability and governance.
- Emergency Response and Crisis Management.
- AIPACODD from AIFOCOM.

Question 2: Are there any particular political-security issues that Malaysia prioritizes within AIPA discussions?

i. If yes, How AIPA help Malaysia resolve these issues?
ii. Can you provide examples of successful collaboration or initiatives?
iii. Are there any underexplored areas where Malaysia could make significant contributions?

Noted answers:

- Malaysia priorities within AIPA, shaped by its strategic interests and regional responsibilities.

- Through AIPA, seeks to address critical issues.
- AIPA provides collaborative platform for dialogue, policy development and sharing best practices.
- ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, supported by AIPA including Malaysia.
- Potential to make significant contribution.
- Environmental sustainability, digital innovation, public health education, economic integration, security cultural integration, and human rights

Question 3: Based on your experience what are the key prospects Malaysia has gained from 2009 until 2018?

Noted answers:

- Enhance regional influence.
- Economic growth and integration.
- Security cooperation.
- Social-cultural integration.
- Human rights
- Public health and environmental.
- National development and resilience.

Question 4: From your point of view, do you agree that Malaysia's involvement in AIPA serves the concept of Parliamentary Diplomacy as below:

i. Complementary to traditional diplomacy.
ii. Institutionalisation.
iii. Exchange of knowledge.

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Noted answers:

- Complementary to traditional diplomacy
- Allowing legislators to engage directly with their counterparts in other ASEAN countries.
- Parallel diplomatic channel: Supports and reinforces the work of executive-led diplomacy.
- Provide additional avenues for dialogue and cooperation on issues that may not fully addressed through traditional diplomacy.
- Institutionalisation, AIPA provides a formal and regular platform for parliamentary interactions.
- Institutionalising the process of regional parliamentary diplomacy,
- Ensure sustained engagement between ASEAN members.
- Facilitate exchange of legislative experiences and best practices.
- Mutual learning, learn from other ASEAN countries.
- Regional legislative development.
- These enhance Malaysia’s ability to address regional issues collaboratively
- Role in promoting stability and cooperation within ASEAN.

Interviewee	**: Expert 4 (Research Officer, Research Division)**
Interview Date	**: 6 August 2024**
Interview Time	**: 3:15 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**
Place of Interview	**: Discussion Room, Research Office, Parliament of Malaysia**

Section A: Demography and Experience of the Experts

Question 1: How would you describe your experience with Malaysia and AIPA Parliamentary Diplomacy?

Noted answers:

- First experience 2013, during AIPA General Assembly (Substantive team)
- Directly involved in organising key AIPA events, drafting resolutions, and coordinating with ASEAN parliamentarians.
- Witness, Malaysia consistently promoted regional unity, legislative harmonisation, facilitative structural dialogue.
- AIPA serves as a platform for parliamentary diplomacy and cooperation among ASEAN members.
- Malaysia contribution, developed of the AIPA Caucus, aim to enhance the legislative capacity, collaboration in policy issues.
- Malaysia has hosted AIPA General Assemblies, facilitates the exchange of view on economic cooperation, security, and socio-cultural issues.

Question 2: How do you define Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA?

Noted answers:

- Efforts and activities undertaken by Malaysian parliamentarians
- Engage with counterparts from other ASEAN countries through AIPA.
- To promote regional integration, legislative harmonization, dialogue on common issues, and the strengthening of parliamentary institutions.
- Sponsor resolutions, most of resolutions *lepas kecuali yang isu* sensitive
- Rohingya, something like that.
- Not 100%, *kalau, ada* against our *perlembagaan kita tak ikut*. Reservation, hormonisation.

English translation:

- Most of resolution passed, except for the sensitive issue.
- Not 100%, if its (resolution) against our constitution, we don't follow.

Question 3: What are Malaysia's objectives in parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA?

Noted answers:

- Promote regional integration, economic integration.
- Harmonising trade economic policies.
- Security cooperation: Enhance collaborative efforts to address regional security challenges.
- Enhance legislative harmonisation, legal framework
- Aligning laws and regulation.
- Policy synchronisation.
- Good governance: transparency, accountability, and integrity.
- Democratic practices, promote democratic principles and practices.
- Capacity building, to strengthen the legislative and oversight functions.

