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Seminar on Media and Human Rights Reporting
on Asia's Rural Poor : November 24-26, 1999,
Bangkok : [programme]

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Paper No. 1

**Seminar on Media and Human Rights
November 24-26, 1999
Bangkok, Thailand**

PROGRAMME

About AMIC

The Asian Media Information and Communication Center (AMIC) is a major resource for communicators in the Asia-Pacific. It serves as a clearing house of information, an initiator and implementor of research activities, a publishing house specializing in communication issues and a focal point for communication scholars and practitioners to exchange ideas and experiences, as well as to plan and work for the future.

AMIC, a non-profit, non-governmental foundation, was launched in 1971 with the support of the Government of Singapore and Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung, an independent foundation in the Federal Republic of Germany. It is a membership organization attracting media practitioners and communication specialists and institutions from 48 countries worldwide.

AMIC Library

AMIC acts as a catalyst for effective communication and socio-economic development in the region. It cooperates with governments and national bodies as well as international organizations like UNESCO, which has accorded it the status of "NGO in formal consultative relations with UNESCO," giving it direct access to the world body. AMIC is actively engaged in mass communications documentation, research, training, publishing and mass media project consultancy.

AMIC Publications

As a publishing house specializing in communication, AMIC publishes periodicals, books and selected papers. Some of these are:

- Asian Communication Handbook
- Asian Values in Journalism
- Asian Women in the Information Age
- Communication Development and Human Rights in Asia
- Communications Research in Asia
- Media Education: A Teaching Manual
- Media Monitor in Asia
- Role of Media in a National Crisis
- TV Without Borders

As a research center, AMIC initiates and organizes research projects that contribute to a better understanding of the role of communication in Asian societies. Some of these are:

- Culture and Identity: ethnic Co-Existence in Asia
- The Emerging Culture of Transborder Broadcasting in Asia
- Children in the News: A Study of the Portrayal of Children in the Media
- A comparative Analysis of Telecommunication Policies in Western Europe and South East Asia
- Survey of TV and Video Penetration in Rural Asia

AMIC Seminars & Conferences

As a center for institutional development, AMIC organizes conferences, seminars and workshops on current issues in the field of print, radio and television broadcasting, film, satellite communications and new media. Some of these focus on:

- The Impact of the Multimedia Environment on News papers and Magazines
- Press Freedom and Professional Standards in Asia
- Asian Communications: The next 25 Years
- New Media and Learning Technologies
- Economic Affairs Reporting on TV
- Radio Programming in the Multimedia Age
- Editorial Management for Senior Women Journalists
- Environmental Television Programmes for Children
- Media and Good Governance
- TV Content: The Asian Way
- Media Regulations in New Times

SEMINAR ON MEDIA & HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING ON ASIA'S RURAL POOR

November 24-26, 1999
The Imperial Queen's Park Hotel,
Bangkok, Thailand



with the support of
Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency
World Association for Christian Communication

The impact of the recent financial crisis and deepening poverty in Asia have both predicted and unforeseen consequences in terms of human rights. Massive layoffs, food shortages, continual communal-related violence and abuses linked to armed conflict and civil strife are but a few of these consequences. The rural poor in the region are most vulnerable. They are powerless to safeguard and pursue their human rights due to illiteracy, poverty, exploitation and remoteness. Many have neither knowledge nor awareness of their legal rights. Access to legal remedies is hard to come by, thus their difficulty to protect their rights.

Mass media have a critical role to play in addressing human rights issues that affect the rural poor. It is a difficult role in the context of the Asian concept of human rights of seeking a correct balance between the right of the individual to exercise his free will and the good of the community. By gathering, analyzing and transmitting information using text and audio-visuals, mass media can assist in safeguarding their human rights, educating them about these rights, reporting violations and facilitating legal remedies, and assisting the rural poor assert their human rights.

UNESCO has recognized this vital link between media and human rights in its Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racism, Apartheid and Incitement to War. The UN-attached agency declared that the promotion of human rights demands a free flow and a wider and better balanced dissemination of information, and to this end, mass media have a leading contribution to make.

