

## **REGIONAL COOPERATION: MAKING IT HAPPEN**

### **NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF PAKISTAN**

May I begin by thanking all of you, and specially the Librarian of the Australian Parliament for the immense pain taken in organising this Conference, and the warm hospitality all of us have received in Canberra. We all know that a number of librarians from parliaments of the Asia and Pacific region are meeting here to discuss their problems and to find ways and means of cooperation so that this conference becomes successful.

Library cooperation basically means the sharing of resources and information of a library and making them available to the users of other libraries and their readers. Cooperation amongst the libraries of the developing countries

is, therefore, essential not only because of limited resources but also because of our common interests.

It was in view these common interests and problems faced by the libraries especially of the Asia-Pacific region, that the APLAP in its Constitution passed in May, 1990 during the first Conference at Seoul, provided for co-operation in the following manner and I quote Article 2(1):

"Encourage understanding of, and cooperation between parliamentary libraries and research and information services attached to the National and State/provincial legislatures in the region."

We must bear in mind that the importance of Asia and the Pacific region in world affairs is becoming increasingly obvious. Unfortunately however the countries in this region have not yet succeeded in mutual cooperation and

understanding as is ~~done~~ <sup>done</sup> in countries in the West. This has to  
be ~~imposed~~ <sup>Corrected</sup> if possible. I hope and believe that the Canberra  
conference will go a long way in contributing to our mutual  
cooperation.

No library, however resourceful it may be, can hope to be comprehensive and self-sufficient at any time. Even the library of Congress, the world's biggest library, is not self sufficient. For many reasons, no library can have all the literature which may be in demand by its users. The advancement of knowledge and explosion of printed material have made it impossible for any library to conceive of itself as being self-dependent and self-subsisting. There has been a tremendous increase in scientific and technical knowledge during the last few decades, so much so that the phenomenon has been termed as "knowledge explosion". As such it is increasingly becoming difficult for a library, however

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**large its resources may be, to acquire and maintain all reading materials to satisfy the needs of the readers. The modern concepts of librarianship stresses not on the volume of literature in a library but on the speed with which the library serves and disseminates knowledge.**

**A parliament's prime function is to legislate i.e. passing of bills for the betterment of the country that is why we the Parliamentary Librarians have a heavy responsibility. In Asia and Pacific region, we must enlarge and mature our services to our parliamentarians. For this we need to gain more budget allocations and require other domestic efforts and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. This will also contribute to the mutual understanding among nations of this region.**

Information is shared quite often among different parliaments through the publications and also international Associations like the IPU, CPA, Association of Speakers and Members of parliament of SAARC countries, IFLA and APLAP. They can also play a very significant and vital role in exchanging mutually beneficial information. Visits of parliamentary delegations and international parliamentary conferences and seminars organized in various parts of the world constitute very useful method for exchange of information on subjects of mutual interest.

Technological revolution in the field of communication has accelerated the speed of transportation of words and images. Advanced computerization, imaging, audio-visual media, E-Mail and Inter-net has a direct impact on information resulting in increased cooperation among parliamentary libraries. Information grows every day. We are fortunate that

tools of dissemination of information have equally increased: there are telephones and fax and now we have the internet. My library is now on the internet, the number of which is assembly @ paknet 1.ptc.pk. We could find out about the recent acquisitions of books acquired by a member country. For instance I can say that we have about 500 books in our library on Australia. Speaking on this theme I would suggest that lists of recent acquisitions in Parliamentary Libraries too, may be put on the internet.

In order to enrich the information resources in the parliaments of Asia and Pacific region, most of the parliamentary libraries in this region have conducted the publication exchange program.

Apart from the regular giving and taking of parliamentary documents, we also exchange among members countries of

APLAP information pertaining to rules, rulings of the chair, legislation and on other specific points and issues from time to time. The National Assembly Library has exchange relations with the parliamentary libraries of Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Germany, India, Japan, South Korea, Sri Lanka, U.K. and U.S.A. It needs support from APLAP in the field of training of our staff through projects like attachments, assistance in undertaking courses etc. I am sure that this cooperation will foster a long term relationship among libraries within this region.

Thank you

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