- Best practice exchange, experience among ASEAN parliamentarians, improve legislative effectiveness.
- Engage with AIPA dialogue partners, other regional parliamentary bodies and international organisation, foster broader cooperation.
- Utilise parliamentary diplomacy to build consensus and mutual understanding on regional issues.

Section B: The Challenges Faced by Malaysia in Involving in The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)

Question 1: How does the Parliament of Malaysia engage with the AIPA, and are there any specific guidelines or frameworks, that govern this engagement?

Noted answers:

- AIPA Statutes, fundamental legal and procedural framework. This document outlines the structure, functions and procedure of AIPA, ensuring common and standard practices.
- Parliamentary Resolutions.
- Not specific to AIPA, ASEAN Charter and ASEAN Community Blueprints.
- Participation in AIPA General Assembly, provides platform for discussion regional issues, adopting resolutions, and setting the agenda for parliamentary cooperation.
- Committee involvement, various standing committee political, economic, social, and organisational.
- Malaysia representatives contribute to the discussions, draft resolution.

Question 2: Can you explain the executive body's influence on Malaysia-AIPA parliamentary relations between 2009 and 2018?

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Noted answers:

- Strategic direction for Malaysia's foreign policy. Emphasised regional cooperation within ASEAN.
- Ensure parliamentary efforts aligned with national foreign policy objectives.
- Executive support facilitated the hosting of AIPA events.
- MPs engaged in diplomatic effort, strengthen Malaysia's, indirectly support parliamentary diplomacy by set stage for effective parliamentary cooperation and dialogue.

Question 3: What factors limit Malaysia from implementing the resolution from AIPA?

Noted answers:

- Members consist of diverse political systems and priorities, and level of democratic development.
- Differences political priorities and governance models can make it challenging to achieve consensus on certain resolutions and implementation. Priority on national interest, may affect the commitment
- Legislative and bureaucratic hurdles, process of translating AIPA resolutions into national legislation can be complex and time-consuming.

- Bureaucratic inefficiencies and legislative bottlenecks, delay or hinder the implementation.
- Limited resources and capacity, implementation requires significant financial, human and technical resources.
- Malaysia like others, may face resource constraint that limit fully implementation.
- Coordination challenges, effective implementation of resolutions requires coordination various of ministries, agencies and the parliament.
- Insufficient coordination can impede smooth execution of agreed policies.
- Domestic political dynamics, including change in government, political instability, and shifting policy priorities, can impact Malaysia's ability to focus on implementation of AIPA resolutions.

Question 4: From your perspective, what are Malaysia's key challenges in actively participating in AIPA-Parliamentary Diplomacy?

Noted answers:

- Ensure consistent engagement and effective representation in AIPA meetings and committees is challenging.
- Parliamentary members may have other commitments or lack of the necessary expertise to fully engaged in technical discussions.
- Aligning AIPA resolutions with national policies and legislative agenda can be challenges.
- May be differences between regional priorities of AIPA and national interests.
- Active participation requires funding and resources. Budgetary constraints and competing priorities can limit the resources available for parliamentary diplomacy.
- Building capacity of parliamentarians and parliamentary staff is crucial.
- Limited training and capacity building can hinder their ability to contribute.
- Low public awareness and support can impact momentum to implement resolutions.

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Question 5: Based on your opinion, why the AIPA-Malaysia Parliamentary Diplomacy topic is under-researched?

Noted answers:

- Niches are of study. Often not received same level of attention, as more prominent international relations topic, bilateral relation, security issues.
- Academic focus more focus on high-profile diplomacy.
- Despite its importance, operate in background, and does not capture, much public, academic interest.
- May be a lack of accessible data, records of meetings, might not be systematically published.
- Limited availability of detailed information for researcher, due to confidentiality and sensitivity.
- Might be perception parliamentary diplomacy less impact on regional affairs, compared to executive actions.

- Challenges to implementing AIPA resolutions, might lead to perception parliamentary diplomacy less effective, attracting less research.
- The result (outcomes of AIPA meetings) is that it is not presented.

Section C: The Prospects Gained by Malaysia by Involving in The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)

Question 1: Can you categorise the political security activities within AIPA?

