

ADDRESSBYSECRETARY GENERAL, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

on the occasion of the opening session of the 2nd Biennial Conference of Parliamentary Librarians of the Asia-Pacific Region held at Islamabad from 9th to 12th May, 1992.

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- His Excellency Mr. Gohar Ayub Khan, Speaker, National Assembly of Pakistan,
 - Hon. Deputy Speaker,
 - Mr. Joobong Kim, President, Association of Parliamentary Librarians of Asia-Pacific (APLAP),
 - Distinguished participants,
 - Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners,
 - Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my privilege this morning to welcome distinguished participants of the 2nd Biennial Conference of Parliamentary Librarians who have accepted our invitation and travelled all the way to Islamabad. We are also grateful to the Parliaments of Australia, Bangladesh,

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Cook Islands, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Western Samoa who have spared ~~the~~ key personnel to participate in the Conference.

2. It is indeed very encouraging to note that Pacific countries have shown a special interest in attending this Conference in Islamabad. The exotic beauty of these countries is legendary and in the recent years many countries of the region have set new records of development and changing the future of their people. Formation of the Association of the Parliamentary Librarians of Asia-Pacific Region was certainly a very auspicious step. Asia-Pacific Region is destined to play an increasingly important role in the world affairs. Pooling of the resources of the countries of this region would enable them to open new avenues for cooperation in many areas. Exchange of knowledge is one such crucial area in which most appropriately custodians of the Legislative Libraries have taken the lead. We are looking forward to increasing our inter-action in many more areas.

3. The very presence of Ms. Jane Ann Lindley gives me a special confidence that this Conference will achieve its desired objectives. Although Jane is no longer based in Pakistan, we in Pakistan have always considered her as one of us.

4. I must also acknowledge here the good work done by Asia Foundation in the improvement of Legislative Research and Reference facilities in this region. Our inter-action with the Foundation over the years has been most beneficial.

5. The theme selected for this Conference is exceptionally appropriate and relevant to the current trends. Concepts of "Research and Information support to Legislatures" are under-going a rapid change. The Librarian who was once considered as the custodian of knowledge is now viewed as a custodian, a communicator and an educator. More than anything it is the growing technological potential which has redefined the role of the Librarian. But along with technological change we find that increasingly large quantities of information are

being made available. The onslaught of information is so incessant that Librarian is even being defined as the filter interposed between man and the torrent of books and other sources of information. Given this scenario packaging and presentation of information has become a specialized undertaking.

6. Effective institutional support which can be made available for legislative and representational work through analysis, research and information has over the years assumed new significance. We need to develop systems which ensure that legislative relevance and appropriateness of the available information is determined with due regard to timeliness and the information reaches the legislators with clarity and non-partisan balance. Only if these objectives are achieved, the available information will have the desired effect of facilitating legislative action. I am sure that with your expertise and diverse backgrounds you will apply your collective wisdom to developing new concepts and ideas for improving the support which can be made available to legislatures through research and information. I would

like to utilize this opportunity to propose that the talent and expertise so fortunately assembled here may focus on Research and Reference facilities being developed in the Parliament of Pakistan and favour us with specific advice for further improvement.

7. Since 1985 successive Speakers of the National Assembly of Pakistan have paid special attention to the information needs of the Members of Parliament. His Excellency Speaker, Mr. Gohar Ayub Khan, has since assumption of Office, emphasized development of an adequate infrastructure which will enable our legislators to discharge their responsibilities in the best possible manner. He has as such a special interest in developing the very areas on which your Conference focuses. His personal involvement in the matter has been a source of inspiration and encouragement for legislative staff involved in up-grading the available facilities.

8. Before inviting His Excellency Mr. Gohar Ayub Khan to deliver his inaugural address, I wish to introduce Mr. Joobong Kim, the President of Association of Parliamentary Librarians of Asia-Pacific whose guidance we have sought every step in organizing this Conference. Would I request him to say a few words.