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<tr>
<th><strong>Title</strong></th>
<th>AMIC-EWCI Conference on Approaches to Communication Planning : Solo, Nov 4-8, 1979 : [keynote address]</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Author(s)</strong></td>
<td>Moertopo, Ali</td>
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</tbody>
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Keynote Address

By

Ali Moertopo
Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour and my privilege to be here today to deliver a key-note address to a regional conference of AMIC and EWCI on Approaches to Communication Planning.

I would like to welcome the participants who have come a long way to Surakarta or Sala as we prefer to call it, for this conference. I hope the serene and quiet atmosphere of the city which is the cultural centre of Java, will contribute to the smooth and successful proceedings of the conference. I also wish the distinguished participants a pleasant, enjoyable and memorable stay in this country.

I am glad that the Conference is to take up as the main subject of discussion the extremely fascinating and increasingly important problem of communication. Indeed I am happy to observe that the role of communication in human affairs has continued over the years to gain wider recognition nationally as well as internationally. This implies that in the more complex nature of the present world situation, greater attention is being paid to human relationships and, as such, to the interaction of human values at national as well as at international level.
In this context, I should say, we are basically concerned with certain aspects of contemporary culture and their implications for cultural relations as a whole.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We live in a world where the trends towards fundamental change have become obvious particularly in the last few years. These trends manifest themselves in certain phenomena of which the following provides outstanding examples:

1. Urban, population, ecological and other problems such as those created as a result of development activities in developing countries, call for new ideas and actions.

2. New developments in science have created changing views of man, of his world and of his society.

3. The most rapid progress of technology does not only create new opportunities for imaginative cooperative activities, but often produces problems relating to human values.

4. The interdependence of peoples have now become an inherent part of all basic problems and, as such, have become an important aspect of the developing life of all nations.

I sum up these phenomena to enable us to indentify what kind of problems lie ahead of us so that we can undertake a search in-depth for new perspectives, for imaginative new concepts and for new approaches to be used by policy and programme planners. We are aware of the fact that, in final analysis they have had a direct bearing on the problem of communication as an important aspect of cultural relations as a whole. How in terms of communication, do we go about handling these changes? What is the contribution that communication can make in responding to the trends of change?

It is .........
It is befitting the occasion indeed, that the Seminar should take as its theme "Approaches to Communication Planning".

For the purpose of my address I think the theme needs qualifying in the light of the frame of reference I have introduced.

Firstly, the target area on which to project the planning will have to be a developing country or developing countries.

Secondly, the orientation will inevitably have to be toward development as a current phenomenon common to developing countries in general.

Apart from these qualifications, I must submit that, in my address, I will have to frequently use models which generally apply in Indonesia. As such, my contribution will basically represent an Indonesian view although I am aware that, as the developing countries have many similar challenges to face, the experiences in Indonesia are mostly applicable in other countries as well.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Within the configuration of the social systems that exist to-day, we ought to identify the place and role of the Communication in the overall efforts of mankind to take up the struggle against backwardness, against poverty, and against disease with a view to improving the standard of living of peoples in the developing countries, and thereby allowing them the opportunity to enhance the quality of their lives.

The changing values and changing relations within the context of the interdependence of peoples referred to earlier, make development communication an inherent part of the social system of any country in very much the same way that, at international level, the Indonesian sub-system is an indivisible part of the global system.
Being an inherent part of a system, be it national or global, communication has the inevitable role of creating the social dynamics — internal as well as external — required to keep the system moving. Communication to a large degree helps the system to respond to the influx of new ideas and new values, and to adjust to change to keep the balance intact.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Talking about social-dynamics, I would like to draw the attention of the distinguished participants to the current development efforts that have been in progress in this country for over a decade. We have now entered the third stage of our Five-Year Development Programme.

The objective of our development is to establish a just and prosperous society in the material as well as in the spiritual sense. We are developing the individual in its totality and the society as a whole.

Translated into day-to-day language, with development we want to increase our output in goods and services and to ensure its equitable distribution among the people. We want to balance material prosperity with spiritual happiness for all the people in our country.