Noted answers:

- Focus on fostering cooperation among member parliaments, addressing regional challenges, political stability.
- Activities involve legislative harmonisation, collaborative initiatives, and capacity building.
- Examples: Anti-drug trafficking: collaborative legislative measures to combat drug trafficking, prevention, enforcement, rehabilitation program. AIFOCOM/AIPACODD.
- ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), support APSC goals.
- Adopt resolutions on political-security issues, parliaments members work to implement at national level.
- Workshops and seminar, to build capacity and share best practice.
- Fact-finding missions, to assess security situations, and gathering information.
- Annual General Assembly, regular meetings to discuss pressing political security issues, formulate strategies, adopt resolutions.

Question 2: Are there any particular political-security issues that Malaysia prioritizes within AIPA discussions?

i. If yes, How AIPA help Malaysia resolve these issues?
ii. Can you provide examples of successful collaboration or initiatives?
iii. Are there any underexplored areas where Malaysia could make significant contributions?

Noted answers:

- Counter-terrorism, AIPA Resolutions, harmonise counter-terrorism laws and policies across ASEAN Members.
- Information sharing, exchange of best practice, improve collective security measures.
- Transnational crime prevention, best practices exchange, regular forums and meeting by AIPA.
- Help Malaysia align its national legislation with regional efforts.
- Under-explored: Climate security, health security, water security and sustainable management, artificial intelligence ethical.

Question 3: Based on your experience what are the key prospects Malaysia has gained from 2009 until 2018?

Noted response:

- Refer question 1.

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Question 4: From your point of view, do you agree that Malaysia's involvement in AIPA serves the concept of Parliamentary Diplomacy as below:

i. Complementary to traditional diplomacy.
ii. Institutionalisation.
iii. Exchange of knowledge.

Noted response:

- Agreed, refer to section A.

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Interviewee	**: Expert 5 (Research Officer, Research Division)**
Interview Date	**: 8 August 2024**
Interview Time	**: 10:00 a.m. – 10.50 p.m.**
Place of Interview	**: Discussion Room, Research Office, Parliament of Malaysia**

Section A: Demography and Experience of the Experts

Question 1: How would you describe your experience with Malaysia and AIPA Parliamentary Diplomacy?

Noted answers:

- Assigned as an AIPA officer in 2018.
- Joined an AIPA officers' programme.
- Maintains ongoing liaison with the AIPA Secretariat.

Question 2: How do you define Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA?

Noted answers:

- Malaysia committed to AIPA.
- Active participation.
- AIPA have many strategic partners: EU Parliament, US Parliament (Legislation). Non-Governmental Organisations.
- They collaborate with AIPA to do program, AIPA request participants, Malaysia always cooperate.
- Always committed to AIPA.

Question 3: What are Malaysia's objectives in parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA?

Noted answers:

- We want to support Malaysia's foreign policy.
- Have maintain good relationship with all entities, all countries and organisations.
- To support the foreign policy.
- Help Malaysia to achieve their objective.
- Malaysia has some priorities, now main priorities, next year we will host ASEAN summit, assume the chairmanship of Malaysia.
- The main objective is to achieve the ASEAN Community 2025.

Section B: The Challenges Faced by Malaysia in Involving in The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)

Question 1: How does the Parliament of Malaysia engage with the AIPA, and are there any specific guidelines or frameworks, that govern this engagement?

Noted answers:

- We have statute paper.
- We (Parliament) do not have a specific guidelines framework, specifically for the engagement.
- The procedure of engagement is Secretary General of AIPA.
- Behalf of President of AIPA, will extend letters to our Speaker.
- Palestine issue, Joint Statement, Secretary General extend the letter to sign the Joint statement.
- Kind of everything must go through AIPA Secretary General.

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Question 2: Can you explain the executive body's influence on Malaysia-AIPA parliamentary relations between 2009 and 2018?

