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<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Amunugama, Sarath</td>
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By

Sarat Amunugama
WHO-UNESCO-IPDC-AMIC ROUNDTABLE ON
"HEALTH EDUCATION NEEDS THE MEDIA"
SINGAPORE, JUNE 20-22, 1984

ADDRESS BY MR SARATH AMUNUGAMA, DIRECTOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION, UNESCO

It is both a privilege and pleasure for me to be present here today to represent UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication at this Roundtable on "Health Education meets the Media" - and to bring to you the best wishes of the Director-General of UNESCO for the success of this meeting. I am particularly happy to be back at AMIC headquarters as I have had the privilege of serving it, both in AMIC's executive board and as its Secretary-General.

For the IPDC, this Roundtable marks a very significant initiative. It is a strengthening of its involvement in communication projects in the ASEAN region. Up to now the inter-governmental council of the IPDC has approved assistance to the Asian News Network (ANN), to the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD), for planning for a TV Programme exchange network in Asia, for the development of film archives in the region, for launching a university level course in book development in the University of the Philippines and for the development of the Multi-media Institute in Indonesia.

But with this Roundtable and its anticipated follow-up, the IPDC will have an opportunity of assisting in-country projects in each of the ASEAN countries. Secondly, this assistance will be provided in an area of activity which has been accorded high priority in the region, namely, health. We know that policy-makers in this region have emphasised the need for improvement in health services, particularly in the area of preventive health services. The rapid growth of populations and the increasing costs of supplying basic services and infrastructures lead us to increase public awareness so that many of the diseases, for instance waterborne diseases, could be prevented. Nowhere is the saying 'Prevention is better than cure' more valid than in Asia with its already large and growing population.
This project seeks to engage the services of the media to increase public awareness in the field of preventive health.

I am sure that such a collaboration would be more than welcomed by both Health administrations as well as the media which today need more information, and a better and more forthcoming relationship with the health authorities.

This Roundtable is significant for another reason as well. Not only do we see people representing these different areas of activity coming together at this meeting; we also see the various International and Regional organisations linked with Health and Media coming together. I am very glad that WHO and UNESCO, AMIC, AIBD, PFA and ANN can all sit together to discuss a problem of considerable importance to the region.

As some of you here may know the IPDC was set up by the International Community at the 22nd session of UNESCO's General Conference as a special mechanism to assist developing countries to identify communications needs, formulate proposals for the development of their communications infrastructure and manpower and to provide assistance for such development. For this purpose it has resources by way of a special account, Funds in Trust support from some donor countries and other offers of assistance such as equipment, Training and Expert services. At present the IPDC finances 87 projects from its special account. At its last meeting the IPDC Council decided to support this Roundtable and will also look for donor countries for its follow up activities. But this Roundtable is essentially a team effort. Not only is it receiving supplementary funding from WHO, UNESCO and AMIC: hopefully it will be assisted by National administrations.
Its conceptual component too will come from all these sources, but especially from the very distinguished representatives from the region who are with us here today.

I will therefore conclude by saying, that IPDC is privileged to be associated with this Roundtable and wishing it all success. /dy

/dy
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