

REPORT FOR STANDING COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL LIBRARIES  
MEETING1, SATURDAY, 13 AUGUST, 2005, 71<sup>ST</sup> IFLA, OSLO, NORWAY.

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Immediate Past President  
Librarians' Association of Malaysia (PPM)

I. LIBRARIANS ASSOCIATION OF MALAYSIA (PPM) MISSION TO ACEH

1. Introduction

In response to a request from The Indonesian Library Association (IPI) for assistance in rebuilding library and information services in the coastal province of Aceh which was devastated by earthquake and tsunami, The Librarians' Association of Malaysia ( PPM ) at its general meeting on 9 April 2005, approved a fact-finding mission to Aceh.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the mission are to :-

- (i) establish contact with librarians in Aceh;
- (ii) observe the state of libraries and rebuilding in Aceh;
- (iii) obtain information on assistance required for rebuilding;
- (iv) establish how best assistance can be delivered.

3. Mission team

A team comprising of the following were appointed to undertake the mission , named the PPM Iqra' ( Arabic meaning Read) Mission from 2 – 5 August 2005 :-

- (i) Dato' Zawiyah Baba, Immediate Past President, Team Leader
- (ii) Mr.Hasbullah Atan, PPM Council Member, Coordinator
- (iii) Mrs.Rohani Rustam, Past President, PPM, Liaison
- (iv) En.Abdul Hamid Abdul Rahman, Cameraman/Photographer  
( Courtesy of Pesona Pictures Sdn.Bhd. )

4. Preparation

Preparations made by the team included surfing websites on Aceh and communicating with contacts identified in Banda Aceh, (the capital city) obtaining information and advice about the current situation in Aceh from Malaysians involved with rebuilding in Aceh, as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Malaysian Consul-General in Medan, the nearest city to Aceh in

Sumatra, where the team made a stopover. Discussion included supply of library books and building and delivery of mobile libraries from Medan.

## 5. Visit Programme

### 5.1 Libraries

Visits were made to the central library, Badan Perpustakaan Daerah (BPD, the Provincial Library Authority), and the library of the Grand Mosque Baiturrahman. A meeting, comprising of briefing, discussion and interviews was held at BPD. Those interviewed were Drs Kamaruddin H.Hussin, the Head of BPD, Ibu Yusnidar, Senior Librarian, Drs. Fauzi, Representative of the Indonesian Library Association (IPI).

### 5.2 Literacy Projects

The team also visited reading and literacy projects run by voluntary organizations such as Phi Beta Learning Centre, Yayasan Anak Bangsa, (Foundation for Indigenous Sons), Children Media Centre and Forum Lingkaran Pena (Pen Circle Forum). These programmes were established before tsunami. Interviews were held with our main contact, Mr.Saiful Mahdi and representatives from each voluntary organization. The activities are heBanda Aceh, as well as the government-built barracks, which serves as temporary housing for tsunami victims.

## 6. General Observations

From our brief stay in Aceh, it was observed that people in Aceh are generally slowly getting on their feet and getting on with life and trying to put the tragedy behind them. The market is busy, restaurants are reopening and the town is busy with traffic, especially four-wheel drives. While roads have largely been cleared, rebuilding of infrastructure appear to be very slow, especially government buildings.

## 7. Assistance Required

Based on the interviews, observation and discussion, the following are assistance urgently required by libraries in Aceh:-

### 7.1 Books for library collections

Books are urgently needed to replace destroyed collections at the Central Provincial Library (BPD), Baiturrahman Grand Mosque Library and the new mobile libraries received from The National Library of Indonesia.

Priority are for books in the Indonesian language but books in English are also needed especially in academic subjects.

Books are also urgently needed by the reading and literacy projects run by volunteers and voluntary organizations particularly reading materials for children including the Phi Beta Learning Centre, Yayasan Anak Bangsa and Forum Linkaran Pena.

## 7.2 Tracing of materials about Aceh

Help is needed to trace old materials about Aceh especially rare books and manuscripts. With the total destruction of the Aceh Documentation and Information Centre (PDIA), which held the most important heritage collections on Aceh, the rebuilding of its cultural memory is urgently needed from libraries which have materials on Indonesia and Aceh.

## 7.3 Vehicles for mobile library service

More vehicles are needed to supplement the two received from the National Library of Indonesia in order to operate a mobile library service in Aceh. The preferred model is the L-300 coaster vans which is bigger than the ones in use at present as they have a bigger capacity for books. The book vans can be built in Medan and taken overland to Aceh. Each vehicle is estimated to cost up to USD50000.00 with airconditioning.

## 7.4 Library furniture

Library furniture and equipment are needed to furnish the library as most areas of the library are still bare or equipped with sub-standard furniture including the reference areas and the seminar and training rooms. The Childrens library which is still undergoing repairs and renovation will need completely new purpose built furniture.

## 7.5 Human resource development

Human resource development is an important part of the rebuilding process. The Central Library lost 22 out of 77 of its staff in the tsunami, including the Head of the Library. There is a need to recruit and train new staff at professional and non-professional levels. The morale and spirit of those who survived the tsunami need to be restored through a sensitive and caring HRD and also counseling programme.