Noted answers:

- Stand guided by Ministry's position.
- AIPA *setiap tahun menerima permohonan* observer countries.
- Executive body influence, *dia kena lalu* ASEAN Secretariat, *selepas* ASEAN Comment *kepada* AIPA, AIPA *akan* distribute the application to all AIPA Member states.
- *Sebab salah tatacara menjadi* Observer, *kena* establish relation *semua negara* ASEAN.
- *Kita minta ulasan dari Wisma Putra, sesuai ka tak.*
- Draft Resolution, *kita tanya Kementerian.*
- *Kita kena dapatkan pandangan dari kementarian.*
- *Parliamentary diplomacy, kita sokong dasar luar Malaysia.*
- *Kita kena pastikan benda tu tak lari.*

English translation:

- Every year, AIPA receives applications from observer countries.
- Executive body influence, it has to go through the ASEAN Secretariat, after ASEAN gives comments to AIPA, AIPA will distribute the application to all AIPA member states.
- Because of the procedure to become an Observer, you must establish relations with all ASEAN countries.
- We ask for comments from Wisma Putra, whether it is suitable or not.
- Draft Resolution, we ask the Ministry.
- We must obtain views from the Ministry.
- Parliamentary diplomacy, we support Malaysia's foreign policy.
- We must ensure that it does not deviate.

Question 3: What factors limit Malaysia from implementing the resolution from AIPA?

Noted answers:

- *Undang-undang kita, kalau tak sesuai dengan* AIPA resolutions.
- AIPA resolution *tak mengikat. Cuma menggalakkan.*
- Recommendary forum. *Yang lose kita ikut.*
- *Budaya (*norms & Culture*).*
- *Negara lain tinggi. Sebeb mereka* sponsor draft resolution *tu, dan dah buat dah.*

English translation:

- Our laws, if they are not aligned with AIPA resolutions.
- AIPA resolutions are not binding. Only encouraging.
- A recommendary forum. The one lose we follow.
- Culture (norms & culture).
- Other countries are high. Because they sponsor that draft resolution, and they have already done it.

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Question 4: From your perspective, what are Malaysia's key challenges in actively participating in AIPA-Parliamentary Diplomacy?

Noted answers:

- Difficulty securing parliamentary members, AIPA activities.
- Limited participation.
- Varying knowledge level.
- Language constraints.
- Parliamentary Diplomacy *tu berlaku di meja makan, di* coffee session.

English translation:

- Parliamentary diplomacy takes place at the dining table, during coffee sessions.

Additional Question: Besides that, any other? Funding?

Noted answers:

- Funding is not a problem.
- AIPA General Assembly host country, strategic partner.

Question 5: Based on your opinion, why the AIPA-Malaysia Parliamentary Diplomacy topic is under-researched?

Noted answers:

- Not interesting, *Bukan seperti isu keselamatan, isu konflik.*
- *Kurang impak secara langsung.*
- *Bukan* main actor. We are supporting actors. (*pandangan*)

English translation:

- Not interesting, not like security issues, conflict issues.
- Less direct impact.
- Not the main actor. We are support actors. (opinion)

Section C: The Prospects Gained by Malaysia by Involving in The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)

Question 1: Can you categorise the political security activities within AIPA?

Noted answers:

- AIFOCOM (now AIPACODD).
- AIPA GA.
- AIFOCOM, *bukan sekadar* domestic, combat drug.
- Political, Myanmar issue.

English translation:

- AIFOCOM, not just domestic, combat drugs.

Question 2: Are there any particular political-security issues that Malaysia prioritizes within AIPA discussions?

i. If yes, How AIPA help Malaysia resolve these issues?
ii. Can you provide examples of successful collaboration or initiatives?
iii. Are there any underexplored areas where Malaysia could make significant contributions?

Noted answers:

- Refugees
- Not to mention specific countries, will try to avoid the draft resolution.
- AIPA GA program, must be approved in AIPA Executive Committee.
- If one country doesn't agree, with certain things on draft resolution,

- Committee meeting cancelled.
- Consensus
- Example: *2018, Kita dengan Indonesia* consistent *bawa isu Myanmar.*
- *Myanmar tak setuju. Isu itu tak boleh bawak. Selama tiga tahun kita tak pernah ada* security meeting (Political-Security).
- AIPA Statute, specifically, *satu tak setuju semua tak boleh.*
- *Pelaksanaan* draft resolution *Malaysia* (Question No.3).