The proposed conference is a follow-up activity to the AMIC-organized seminar on Communication Development and Human Rights in Asia held in Bangalore, India on May 9-11, 1988. This was supported by the Institute of Social Studies (ISS), Netherlands, Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) and the Nederlandse Organisatie voor Internationale Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (NOVIB)

Objectives

- To increase journalists' awareness and understanding of human rights issues that impact on the rural poor of Asia
- To examine how media practitioners and institutions can meet the challenges and exploit the opportunities arising out of developments on human rights in the region
- To identify guidelines and measures that can assist media in improving coverage of human rights issues affecting the rural poor in Asia
- To provide a forum for knowledge sharing and networking among communication professionals, human rights activists and lawyers and academicians

Who Will Attend?

Senior media practitioners, human rights activists, civil rights attorneys and academicians from 10 Asian countries, namely, Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Format

The three-day conference features country presentations of the state of Media and Human Rights in Asian countries, discussions among participants and resource persons of the various issues involved in media and human rights and the generation of a list of recommendations on how media can effectively assist in human rights.

Tea Break

1030 - 1100

Programme (Venue: Saitip 1, 3rd Floor, South Wing)

Day One

0830 - 0900
0900 - 1030

- Registration
- Opening Ceremony
 - Pradip Ninan Thomas, Director, Studies & Publication, WACC, United Kingdom
 - Sorajak Kasemsuvan, Director General, Mass Communication Organization of Thailand, Thailand
 - Kayoko Mizuta, Deputy Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic & Social Commission for the Asia & the Pacific, Thailand

HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING ON ASIA'S RURAL POOR

- Country Presentation by India
 - P. Sainath, Freelance Journalist, India

Tea Break

1030 - 1100

HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING ON ASIA'S RURAL POOR

- Country Presentation by Malaysia
 - Zaharom Nain, Professor, School of Communication, University Sains Malaysia, Malaysia

COMMUNICATION, GLOBALIZATION & HUMAN RIGHTS

- Rukmanoro Hadi Sumukti, Visiting Research Fellow, Institute of Defense & Strategic Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
- Qazi Faez Isa, Law Partner, RIZVI, ISA & Co., Pakistan

Lunch Break

1245 - 1400

HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING ON ASIA'S RURAL POOR

- Country Presentations by Philippines & Bangladesh
 - Carol Arguillas, Mindanao Bureau Chief, Philippines Daily Inquirer, Philippines
 - Mahfuz Anam, Editor, The Daily Star, Bangladesh

Tea Break

1530 - 1600

HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING ON ASIA'S RURAL POOR

- Country Presentations by Thailand & Nepal
 - Thongbai Thongpao, Columnist, Bangkok Post, Thailand
 - Sangeeta Lama, Correspondent, Himal Magazine, Nepal

Dinner Hosted by the Mass Communication Organization of Thailand

1900-2100

Day Two

0900 - 1030

SAFEGUARDING HUMAN RIGHTS: OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES -- PERSPECTIVES FROM NGO'S & ACADEME

- Jaran Dilapichai, Director, Union of Civil Liberties, Thailand
- Pradip Ninan Thomas, Director, Studies & Publication, WACC, United Kingdom
- Kao Kim Huon, Executive Director, Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace

HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING ON ASIA'S RURAL POOR

Country Presentations by Sri Lanka & Cambodia

- Rajpal Abeynayake, Deputy Editor, The Sunday Times, Sri Lanka
- Ham Samrang, Associate Editor, The Cambodia Daily, Cambodia

SAFEGUARDING HUMAN RIGHTS: OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES -- PERSPECTIVES FROM GOVERNMENT & ACADEME

- Rajindar Sachar, Chief Justice (Retired), India
- Nasser Marhomsalic, Commissioner, National Commission on Human Rights, Philippines

Lunch Break

1530 - 1600

HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING ON ASIA'S RURAL POOR

- Country Presentations by Indonesia
 - Ati Nurbati, Deputy Editor, Opinion Desk, Jakarta Post, Indonesia
 - Maria Hartlingasih, Senior Journalist, Kompas, Indonesia

MEDIA & HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING ON ASIA'S RURAL POOR

- Ravi Velloor, Assistant to Editor, The Straits Times, Singapore

Day Three

0900 - 1030

Group Discussions (cont'd)

Tea Break

1030 - 1100

Presentation/Approval of Agenda of Action

1100 - 1230

Closing Ceremony

1230 - 1245

Lunch

1245