

Session 5

The last session allowed Mrs. Berin Yurdadog to evaluate the Conference and share her ideas with the delegates on Conference theme.

"Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and gentlemen

This is the last day of our long but fruitful meetings; and we are all very happy to be able to share our ideas and experiments with each other in such a friendly atmosphere. During the meetings the problems discussed awakened the same sort of sympathy in our hearts, while the achievements shown made us all very proud of our colleagues.

To day we are in mixed feelings: We are happy, of course, to be able to put an end to the hectic period of getting up early, rushing to attend the meetings, looking up for the last minute distribution of papers. Yet in a way we are sorry to realize that these nice days of sharing will soon be over, and take their places among our cherished memories.

The theme of the 7th Biennial APLAP Conference was, as you all know "The Role of the Parliamentary Libraries in Enhancing Democracy in the Digital Age". To tell you the truth I was scared that in the frenzy of digitization; while everything was turning up to be e-something, this conference could be the victim of the mode, and end up to be an e-conference.

Please don't misunderstand me. I am not against digitization. I see it as a challenge. The digital revolution, like all other preceding revolutions, will enforce us to abide with its own rules and regulations. The digital age, the natural outcome of the digital revolution, enforces us to get digitized. But I don't think that getting digital in processes should be an excuse to lose the human touch as we interact with each other.

As you all know, the most effective type of communication is face-to-face as we have the advantage of obtaining feedbacks immediately. Sometimes a look, a twinkle in the eye, a raised eyebrow, and a half-formed smile can tell you a lot more than a whole book could. According to the feedback you get, you can modify your discussions to make them more meaningful.

It is a wonderful feeling to meet someone personally, whom you have already known by name. Knowing a person by name, by his or her writings, by the ideas put forward in those writings is fine; but knowing the person behind those ideas counts much more.

Conferences give wonderful opportunities to be friends with the people whose ideas are so near to yours.

I, personally, am very happy to be able to meet you all here, in Turkey. Though you are all much younger than I, I feel a warm friendship is established among us.

Therefore, I greet you all not as my colleagues only, but as my friends also. I greet you all as the distinguished members of the elite groups of your respective countries. You are the people "to address the changing and challenging environment for libraries and information systems and services in the digital age, with emphasis on examining contemporary problems, advances, and solutions... and how to change for the better" as it was pointed out in Dubrovnik, Croatia, last September. Digital Libraries belong to an emerging digital culture. Information seeking and information retrieval have to be integrated effectively. This year, again in Dubrovnik, Croatia, interactive, cognitive and relevance revolutions have been discussed. All the countries are aware of the danger called "the digital divide" so it is imperative that the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights is enforced. Everyone is talking about globalization, enhancing democracy, creating equity by means of recognizing equality etc. yet the gap between the "info-rich" and "info-poor"; between the "haves" and "have-nots" is getting bigger and bigger. The "information society" is oriented towards the accumulation of knowledge and increasing degrees of sophistication in information processing, which allows data to be organized and readily communicated. Within this information society networking logic allows libraries and information units to interrelate with users through a common digital language that prepares, saves, processes, retrieves and transmits information. As Patricio Aranda Torres points out, Parliaments and their libraries and information services can take opportunities to contribute to strengthening of democracy by providing information on the political process direct to citizens, meeting the demand in society for transparency with respect to policy making.

What is expected of you as librarians is overwhelming. But people believe in you and your profession. Because it is taken for granted that the librarianship is one of those professions which do not accept retirement. Let me clarify that! In librarianship, as in medical profession, you may retire from your post, but not from your service. Because librarians, like doctors, accept their jobs as missions, and they find themselves compelled to give service when and where a need is expressed. And to have a mission like that requires a high degree of dedication.

So once again, I want to thank and salute you all as the dedicated missionaries paving the way leading to goodwill, understanding, friendship, democracy, equity and equality! Good luck to you all, and bon voyage!"