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**Welcome Address**

**by**

**Datuk Haji Dol Ramli**

WELCOME ADDRESS BY DATUK HAJI DOL RAMLI, VICE-CHAIRMAN, ASIAN MASS COMMUNICATION RESEARCH AND INFORMATION CENTRE (AMIC), AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE SEMINAR ON "PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT", KUALA LUMPUR, 30 MARCH - 2 APRIL, 1993.

Chief Guest, Dato Jimin Idris, Deputy Secretary-General, Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you on behalf of AMIC to this Seminar on "Participatory Communication in Environmental Management".

Last year, the United Nations Conference on "Environment and Development", the Earth Summit as it was known, in Rio, focussed the attention of the world on the problem of the environment. The dangers of environmental degradation continue to menace the world and governments and people must be alive to the dangers of complacency and inaction in the face of environmental problems.

According to a study in the mid-eighties, energy consumption was expected to grow 225% at the prevailing use over a period of 40 years. This would mean that two additional Saudi Arabias would be needed to supply enough oil, world coal production would need to triple, three times as many rivers would have to be impounded behind hydro-electric dams, and several large nuclear power plants would have to be built.

The human aspects of the problem are even more alarming. The world population grew from 2.5 billion in 1950 to 5.3 billion in 1970. Demographers predict that by the end of the 21st century, we would have to provide enough resources for 27 billion people.

There are ample signs that governments in Asean are waking up to the dangers of environmental neglect. But a problem of this magnitude cannot be left only to the governments. It is necessary that people should support and supplement the efforts of the government by making sure that they desist from activities that will harm the environment. Non-governmental organisations have a responsibility to sensitize people to the need for protecting the environment.

I am glad to state that for more than a decade now, AMIC has been actively engaged in promoting of environmental awareness through programmes of seminars or workshops. These have been designed to encourage media participation and to improve the skills of media practitioners, not only mass media but also folk and traditional media, which in some countries and in certain situations, can be extremely effective, in building environmental consciousness.

AMIC's programmes since 1980 have sought to develop a core of environmental communicators among print media journalists, broadcasters, audio visual and film practitioners and other media professionals. Workshops have been held not only in Malaysia but also in Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. AMIC's study of the use of traditional or folk media in environmental communication also covered Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand.

For those who are unfamiliar with the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre, I would like to briefly explain that AMIC is a non-profit, non-governmental, mass communication organisation serving Asia from its Secretariat in Singapore. AMIC is supported, among others, by the Government of Singapore and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, an independent foundation in Germany. Equally important and gratifying to us, is the cooperation that we are privileged to receive from so many individuals and institutions.

Last year, AMIC's programme of activities commenced with a seminar on "Environmental Policies and Media Reporting". Support for this seminar was provided by the Canada-Asean Fund. This year again, the Canada-Asean Fund has recognised the importance of this Seminar on "Participatory Communication in Environmental Management" and has provided the funding that has made this meeting possible. We would like to express our appreciation to the Centre and to the Government of Canada for extending their support to us.

We are also grateful to you, Dato Jimin, our Chief Guest, for agreeing to inaugurate this seminar today. This is indicative of the importance that the Government of Malaysia attaches to environmental issues. AMIC has in the past benefitted from the cooperation and assistance extended by the Department of the Environment, the Forest Research Institute and the print and broadcast media in Malaysia. We appreciate the continuing support extended by the government and the media.

We are also thankful to all the participants who have responded to our invitation at fairly short notice. This is a particularly important meeting as it seeks to document case studies, discuss alternative models and strategies for participatory communication and suggest action programmes. I am sure the discussions over the next four days will be fruitful and benefit not only the participating countries but the region as a whole.

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