

The role and responsibility of the Asean press

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The Role And Responsibility Of The Asean Press

CONSULTATION ON PRESS SYSTEMS IN ASEAN
JAKARTA

Topic : The Role and Responsibility of the Asean Press

Session : 14.45 - 16.00 hours, August 24, 1988

Chairman : Dr Boonlert Supadhiloke

Discussion

A Malaysian delegate suggested the conference examine ways on how the press in the ASEAN countries can help and work with each other because the ASEAN press still depends mainly on Western wire services for stories about ASEAN countries.

ASEAN stories, carried by the Western press, are mostly negative. The Western press does not touch development activities in the ASEAN press.

An Indonesian delegate commented that since the first ASEAN Editors Meeting in Manila four years ago the ASEAN press has often discussed using more ASEAN stories written by ASEAN journalists. However, ASEAN mass media still prefer Western wire services because stories carried by the ANEX network are often too late.

Even so, ASEAN journalists actually should develop a conducive attitude towards ASEAN stories written by ASEAN journalists.

Now, after four years, the attitude of the ASEAN journalists has not changed. The Confederation of ASEAN Journalists also has established a code of ethics designed to enhance the regional entity.

The Jakarta Declaration of the Non-aligned Movement on the

attitude towards news written by journalists from the Third World also has remained a paper document without implementation.

The ASEAN press also should pay attention to the killing of journalists, for example as those reported in Thailand and the Philippines. Thus ASEAN should develop solidarity against the threat upon journalism.

Concrete action is needed. Otherwise, ASEAN journalists will only go from one seminar to another discussing the same issues without any concrete results.

What is needed is positive attitude on the part of ASEAN journalists towards news stories written by ASEAN journalists.

A Singapore delegate expressed the view that the Asean press have an excuse to depend on the big four (news agencies), because the Asean press themselves cannot fulfill the need for the news on the region. We have CAJ and ANEX but their activities are still small. How do we establish a working news agency?

To the questions raised by Singapore delegate, an Indonesian delegate stated that in the coming December, Asean Information Ministers will meet, and these issues will be discussed at the highest level. And from this consultation we can give recommendations for that meeting.

A Philippine delegate commented that if we report in depth, especially on economic and trade, of an Asean country there might be no negative consequence. But, if we report in detail on political aspect, the impact could hamper the relationship.

A Malaysian delegate proposed a reordering of the priorities of the Role of the Press;

1. to support the development;

2. promote the integration of the nation/people;
3. mould the national identity;
4. explain public issues;
5. create an atmosphere for better living;
6. keep the people informed and educated.

To the 6 points of the Press Role suggested by Malaysia, an Indonesian delegate agreed to the idea, but in practice they are not so simple to implement. He suggested using "dialogue" as one instrument to present argument, and different argument should be tolerated. But we are still in the process of making the system and it would be counter-productive to our common goal of development.

Another Indonesian delegate said that the practice of dialogue with chief editors so far has been useful and helpful, and the 6 points of the Role of the Press, he said, have been built into the Indonesian political system.