The basic perception of our development is to make the process of humanization work; to ensure the successful outcome of our efforts in terms of enhancing the quality of life of each and every individual, and to avert dehumanization in the process of modernisation and development.

This is the cultural value inherent in our development concept.

This being the case development is something which concerns each and every individual, and the people as a whole.
The success of our development will be determined by the extent to which the society as a whole can be persuaded to move as a system, to climb upward as a system toward greater progress.

We subscribe to the concept that development involves the movement of a social system toward the attainment of higher goals. In this context, the participation of each and every individual, and of the society as a whole, is essential.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In this framework, I posit the social engineering role of communication to be to produce, if not accelerate, the social dynamics within the system, with a view to popularising the twin strategy of bringing about the equitable distribution of the national income (the horizontal strategy) and at the same time of ensuring further growth (the vertical strategy).

The purpose of promoting social engineering is to bring about social participation, social responsibility, real effective power of the government enjoying the trust and the respect of the people, and national stability, the four main elements which should ensure the success of development.

This, to my mind, is the comprehensive nature of our development process which, if consistently upheld, would promote and at the same time preserve the balance and harmony between temporal and eternal life, between material and spiritual gains, and between the virtues of man as an economic, and at the same time as a cultural being.

I would like to underline the importance of social participation with social responsibility as its concomittent byproduct of social behaviour.

In my ......
In my opinion, social participation presupposes the enthusiastic and wholehearted involvement of the general public in development activities.

Here the public are motivated to contribute their share in development and, as a matter of course, are willing to take responsibility for its success.

From the point of view of communication, motivation is the biggest factor in ensuring the success of development as it can generate support from the grass roots. In this light, communication will thus have to be a two-way traffic, rather than a one-way traffic process. We know from experience that communication to be effective must be "earned" rather than imposed.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I need not dwell into the details of how motivation is to be brought about; this is for professional planners to work out. Suffice it to say that motivation provides the backbone of communication support for the attainment of our development goals including the increase in output of the agricultural, mining, and industry, and the maritime sectors. In the social sectors including health-services, education, family planning and transmigration, motivation is also of the utmost importance from the point of view of communication support.

There is another point I wish to raise in connection with the problem of communication support.

In the context of social engineering in Indonesia, the social dynamics which, as I mentioned, is a requisite to social progress, should remain observant of the ethical rules and the moral values of the Pancasila, the philosophical basis of the nation. Such values as nationalism, national identity and freedom with responsibility not only provide the resources for motivation, but in themselves they .........
they provide the national characteristics that colours every aspect of development in my country.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have given an outline of the nature, the role and the place of communication in human relations. I have dealt with certain aspects of the problem of communication in support of development. I have described the Indonesian setting from which certain models may be derived to suit the needs of communication support.

I am now going to deal with the system of communication, designed to give support to the process of development.

I am fully aware of the large number of communication resources available which are directly required and used in the process of communication. These include the satellites, the mass-media, the social institutions, the cultural institutions, and so on. These resources should combine to operate in a system if we want to give the maximum communication support possible to development.

For the purpose of this conference, however I would like to devote my attention primarily to the mass-media as one of the most important communication resources in society. Without playing down the equally important role of the other communication resources available I submit that the role of the mass-media in development support is very important indeed.

Here the changing perception of the community has increased this very role of the mass-media to proportions as yet unknown to us.

The emergence of such problems as human rights, the right of ex-colonized people to become independent and to determine their own destinies, have added increased weight to the mass-media as an instrument for social engineering.

For. ....
For every people and nation, in particular the emerging ones, the mass media is important.

In general, the mass media display the strong colours of nationalism in the history of their existence.

The position of the mass media in Indonesia is no exception to this common rule.

Their existence has always been closely associated with the independence struggle of their country. The contribution in particular of the press, the radio stations, the films, and the traditional communication media to the protracted struggle of the people to gain independence and to defend this newly found value of freedom has been most striking indeed.

Having fulfilled their mission to support the people's struggle for independence, the mass media are now called upon to sustain the progress of development with a view to giving substance to the newly built edifice which we call the Republic of Indonesia.

From past experiences we have gathered valuable material on the position of the mass-media in development support.

