

For fresh fruit and vegetable marketing and distribution in Asia



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## APAC parliaments foster growth

Members of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum have met to discuss furthering trade development in the region



**B**etter economic integration is a key focus for members of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) who gathered for their 26<sup>th</sup> annual meeting (APPF-26) on 19 January.

Vietnamnet reported that Vietnamese delegation proposed the implementation of innovative practices like streamlining customs procedures, reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers, as well as improving the business climate in each member's economy.

Canadian delegation pushed for public investment and policies that help create public-private partnerships through better trade agreements, infrastructure, logistics, digitisation, innovation, education and skills-training.

They also encouraged member states to ratify the World Trade Organisation's Trade Facilitation Agreement for those who hadn't done so.

The fostering of micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs) was a strong focal point, solidified by recent economic success in the area for Asia Pacific (APAC) countries. This will continue to be a concentration, alongside the strengthening of economic integration.

The APPF-26 final resolution on promoting economic growth and free trade called upon member states to implement the APEC Action Agenda on Advancing Economic, Financial and Social Inclusion, which aims to build a more inclusive, accessible and sustainable Asia Pacific community which shares the benefits of free trade.

The resolution also encouraged the fostering of MSMEs to engage in deeper global value chains in the digital era.

The final resolution on the role of parliaments in promoting seamless

regional economic integration, supported the establishment of the Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific which could be fostered via pathways including the [Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership](#), the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, the Pacific Alliance and FTAs between trading partners.

Member countries of the APPF include Australia, Cambodia, Canada, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Chile, China, Colombia, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Federated States of Micronesia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Thailand, the US, and Vietnam.