English translation:

- Example: In 2018, we and Indonesia consistently brought up the Myanmar issue.
- Myanmar did not agree. So that issue couldn't go through. For three years, we never had a security meeting (Political-Security).
- AIPA Statute, specifically, if one does not agree, then all cannot.
- Implementation of Malaysia's draft resolution (Question No. 3).

Additional Question: Are these falls under barriers?
Noted answers:

- Yes,
- AIPA Executive Committee (No Consensus)

Question 3: Based on your experience what are the key prospects Malaysia has gained from 2009 until 2018?
Noted answers:

- Training for officers. How to write the resolutions.
- Resolution *tak boleh panjang*.
- Training *dengan* organisational bodies. United Nations/European Union.
- Training *untuk* MPs, exposure on other countries.

English translation:

- The resolution cannot be long.
- Training with organisational bodies. United Nations/European Union.
- Training for MPs, exposure on other countries.

Question 4: From your point of view, do you agree that Malaysia's involvement in AIPA serves the concept of Parliamentary Diplomacy as below:

i. Complementary to traditional diplomacy.
ii. Institutionalisation.
iii. Exchange of knowledge.

Noted answers:

- Complementary traditional diplomacy, of course, Main task support traditional diplomacy. *Konsep Asas* Parliamentary Diplomacy itself.
- Institutionalisation: Totally agree. Platform for parliamentarians engage and express opinion, building network.
- Exchange of knowledge: Meeting/conference (formal sessions)
- AIPA will allocate time for participant address their issue.

English translation:

- Complementary to traditional diplomacy, of course. The main task is to support traditional diplomacy. It is the basic concept of Parliamentary Diplomacy itself.

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Interviewee	**: Expert 6 (Research Officer, Research Division)**
Interview Date	**: 8 August 2024**
Interview Time	**: 11:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.**
Place of Interview	**: Library, Parliament of Malaysia**

Section A: Demography and Experience of the Experts

Question 3: What are Malaysia's objectives in parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA?

Noted answers:

- We were among the founding members of AIPA.
- Previously AIPO.
- Speakers joint together. Decision where parliament must have platform like ASEAN. But on legislative.
- Legislative POV. ASEAN is G2G.
- AIPA is ASEAN Member parliaments. Totally different.

Section B: The Challenges Faced by Malaysia in Involving in The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)

Question 1: How does the Parliament of Malaysia engage with the AIPA, and are there any specific guidelines or frameworks, that govern this engagement?

Noted answers:

- Have a very comprehensive statute.
- Governs how we engage with AIPA.

Additional Question: For domestic level, we don't have regulation? We follow the statute?

Noted answers:

- AIPA Statute.
- HOR (House of Representatives) is the head of each member parliament group.
- Can consist of both house.
- Malaysia: Speaker head of AIPA, each lower and upper house, member of AIPA.
- Not individual membership, parliament membership directly.

Question 2: Can you explain the executive body's influence on Malaysia-AIPA parliamentary relations between 2009 and 2018?

Noted answers:

- Rely on MOFA for Foreign Policy direction.
- MOFA set our Foreign Policy, Parliament complement whatever MOFA sets
- Do not say anything against.
- Stand guided. We follow.

Question 3: What factors limit Malaysia from implementing the resolution from AIPA?

Noted answers:

- Few resolutions, directly some indirectly.
- Indirectly we forward to relevant ministries. MPs bring during debate. During their select committee meetings.

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- Limitation could be the non-binding policy.

Question 4: From your perspective, what are Malaysia's key challenges in actively participating in AIPA-Parliamentary Diplomacy?

Noted answers:

- Always support from MOFA and all relevant ministries.
- Supplies information, resources.

Additional Question: Institutional challenges no funding or staff?

Noted answers:

- Funding-not agree. Face in every organisation.

Question 5: Based on your opinion, why the AIPA-Malaysia Parliamentary Diplomacy topic is under-researched?

Noted answers:

- Parliamentary diplomacy thoroughly under-researched.
- On international level. Very niche topic.
- Only those involved in, not many people know it.
- International: Government to government. AIPA smaller than that.
- Many don't know AIPA, unless you work on small networking.