I must admit that, the Indonesian setting in which the mass media operate, is indeed unique. Indonesia is an archipelagic state covering an area as vast as that of the United States of America. When superimposed on the map of Europe, the distance between the western and the eastern tip of this country extends over an area as stretched out as the distance between London and Teheran.

The 140 million people living in our country are in a sense heterogeneous, although generally the sense of nationhood, the sense of unity, has definitely been very well consolidated. There are more than 300 languages spoken, although the national and official language of the state, the Bahasa Indonesia, has been accepted in fact as well as in practice.
Each of the languages has its own dialects which, in all, run into another hundreds of them.

Each of the many population groups observe their own customs and traditions while the degree of the intellectual capacity of the groups varies from group to group and from place to place. The Indonesia territory is made up of thousands of islands and islets spread over the archipelago, and linked one with the other by the territorial waters and the territorial seas in between them.

Within this setting communication has been rendered the more difficult by the relative lack of adequate, inter-island transport facilities.

Under the circumstances, the success of communication in support of development is basically dependent on three factors: the social perception of communication, the system of communication, and the media infrastructure.

I have had a unique experience in the country-side about the reception of our television broadcasts by members of the rural public. In my tour of the provinces, I was surprised to discover that several members of the rural public tended to switch off the television set at the start of every news broadcast. When I asked for the reason I got the answer to the effect that the viewers concerned could not bear the sight of one and the same man (obviously the news caster) appearing on TV at exactly the same times every day.

This is one example to show how different sometimes one's perception is with regard to news broadcast on TV. For some people it is what he sees that matters most, not the messages which are broadcast.

In Jakarta, for instance, a newspaper printed on an old-fashioned hot metal printing machine, will not sell no matter how skilful the editorial section is done. The people in Jakarta have got used to finer quality printing of newspapers on offset machines.
In a given system of communication, the communicative effect of a medium or communication resource however up-to-date or ultra-modern the infra-structure, will get completely lost in an environment where even the idea of mass-media has not yet taken hold in the minds of the public. In several isolated parts of this country sugar and tobacco serve as a better communication media than anything produced by even the most sophisticated device such as satellites and television.

It is for this reason, in addition to the previously described geophysical structure of the country that, the communication media of all generations do co-exist here, from the most primitive ones to the most sophisticated.

The point I wish to raise in this context is that, in communication planning, in order to produce the maximum effect, the kind of media to be used for development support in a given system of communication should be carefully selected to suit the needs of the occasion.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to serve notice on the distinguished participants that, in building a system of mass-communication, Indonesia has begun entering the period of modernisation.

The conditions in this country, with some exceptions in a few, usually isolated localities, have allowed us to start modernising the infra-structure as well as the system of communication.

The modernisation of the infra-structure includes the expansion as well as the updating of the television and radio networks, and the modernisation of printing press facilities.

The capacity of the public to absorb modernisation is shown by the rapid increase over the past few years in the sales of TV sets and transistor radios.

There. ....
There are now 1.5 million registered TV sets and 12 million transistor radios throughout the country. The increase in the average daily circulation of newspapers (which is now about 2 million copies) is relatively slower, in part because the rural public are still practically beyond the reach of newspapers.

On the updating of the system as part of the mobilisation of existing communication resources, the introduction of the rural press and of the media for the professions may, when they have come to be realized shortly, provide a good example in point.

The revitalization of the social institutions, in this case the media institutions, is also worthy of note. In the context of motivating social participation and social responsibility the Press have revitalized the mechanism of the Press Council to oversee the efforts at social engineering undertaken by the Press as a communication resource. The Press Council caps the Press Community in the same way that, in another branch of the mass-media, the Film, the National Film Council caps the Film community.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have come to the end of my address. I must admit that the task of articulating the role of communication in development support is a difficult one. I have tried to outline the main features of that role which I think are basic in understanding the complicated nature of the communication processes.

Permit me now to once again extend my deep appreciation to AMIC and EWCI for their initiatives to hold this Conference.

I sincerely. ....
I sincerely hope the participants will succeed in producing the best solutions to the problems under consideration.

I wish the conference every success in its deliberations.

I thank you.

Surakarta, 5th November 1979.

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION
THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

ALI MOERTOPO.