

AMIC-DEPPEN Seminar on the Socio-economic
Impact of Broadcast Satellites in the Asia-Pacific
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address]

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Welcome Address

By

Vijay Menon

WELCOME ADDRESS AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE DEPPEN-AMIC SEMINAR ON
"THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF BROADCAST SATELLITES", JAKARTA,
INDONESIA, JULY 27-29, 1990

I am glad to welcome all of you, on behalf of AMIC, to this regional seminar on "The Socio-Economic Impact of Broadcast Satellites in the Asia-Pacific".

The topic is timely and the venue is most appropriate. Above all, it is a matter for satisfaction that we have with us the Minister of Information, H.E. Mr. Harmoko, who truly "inspired" us to hold this meeting.

Satellite technology has stirred a revolution as it has swept across the world altering the lives of millions of people. By overcoming the barriers of climate and geography, satellite have propelled the countries of the Asia-Pacific into the space age, helping them to leap-frog technological gaps in reaching the message of development to their poorest and remotest citizens. There is no finer example of this than Indonesia, which recognised the promise and harnessed the potential of satellite technology when many in the region and outside doubted the wisdom of its decision.

Today, satellites are helping communication and commerce, education and entertainment. Media and telecommunications, health and nutrition, banking and business, have all benefited from satellite communication. But as with all new advances in technology, there is an element of debate and controversy as

narrow interests seek to exploit the potential for power and profit in preference to the general good.

Korea is an example. The number of parabolic antennas in South Korea was expected to reach 150,000 by the beginning of 1990. But this was not viewed as a blessing, or even as a sign of progress. Journalism professors have been filling local newspapers with letters denouncing the impact of foreign TV on Korean society. Foreign programmes, they feel are making viewers in Korea adopt to alien ways of thinking, life and customs and deepening the dependency of Korea on alien culture.

But the problem is not confined to Asia. It extends to Europe and North America. Even the European Community has announced plans to set a quota for non-European producers of television programmes, notably productions from America.

Today, and over the next two days, this seminar will discuss various aspects of the impact of broadcast satellites - education, national development, rural development, traditional values, society and culture. We are grateful to DEPPEN for making this meeting possible, to our participants for responding to our requests, often at short notice, and to The Asia Foundation for its generous assistance. Above all, we are grateful to the Honourable Minister for his invaluable interest and support. We are confident that this seminar will be as productive as our seminar on Satellite Technology held in 1984 which was also initiated on a suggestion by His Excellency.

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In the final analysis, the success of a seminar may be measured by the contribution it makes to the existing body of knowledge. We seek to your active involvement and participation so that these three days are truly productive and we can look back on a successful seminar.

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Mr. Vijay Menon
Secretary General of
AMIC - SINGAPORE