

OPENING SPEECHES

**Opening Speech by Mr. Hayati SENER
Acting Secretary General of the TGNA
at the Opening Ceremony, September 9, 2002**

Mr. President,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me a great pleasure and honour to be with you at the opening ceremony of the 7th Biennial Conference of the Association of Parliamentary Librarians in Asia and the Pacific (APLAP).

Taking this opportunity, I would like to convey to you the best wishes of the Speaker the of Turkish Grand National Assembly, his Excellency Mr. Omer Izgi, for having a successful conference.

As you know, APLAP aims at encouraging mutual understanding and cooperation between parliamentary libraries and research and information services in the Asia-Pacific region and enriching parliamentary services through cooperation among member libraries.

I hope that this conference will be a valuable opportunity for member libraries to exchange knowledge, to assess the latest developments concerning parliamentary libraries, to develop new ideas and to work out a vision as well as a plan for APLAP to attain its purposes.

The main theme of this year's conference is "The Role of Parliamentary Libraries in Enhancing Democracy in the Digital Age". I believe that the subject of this Conference is very timely. The Asia-Pacific countries have different socio-economic and political traditions, institutions and cultures which may found common ground in democratic forum. Given that enhancing democracy may be a common unifying goal for the all member countries, the role of parliamentary libraries in storing, processing and

delivering of information in digital form is of vital importance for the consolidation and deepening of parliamentary democracy. The digitalisation of parliamentary libraries, the main source of information of the parliamentarians, will directly affect the accuracy, speed and extent of information and in addition, will contribute to the participatory character of democracy.

I hope that your Conference will be a fruitful one, providing ample opportunity for sharing new ideas as well as developing mutual understanding and it becomes a source of inspiration open to the future.

I wish success to the 7th APLAP Biennial Conference. Thank you.

**Address at the Opening Ceremony of the
Seventh APLAP Conference,
Ankara, 9 September 2002
by Mr. R. C. AHUJA, President of APLAP**

Hon'ble Members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Hon'ble Acting Secretary-General of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Mr. Hayati Sener, Distinguished Dignitaries, Distinguished Keynote Speakers, Distinguished Delegates, Distinguished Colleagues from the Turkish Grand National Assembly Library and Documentation Centre, Distinguished Officers of the Assembly Secretariat and Various Ministries of the Government of Turkey, Ladies and Gentlemen:

First of all, I would like to join our gracious hosts in welcoming you all to this Opening Ceremony of the Seventh Biennial Conference of the Association of Parliamentary Librarians of Asia and the Pacific, popularly known as APLAP. For us, APLAP members, visiting Turkey -a land renowned the world over for its glorious civilisation, culture and learning- and holding our conference here, is indeed a matter of great pleasure. We have been able to meet in this pious land because of the blessings of His Excellency Mr. Omer Izgi, the Hon'ble Speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. On behalf of APLAP, I would like to express our deep gratitude to the Hon'ble Speaker and the Turkish Grand National Assembly for hosting this Conference.

The Biennial Conferences of APLAP reflect the recognition in the Parliamentary Library circles of the importance of exchange of views on information management and its techniques, the role of IT in this field, and the challenges posed by the objective of global sharing of the resources of legislative information. During more than a decade of our existence, we have deliberated on a wide range of issues including the legislative information networking, information resource-sharing, regional cooperation, impact of culture on parliamentary libraries and parliamentary research services, etc. Some of the themes discussed so far have been of vital importance not only for the overall functioning of parliamentary libraries but also for the vibrancy of our systems of governance. The theme of this Conference namely 'The Role of Parliamentary Libraries in Enhancing Democracy in the Digital Age' also falls in this category.

Nowadays, in democracies, people are concerned not merely about the institutional arrangements per se but also about how these institutions work and what these institutions deliver. They demand responsibility, accountability and transparency in the system. They also demand objective and authentic information about the working of parliamentary institutions so that they may evaluate their performance. It has, therefore, become necessary for our systems to evolve effective channels of transmission of the requisite information to the people both through media and directly by suitable means.

Parliamentary Libraries play a crucial role in this regard. They collect and disseminate information to the members of parliament and help them in discharging their duties. Further, as intermediary between the Parliament and the people, they act as an information base by making available to the media and the public authentic information about the various parliamentary practices and procedures, about the business being transacted in Parliament and also about the useful work being done by Parliament for the welfare of the people and development of the country as a whole.