Section C: The Prospects Gained by Malaysia by Involving in The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)

Question 1: Can you categorise the political security activities within AIPA?

Noted answers:

- Don't know whether can categorise it.
- Small side meetings, a lot of knowledge sharing. To categorise, wouldn't able to.

Additional Question: Can we consider AIFOCOM part of political-security activity?

Noted response:

- Okay

Additional Question: How about AIPA-Caucus, ASEAN-AIPA Interface

Noted answers:

- Interface, where heads of government of ASEAN meet people leaders
- Exchange of various issue. Not only political-security.
- AIPA Caucus totally different. Follow up on resolutions, previous years.
- Divided into four to five committees under AIPA not only political security.

Question 2: Are there any particular political-security issues that Malaysia prioritizes within AIPA discussions?

i. If yes, How AIPA help Malaysia resolve these issues?
ii. Can you provide examples of successful collaboration or initiatives?
iii. Are there any underexplored areas where Malaysia could make significant contributions?

Noted answers:

- Myanmar issue, the Rohingya issue.
- But guided by Wisma Putra. If they say should bring up, then we bring up.

Additional Question: How about South China Sea issue?

Noted answers:

- Yes, but. Can only be discussed if all 10 members agree.
- Matter of consensus.

Question 3: Based on your experience what are the key prospects Malaysia has gained from 2009 until 2018?

Noted answers:

- Hosted the conference 2015. Malaysia was AIPA chair and ASEAN.
- Very big recognition.
- Hosted a few smaller meetings.

Additional Question: How could this benefit us?

Noted answers:

- Malaysia recognised
- We host, bring up matters. Our Foreign policy wants.
- AIPA Caucus few years ago. YB brought about Carbon Footprint.
- Not discussed widely, so brought attraction.

Question 4: From your point of view, do you agree that Malaysia's involvement in AIPA serves the concept of Parliamentary Diplomacy as below:

i. Complementary to traditional diplomacy.
ii. Institutionalisation.
iii. Exchange of knowledge.

Noted answers:

- Totally agree.
- Very different from traditional diplomacy.
- Not bound by what the executives are.
- More liberty.
- Allows to address informal matters in a private setting.

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Interviewee	**: Expert 7 (Research Officer, Research Division)**
Interview Date	**: 16 August 2024**
Interview Time	**: 11:04 a.m. – 11:46 a.m.**
Place of Interview	**: Google Meet (Online)**

Section A: Demography and Experience of the Experts

Question 1: How would you describe your experience with Malaysia and AIPA Parliamentary Diplomacy?

Noted answers:

- Involved in 2015. We were host country.
- Preparation started in 2014.
- Substantive committee preparing report and input for MPs.
- AIPA Workshops 2019.

Question 2: How do you define Malaysia's parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA?

Noted answers:

- Very participative in all workshops.
- MPs very responsive, they'll speak whenever they have opportunity.
- MPs appointed as leaders of group. Presenting outcomes.
- Look high on Malaysia.

Question 3: What are Malaysia's objectives in parliamentary diplomacy within AIPA?

Noted answers:

- To strengthen our collaborations with other members.
- To learn best practices from other states.
- To share idea and good practices.
- Collaboration. To resolve that we need to resolve.

Section B: The Challenges Faced by Malaysia in Involving in The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)

Question 1: How does the Parliament of Malaysia engage with the AIPA, and are there any specific guidelines or frameworks, that govern this engagement?

Noted answers:

- *Ya, ada.* AIPA itself *ada* Statute.
-

English translation: Yes, there is. AIPA itself has a Statute.

Question 2: Can you explain the executive body's influence on Malaysia-AIPA parliamentary relations between 2009 and 2018?

Noted answers:

- Separation of powers between executive body and legislative body.
- *Pergi* attend any AIPA meeting, try to get some input in terms of policy.
- Resolutions, *kita hantar untuk* their consent.

English translation:

- When attending any AIPA meeting, try to get some input in terms of policy.
- Resolutions, we send them for their consent.

Question 3: What factors limit Malaysia from implementing the resolution from AIPA?

