

Welcoming Remarks

11th Association of Parliamentary Librarians of Asia and the Pacific Conference
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I would like to begin by acknowledging:

- the Honourable Shim Jae Cheol, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea
- Doctor Lee Eun Chul, Chief Librarian of the National Assembly Library
- Anna Lee, the International Program Officer here at the National Assembly Library, and
- the Conference Organising Committee.

This conference marks a successful and welcome return to Korea. Under the early leadership of the National Assembly Library and its Director, Mr Kim Joo Bong, APLAP was established as an organisation on the tenth of May 1990 during the first biennial conference of Parliamentary Librarians of the Asia-Pacific region.

I would like to reflect on the welcoming address given at that conference by Mr Kim Jae Soon who was Speaker of the National Assembly at the time. Mr Kim spoke about the dramatic changes and upheavals in world affairs in the early 1990s. He noted the trend towards democratisation and liberalisation and the steadfast efforts of countries across the Asia-Pacific region to develop and strengthen their parliamentary democracies. He welcomed the dawning equality between nations. He also wisely identified the central role of parliamentary libraries and research services in enriching parliamentary democracies, and the importance of bringing our diversity in harmony to these meetings.

Seventeen years after APLAP was established, Mr Kim's insights have stood the test of time. We return to Korea with many achievements upon which to reflect. We are a strong organisation with a diverse membership of institutions from countries across Asia and the Pacific: a huge swathe of the world. We are a group of dedicated individuals who come together, in the spirit of cooperation, to share our experiences and learn from each other.

Indeed, we have stayed true to our founding principles: that the organisation would encourage understanding and cooperation between parliamentary libraries and research services serving legislatures across Asia and the Pacific. To this end, our conferences are an essential part of fulfilling this purpose.

Through our discussions here this week, we will develop ideas, methods, and techniques that will help us improve our services to our legislatures. We will gain a better understanding of our diverse roles. We will be empowered to learn from each other and to share our innovations and challenges. And, we will advance the cause of parliamentary librarianship. I'm sure you'll agree this is a wonderful purpose to fulfil.

In the spirit of reflecting upon our origins, it is interesting to note the first APLAP pre-conference workshop, hosted by the Legislative Yuan of the Republic of China, examined the role of computers in parliamentary libraries and research services. Today, we're discussing the continuing challenges and opportunities presented by technology; in this case, by big data. This is a significant issue for us, and I'm looking forward to hearing how parliamentary libraries and research services are addressing its emergence.

In closing, I would like to welcome you all, friends from across Asia and the Pacific, and perhaps further. I am very much looking forward to re-connecting with old acquaintances, renewing friendships, and meeting new colleagues. And, engaging in the spirit of cooperation and learning.