



THE THIRD BIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF
THE ASSOCIATION OF PARLIAMENTARY
LIBRARIANS OF ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
MAY 9-12, 1994. BANGKOK, THAILAND.

**RESOURCES AND INFORMATION
SHARING OF LEGISLATION**

BY

MS. LILY TIKI

Papua New Guinea National Parliament

MAY, 1994

ASSOCIATION OF PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARIANS IN THE ASIA PACIFIC
3RD BIENNIAL CONFERENCE
BANGKOK, THAILAND, 9 - 12 MAY, 1994.

RESOURCES AND INFORMATION SHARING OF LEGISLATION

Parliament's prime function is to legislate, i.e. composing and passing of legislation for the betterment of the country. Amongst the three arms of government, the most important is the Legislature because it lays down the basic principles which the Executive has to apply in the implementation of laws, while the Judiciary ensures that the Executive and the Legislature have acted in accordance with the legislations prevailing. Therefore, a legislation to be effective must be well researched, in most cases prior to the drafting of the final draft of such a legislation. In the drafting of legislation, information is sought in framing its foundations, through interviews with professionals on that subject matter or through legislative materials.

Our topic 'resources and information sharing of legislation' is of vital and beneficial importance to a Parliament both in a professional and economic sense. In the professional sense this sharing enables the researcher whether it be the parliamentarian or the legislative draftsman, comparable reference material which is readily available. In regards to the economics, due to the astronomical/soaring prices of acquiring materials today we have to curtail our spending, thus the only logical solution would be to share. In this case legislation, which is made and passed by Parliament and which is readily available to us for disposal, is an answer.

Through the support services of Parliament in cooperation with other Parliaments services and resources this sharing enables a free exchange of ideas which are in relation to long-term policy development projects which cover studies intended to find solutions to persistent problems facing individual countries. The result of these projects is legislative action, usually in the form of bills.

Resources Sharing

In this context resources encompasses both the human resources and the library's existing physical resources.

Human resources of a Parliament covers the Parliamentarians and all the support staff which include all the Parliament staff and the Member of Parliament's research staff. In this case the support staff being the legislative draftsman, parliamentary lawyers and research staff and the Library. Sharing of these resources through the exchange or attachments

of legal and research staff, or through inter-parliamentary tours where staff may:

- a. study the legislative process of a bill
- b. exchange ideas and learn about legislative reforms and development. How particular legislation came to be, its implementation and its effect, i.e. to ascertain whether the law is implemented according to what it was originally intended to do.
- c. study the mechanics of inhouse files on legislation, i.e. keeping your own track records of a bill, whether manually or by machine (computer). We need the assistance of staff whose Institution has tackled and overcome this problem and have access to such a system to help us develop such systems.

The existing physical resources are controlled by funds and space. For some of us libraries with small budgets, the sharing (implicates an exchange) could well become a drain on our resources which are very limited, that we may not be able to satisfy the exchange agreement. This requires multiple photocopying, which = reams of paper, which = postage charges, which = lots of money. Alternatively if there is a pooling of resources to form one common central base for depositing of legislative material, it will be much easier, which means the contribution of only one issue and not multiple sets. Ofcourse the burden will have to be shouldered by a bigger, well funded Institution.

Space must be considered too. With all the numerous legislation enacted the big proportion is never/seldom sought which only take up space on the shelves, e.g. Eastern Laws to Western Laws. With a grouping such as APLAP we are influenced by both laws on either side. On the one hand it may complement the collection, otherwise space is precious.

Information Sharing

Parliament must be informed on matters affecting a country on the community (provincial & national) and international level. When we talk about information sharing it may mean:

1. information shared/discussed between Librarians when inquiring about legislation, thus seeking a copy of the legislation, or an explanation or advice on it, or
2. a collection of foreign legislation acquired through an exchange agreement as part of the library's collection.

Whatever it may be, it is of greatest assistance to the persons involved in the making and drafting of laws or simply researching a legislation. In any event this readily

available information provides for the basis of his work. The availability of this information within his reach considerably lessens the workload and research involved.

If space is not an hindrance, then selectiveness is really not a problem between Eastern Laws and Western laws. In fact they complement each other (as mentioned earlier) and is very helpful/useful when the need arises for comparison of legislation.

.....

My idea of resources and information sharing would be entirely on co-operation and obligation and not an exchange agreement as described in the major part of my paper, although I would pursue some remarks as outlined in the human resources. With the use of telephone and facsimile, information may be accessed almost immediately. The cost of using these machines outweighs the cost of photocopying and posting exchange materials. It would be economically rational where resources are scarce and information acquired and given when circumstances arise. Otherwise the pooling of resources would be ideal, where we all contribute to one common legislative resource centre and in return are obliged to use the services when the need arises.

.....

Having said all these, and mindful of the fact that the world is getting smaller, the impact of new technology will draw us closer together with sharing all this information on diskettes.

This sharing of resources and information will foster long term relationships between libraries within the region, thus allowing for easy access to information that may not be available in a particular library.

LILY TIKI,
LIBRARIAN,
PAPUA NEW GUINEA NATIONAL PARLIAMENT

3 May 1994.