Noted answers:

- *Ada banyak* resolutions.
- Some of the factors may be financial.
- Culture, practice *kita berbeza dengan* other ASEAN countries.
- Preparedness to change.
- Some of resolutions, *kita tak bersedia lakukan. Contohnya,* knowledge, *budaya,* practice, *kewangan.*

English translation:

- There are many resolutions.
- Our culture and practices are different from other ASEAN countries.
- For some resolutions, we are not ready to implement them. For example, in terms of knowledge, our culture, and our practices, financial.

Additional Questions: *Semasa engaged dengan AIPA Malaysia aktif tak sponsor resolutions?*

Noted answers:

- *Aktif.* Every year we will sponsor resolutions.

English translation:
Question: When engaging with AIPA, is Malaysia active in sponsoring resolutions?
Answer: Active. Every year we will sponsor resolutions.

Question 4: From your perspective, what are Malaysia's key challenges in actively participating in AIPA-Parliamentary Diplomacy?

Noted answers:

- *Tak banyak pun. Sebab* we always participate.

English translation:

- Not that many. Because we always participate.

Additional Question: *Dari segi non-binding rule tahun-tahun sebelum?*
Noted answers:

- *Isu berkaitan Rohingya*
- *Kita memang* reserve

English translation:
Question: In terms of the non-binding rule in the previous years?
Answers:

- Issues related to the Rohingya.
- We are indeed reserved about it.

Question 5: Based on your opinion, why the AIPA-Malaysia Parliamentary Diplomacy topic is under-researched?
Noted answers:

- *Bukan semua tahu* existence of AIPA. Roles of AIPA
- Potential of AIPA to strengthen or unite whole member states not everyone acknowledges.

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English translation:

- Not everyone knows the existence of AIPA. The roles of AIPA.

Additional Questions: Kalau public atau academicians, akan ada apa-apa kesan?

Noted answers:

- *Banyak* publication is good.
- *Kita tahu* loopholes and how to overcome it.

English translation:
Question: If it's for the public or academicians, would there be any impact?
Answers:

- Many publications are good.
- We know the loopholes and how to overcome them.

Section C: The Prospects Gained by Malaysia by Involving in The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)

Question 1: Can you categorise the political security activities within AIPA?

Noted answers:

- Joint a workshop organised by United Nations collaborate with AIPA.
- Women, Peace and Security.
- Encourage more women participation in security issue.

Question 2: Are there any particular political-security issues that Malaysia prioritizes within AIPA discussions?

i. If yes, How AIPA help Malaysia resolve these issues?
ii. Can you provide examples of successful collaboration or initiatives?
iii. Are there any underexplored areas where Malaysia could make significant contributions?

Noted answers:

- South China Sea.
- Myanmar issue.
- Rohingya.

Question 3: Based on your experience what are the key prospects Malaysia has gained from 2009 until 2018?

Noted answers:

- *Banyak, dari segi* training, staf development, work-shops.
- Not only for parliamentarians, also for staff.
- Training *dari segi penyediaan* resolutions.

English translation:

- A lot, in terms of training, staff development, and workshops.
- Training in terms of preparing resolutions.

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Question 4: From your point of view, do you agree that Malaysia's involvement in AIPA serves the concept of Parliamentary Diplomacy as below:

i. Complementary to traditional diplomacy.
ii. Institutionalisation.
iii. Exchange of knowledge.

Noted answers:

- Fulfill.
- Traditional Diplomacy, they look very high upon the participants from Malaysia.
- *Banyak* resolution *kita* sponsor.
- Institutionalisation, yes, network collaborate.
- Exchange of knowledge: Throughout workshop and forums, conference.
- *Dari segi pelarian Myanmar, Rohingya*

English translation:

- We sponsor many resolutions.
- In terms of Myanmar refugees, Rohingya.

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Appendix F
Photographs of the Experts receiving Appreciation Frames

Photographs of each Expert receiving an appreciation frame in recognition of their contribution to this research. To protect the Experts' privacy, the images were zoomed and cropped to display only the frame at the moment it was presented.



Expert 1



Expert 2



Expert 3



Expert 4



Expert 5



Expert 6



Expert 7

Expert 7 receiving the Appreciation Frame during the researcher's field visit to the Parliament of Malaysia (interview conducted on 16 August 2024).



Appreciation frame design template presented to the Experts

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