## 7.6 Computerised library system

The Unesco WINISIS library system in use in the library and telecommunications system was largely destroyed by tsunami. There are

no fixed telephone lines in use. The Library computers in the WARINTEK (Information Technology Centre) on the first floor, although spared from damage, were however, stolen. At present the Library has a notebook Compaq computer donated by the Librarians Association of Malaysia (PPM).

#### 7.7 Funding for literacy projects

The team received 2 proposals for literacy projects conducted by the *Forum Linkaran Pena* ( Pen Circle Forum) with estimated cost of projects as follows:-

##### 7.7.1 *Rumah Cahaya: BaCa Hasilkan KarYa 2005.*

The above project translated to mean House of Enlightenment: Read and Write 2005 involves purchase of a building for its activities including story-telling, special writing workshops and seminars. The building will also house a Secretariat, guest room, prayer room, bathroom . The cost of is estimated at 555, 375,000.00 Indonesian rupiahs.

##### 7.7.2 *Kempen Aceh Bangkit Aceh Membaca*

The Aceh Rises Aceh Reads Campaign is aimed at raising awareness of importance of reading and writing. The programme targets tsunami victims housed in barracks built by the government and shelters around Aceh as a way of reducing the trauma of the tsunami and to stimulate their minds to recovery. FLP will mobilize its surviving members as part of the rebuilding of Aceh and revival of Aceh people following the devastation of the earthquake and tsunami. The campaign is estimated at a mere 211, 990 Rupiahs.

#### 8. Recommendations

The main recommendations of the Mission Team are :-

8.1 PPM coordinate external assistance for libraries in Aceh

8.2 National Library of Malaysia coordinate the following

- (i) Tracing of materials about Aceh
- (ii) Provide training in conservation of materials
- (iii) Include participants from Aceh in training programmes and workshops for senior library

personnel, middle management and support staff under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme

- (iv) Provide template for application of integrated library system in Aceh libraries

- 8.3 Acknowledge the leadership, tenacity and tremendous efforts of Ibu Yusnidar and staff of BPD in restoring the physical condition as well as the administration of the library and its surroundings from the devastation and debris of the tsunami.

## 9. Conclusion

The PPM Iqra' Mission was successfully undertaken and its objectives achieved. A full report prepared in Bahasa Malaysia and English has been submitted to higher authorities in Malaysia and to IFLA as well as other international organizations which requested for it. It is hoped that libraries, library associations as well as librarians can contribute in any way possible to help make life better for the people of Aceh through its libraries.

## II. WORKSHOP ON THE PRESERVATION OF DIGITAL HERITAGE IN ASIA AND OCEANIA, 6-11 DECEMBER 2004.

The National Library of Malaysia with the support of UNESCO organized a Regional Workshop on Digital Preservation of Digital Heritage in Asia and Oceania from 6-11 December 2004. The objectives of the Workshop are as follows:-

- (i) To generate awareness and understanding of the concept and importance of digital preservation of cultural heritage;
- (ii) To provide exposure to participants on basic principles in the implementation of a conservation programme for digital collection;
- (iii) Provide guidelines in the implementation of a national digital collection conservation programme;

21 participants attended the workshop including representatives from Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Maldives, Myanmar, Philippines, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. Mr. Colin Webb, Director of Preservation Services, National Library of Australia was the facilitator and resource person for the Workshop.

The workshop was opened by the Director-General of the National Library of Malaysia, Dato' Zawiyah Baba on 6 December 2004. At the closing ceremony,

Anton Gililand from South Africa, on behalf of participants, thanked the organizers for a very useful and fruitful Workshop, which all participants enjoyed very much. Dr.Susanne Ornager, Adviser for Information and Communication, UNESCO, closed the 5-day Workshop on 11 December 2005.

III. 13<sup>th</sup> CONFERENCE OF DIRECTORS OF NATIONAL LIBRARIES IN ASIA AND OCEANIA (CDNLAO)

The National Library of Malaysia hosted the 13<sup>th</sup> Conference of Directors of National Libraries in Asia Oceania in Kuala Lumpur on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2005. Collaboration among National Libraries, Archives and Museum was one of the items on the agenda. Directors of National Libraries or representatives from 17 countries in Asia Oceania, namely Australia, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Japan, India, Indonesia, Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Vietnam attended the meeting. The 14<sup>th</sup> CDNLAO will be held in Manila, Philippines in 2006.

IV. WORKSHOP ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR DIRECTORS OF NATIONAL LIBRARIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES 2005

The National Library of Malaysia organized the above Workshop in Kuala Lumpur from 24 – 25 May 2005. The idea for the Workshop was first mooted at the meeting of the Standing Committee on National Libraries at IFLA in Glasgow, 2002. The Workshop was first held in 2004 under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP). Under this programme, the Malaysian government sponsor participants from developing countries. Following the success of the first Workshop, the Economic Planning Unit, Prime Ministers Department Malaysia approved the continuation of the Workshop under the MTCP. The two other courses under MTCP organized by the National Library of Malaysia since 1984 are the Basic Course for Library Assistants, and the Programme of Visits and attachment for Library Professionals.

The Workshop was themed ‘Collaboration between National Libraries, Archives and Museum’ to generate awareness on the need for collaboration, identify possible projects which need collaboration and, the means to provide access to cultural heritage collections, capacity building for collaboration and human resource development. 17 participants from Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Vietnam attended the 3-day Workshop. It is hoped that the Leadership Development Workshop will continue as a regular programme under the MTCP for National Library Directors.

