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<td>Iau, Robert</td>
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WELCOME ADDRESS

By

ROBERT IAU

Paper No. 5
WELCOME ADDRESS BY MR ROBERT IAU, CHAIRMAN, ASIAN MEDIA INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION CENTRE (AMIC), SINGAPORE

Mr Lee Cheok Yew
Chief Executive Officer
Television Corporation of Singapore Arts Centre Co Ltd

Dato' Jaafar Kamin
President, CBA

Prof Eddie Kuo
Dean, SCS/NTU

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to this Conference on Thriving in a Diverse Broadcasting Environment. The theme is timely and topical and your presence here today reflects the importance that you attach to the subject.

Broadcasting in Asia presents a complex and diverse picture. There are almost 4,000 radio stations and 1,100 TV stations. Many of these are government owned or controlled, while an increasing number is privately owned and operated. The audience is infinitely varied, whether viewed from the standpoint of literacy, language, income or population, add recent trends towards deregulation, advances in technology and shrinking finances, the picture becomes infinitely more complicated.

A little over two years ago, AMIC organized a seminar in Seoul on The Impact of the Changing Media Environment on Public Service Programming in Asia. The assembled public service broadcasters and policy makers from 12 Asian countries, while
acknowledging their differing national problems and priorities, stressed their common need for greater support to ensure the strengthening and survival of their networks. Equipment, research and training apart, their concern was for greater autonomy and a level playing field.

It is singularly appropriate that our inaugural speaker this morning is Mr Lee Cheok Yew, Chief Executive Officer of the Television Corporation of Singapore. The experience of the TCS, thriving in a changed and still changing broadcasting environment, will undoubtedly be of interest to all the delegates. We are thankful to Mr Lee for accepting our invitation, and for his encouraging and helpful response to our requests for support, not only to this conference, but also to the AMIC Television Write Award instituted in 1996.

The origins of this meeting may be traced to a suggestion by the CBA last year for a joint seminar with AMIC on Public Service Broadcasting. We readily endorsed the idea. But, for a number of reasons, the meeting had to be deferred to 1998. The conference programme has been formulated in close consultation with the CBA Secretary-General. We are delighted that we have with us today both Ms Elizabeth Smith and the CBA President, Dato' Jaafar Kamin.

We are also happy to express our appreciation to the School of Communication Studies, Nanyang Technological University, which agreed to co-sponsor this conference. AMIC has an expanding range of joint projects with the School, covering publications, research and seminars, and we are deeply grateful to the Dean, Prof Eddie Kuo, for his unfailing support and encouragement.
The credit of being our principal benefactor for this programme goes to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. While it is not present here today, we would like to express our gratitude to SIDA for the support it has extended to this programme.

For the benefit of those who are unfamiliar with AMIC, I would like to mention that we are a non-profit organization, a registered charity, dedicated to the promotion of media and information activities in the region. Our founding in 1971 and our progress during the past 27 years have been aided by the Government of Singapore and the Friederich Ebert Stiftung (FES) of Germany. In fact, the Regional Media Programme of the FES in Kathmandu has kindly sponsored five participants from South Asia.

We are grateful to all of you ladies and gentlemen, speakers and delegates alike, for joining us at this important meeting. Your presence and active participation will ensure the success of this conference and the book to follow.

/AMIC Address/d13