Needless to say, the task of catering to the information needs of the parliamentarians and of the people is extremely challenging. The mass of diverse materials makes it difficult for the legislators to identify their interests with physically distributed information, available in conventional forms. Further, we also find it hard to keep track of information and also to generate user-profiles of demands and expectations. Digitalisation has emerged as a strategy to overcome these and other such problems relating to information management and dissemination. The easiness in accessibility, increased usability and erosion of physical barriers offered by the digital environment in parliamentary libraries increase its desirability manifold. Through digitalisation we can have a view of as many repositories as possible and also enable law-makers to connect and interact with information for the ultimate objectives of understanding public opinion and also to link the same with policies to be made.

Keeping in view the above scenario, one of the aims of APLAP and the objective of this conference is to encourage the establishment of necessary infrastructure in the member countries for initiating digitalisation programmes and also for fostering the exchange of legislative information over national and international borders. We must endeavour to

digitalize and strengthen the functional base and user services of our national Parliamentary Libraries and improve international availability of digitalized parliamentary information for providing to ourselves the means for ensuring the much desired parliament-people interaction and ultimately for global resource sharing.

Friends, it is indeed a matter of great honour for us to be in this beautiful city of Ankara which is not only the capital city but also the spirit of modern, progressive and culturally rich civilization of Turkey. With its clean roads lined with beautiful trees, enchanting greenery in vast open spaces, and highly developed social conscience, Ankara presents the ideal setting for the Seventh Biennial Conference of APLAP. I am sure, we would have fruitful deliberations on the theme of this Conference here.

I would like to thank, on behalf of all APLAP members, the Hon'ble Acting Secretary General of the Turkish Grand National Assembly for his illuminating opening address and very encouraging words which would be a source of inspiration for all of us. I would also like to thank him for all the support so kindly given by him to the Turkish Grand National Assembly Library and Documentation Centre in hosting this Conference.

On behalf of APLAP, I would also like to thank the three Keynote Speakers, Hon'ble A. Ziya Aktas, Member of Parliament, Mrs. Berin U. Yurdadog, Professor University of Baskent and Mrs. Nilufer Timisi, Assistant Professor University of Ankara, who have very graciously agreed to address us in the afternoon session today.

I would also like to thank the Organising Committee of the host Secretariat under the leadership of Mr Ali Riza Cihan, Director, for the excellent arrangements made for the Conference.

On behalf of APLAP, I would also like to thank the distinguished gathering here for gracing this occasion.

Thank you very much.

**Speech by Ali Riza CIHAN,
Director of the Library and Documentation Centre of TGNA
at the Opening Ceremony**

Mr. President,

Distinguished colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be with you this morning for the opening of the 7th Biennial Conference of the Association of Parliamentary Librarians of Asia and the Pacific (APLAP). I welcome all participants.

Let me begin with some information about our library. Although the beginning of the parliamentary democracy in Turkey goes back to 1876, the Turkish Grand National Assembly was founded on 23 April 1920, and five months later on 28th September 1920, the library was officially opened. After the parliament moved to its present building in December 1960, our library has served in its original place ever since. Carrying out the duty of providing information support to the supervision of the executive by the parliament and to the fulfilment of its legislative activities, the services of the library may be categorised under three headings: 1. Library services; 2. Research services; 3. Documentation services. The use of digital technology in the production, storage and delivery of information we produce has been one of our main goals. In order to remain up to date, recent developments in digital technology have been closely followed up. Thus, our parliament has its own web site since November 1996.

After this date we have been giving special importance to digitalise our services including the delivery of content management of book catalogue and such databases as regarding Turkish governments, Prime Ministers, Speakers and Political Parties.

Coming back to the conference, the theme of this year is particularly important to us, the parliamentary librarians. We are librarians, the engineers of information of the age of information in a world of global dimensions. It would be possible to diversify the

services we produce and to increase the quality of the content by making use of new digital technologies. The securing of reliable, transparent, and quick flow of information for MPs by the parliamentary libraries, without no doubt, would greatly contribute to the enhancement and strengthening of democracy in our countries.

We, the staff of the Library and Documentation Center of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, have done our best to organize a productive and successful conference. I hope we have managed it. The only thing that makes us concerned is that due to financial difficulties and long distance between Turkey and other member states, only 12 out of 30 member states could participate the Conference.

I am confident that the discussions and exchange of views among the participants who have come together in our country for this conference will shed much light on the future of parliamentary libraries. I hope that by the end of conference all the participants will have gained a deeper understanding and cooperative relations with each other.

I wish success to the conference and welcome you once again.

Thank you.

