

CONSAL REPORT

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THE CONGRESS OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN LIBRARIANS

1 CONSAL REGIONAL UPDATE

1.1 The CONSAL Executive Board had its first CONSAL XIII meeting from the 28th to the 30th of March 2004. The meeting ratified Singapore's proposal to continue hosting the Secretariat and endorsed Ms Tay Ai Cheng from Singapore as the Secretary-General of CONSAL. The key updates in the region are as follows:

2 Secretariat Highlights

2.1 The first phase of the regional digitization was completed with the delivery of digitization machines and training provided to all ASEAN countries by Kodak Pty Ltd. Phase 2 of the initiative will involve the delivery of 300-500 e-books to be made available region wide. The Secretariat presented the 3-year review and report highlighting major achievements in the region.

2.2 The CONSAL Executive Board has also initiated a study on how the academic libraries and librarians from educational and academic institutions can contribute towards CONSAL. The CONSAL Council of Academic Libraries (CAL) was first proposed by Brunei in 2001. The Executive Board is reviewing the relevance and the contribution of CAL towards accomplishing CONSAL's core objectives.

2.3 The Executive Board also revisited the constitution to expand its participation in regional activities and to institute a membership structure. The Constitution will have a final reading in the next Executive Board meeting before it is endorsed by CONSAL. The proposed changes are predominantly in the area of governance and provisions for self-sustenance.

2.4 The Secretariat has been tasked to publish a bi-annual newsletter highlighting events and featuring new developments in the region. The newsletter will be distributed to all Library Associations in the region and published on CONSAL WEB. The first e-newsletter is anticipated to be ready by end Jul/early Aug 2004.

3 Latest Country Highlights

3.1 In **Brunei**, the Ministry of Culture, Information and Sports is currently studying a proposal to construct 4 new public libraries to make knowledge accessible to the citizens. The infrastructure project complements a national digital library programme that will support the educational institution. A major digitization project to build an international mufti (muslim scholars) digital library is underway, headed by the Prime Minister's Office. CONSAL had earlier proposed for the development of a National Library in Brunei to the Ministry of Culture, Information and Sports. The recommendation has not been adopted by the Bruneian government.

3.2 In 2003, the government of **Cambodia** has made internet accessible in 4 public libraries and 22 community information centres. Each province has a community information centre which can access a Khmer language web portal. A dedicated library network (RUPP) is currently being developed. UNESCO, UNICEF and NGO's like "Buddhism for development" have undertaken major information literacy initiatives in Cambodia last year.

3.3 In **Indonesia**, the National Library had facilitated the construction of the First Presidential Library (Presidential Library of Bung Karno) with the laying of the foundation stone early this year. The development was undertaken by the Municipal Government of Blitar (East Java). The Hatta Foundation has proposed the development of the Library of Bung Hatta (first Vice President) in Bukittinggi (West Sumatra). The Indonesian National Digital Library Network (IDNL) has 80 participating institutions to date with a collection of more than 2,000 digital files.

3.4 In **Laos**, the government has planned for the development of 10 school libraries for 2003-2004 and two public libraries with the help of the Shanti Voluntary Association. The National Assembly Library (defacto National Library of Laos) has beefed up mobile library services with three new buses that will be extended to 3 new provinces.

3.5 In **Malaysia**, the Johor State Library, Sabah State Library and Perlis State Library underwent extensive renovation. About RM 1m was spent on the development of town libraries which included the Selandar Town Library, Melaka and the Serting Town Library. 29 Cyberknowledge centres were established nationwide networked with computers. A total of RM 1.8m was provided to State Libraries for local digitization projects. NLM (National Library of Malaysia) had introduced an E-Library User Education programme. In 2003, Strategic Recommendations with a five-year implementation plan for PERDANA (Malaysian National Digital Library initiative) was presented. NLM showcased the Islamic Digital Library Network (IDLN) to the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) Conference in October 2003.

3.6 **Myanmar** has constructed a new National Library building which will showcase its most prized manuscript collection. Myanmar has also embarked on a digitization project to preserve its valuable heritage collection. The National Union Catalogue is available digitally within Myanmar through the efforts of the University Library.

3.7 In **Philippines**, the government approved an estimated US\$2.5m budget towards the development of a National digital library and digitization programme. As of September 2003, Philippines has 977 public libraries which includes a congressional library, a regional library, 49 provincial libraries, 82 city libraries, 512 municipal libraries and 332 district libraries. There are about 3,000 licensed librarians in Philippines.

3.8 In October 2003, the National Library Board of **Singapore** reopened Queenstown Community library which featured facilities catering to the special needs of the elderly and physically-handicapped, including wheelchair-friendly access, a lift within the library building and stations with lowered heights. The new facilities in the library incorporate many 'self-help' conveniences that reduce waiting time – self-service Borrowing Stations, 24-hour Bookdrops, Borrower's Enquiry & Payment stations, Membership Registration Kiosks and the "Cybrarian" (Cyber Librarians) stations that allow users to interact with librarians online. Singapore also opened its third regional library – Jurong Regional Library in May 2004 with a focus on youths. The Teens Library, a unique feature of the library, is inspired by teens, created for teens and run by teens. NLB involved teenagers every step of the way, from concept to implementation. Following a competition three years ago to gather ideas on what teens would like to see in a library, the NLB involved a group of teen volunteers to design, create and run a space of their own. The result is a vibrant space for the youth, with fun yet meaningful activities that stretch their imagination, and that gives them a sense of ownership and pride in being able to execute what they dare to dream.

3.9 In October 2003 **Thailand** announced a national e-library network, a national knowledge institute to be managed by Information and Communication Technology, Education and Culture ministries linking libraries and reading centres nation wide. A 10b baht Knowledge Management Development Organisation (KMDO) under the Prime Minister's office will be set up to increase levels of knowledge through the promotion of reading, creating a living library with e-books. The government also allocated \$20m baht to 30,000 public school libraries every year for the next three years.

3.10 **Vietnam** had constructed 34 new district libraries, 392 new community libraries and 28 new reading rooms for children in 2003. The National Library of Vietnam registered a record high visit of 399,995 or 1300 visits in 2003 with 28,115 members issued with reader cards. The legal depository collections in Vietnam average 9,600 each year from 45 publishing houses. In 2003 NLV collected 11,987 items. About 80,000

books were sponsored to Vietnamese libraries by the Asia Foundation. NLV also organized 2 national conferences and implemented +DDC and AACR2 Translation into Vietnamese with the help of the ALIA.

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