

3RD CALD COMMUNICATIONS WORKSHOP
SEPTEMBER 17-21, 2005
KUALA LUMPUR MALAYSIA
THEME: POLITICAL PARTIES and the INTERNET

(by: Lai Soon Ket of Malaysian People's Movement Party)

The Third CALD Communications Workshop, co-organized by CALD and Malaysian People's Movement Party (Parti GERAKAN Rakyat Malaysia, in short GERAKAN), the CALD member of the host country, and sponsored by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNN), was successfully held on September 17-21, 2005 in Kuala Lumpur, the capital city of Malaysia.

The Workshop, themed POLITICAL PARTIES and the INTERNET, was participated by communication or publicity officers from the CALD member countries and observers, as well as from the Young Liberals and Democrats of Asia (YLDA) and the Youth Initiative.

The Workshop Proper

The Workshop proper was made up of 3 main parts:

1. Brainstorming and discussion, in big group as well as smaller working groups. Two sessions were held to discuss, respectively:

- 1.1 What can CALD member parties do to promote the organization's issues in their respective countries?
- 1.2 The Role of the Internet in the communications strategies of political parties

2. Presentation on websites of member parties.

Participants from the respective countries were requested to have a presentation on the websites of their parties and also from the main opponent. However, due to the keen interest and hot discussions on the first few presentations, a few participants were unable to give their presentation, however, their notes and powerpoint presentations were distributed to all the participants.

The following countries had given their presentation:

- Uri party, Korea
- Sam Rainsy Party, Cambodia
- Democratic Party of Thailand
- Malaysian people's Movement Party, Gerakan
- Liberal party of the Philippines
- Democratic People's Party, Taiwan
- Liberal Party of Sri Lanka
- Democratic Party of Singapore
- National Council of the Union of Burma
- Hongkong Democratic Party
- National Awakening Party (Parti Kebangkitan Bangsa) Indonesia
- Young Liberals and Democrats of Asia

All presentations were followed by discussions to enable the participants to share their experiences. Among others, it was noted that:

- The problem of digital divide was very real among the CALD member countries, with the sophisticated Korea, Taiwan and Hongkong far aheads of others, while Burma had hardly started;

- All countries were keen to learn to upgrade on the effective use of the Internet as an alternative communication tool;
- The presentation of URI Party had inspired all other participants of the workshop on the potential of Internet;
- The CALD Workshop had successfully motivated member parties with limited resources to set up and improve on their websites.

3. Input session

Workshop participants were input with latest developments of Cyberactivism in Asia and the experience of online campaigning in Germany.

Mr. James Gomez talked on Cyberactivism in Asia---Political party websites and their impacts, and Dr. Ronald Meinardus shared the experience on Successful online campaigns in germany's general elections.

Tour and Visits

Future Plans

The Workshop had identified, in particular, the urgent task of bridging CALD and all the member parties via the Internet. It was agreed that all member party websites should provide links to CALD, as well as to all the member parties.

Member parties were also encouraged to build up party to party relations to exchange on ideas and techniques to promote the liberal democracy.

The evaluation session had identified the topics for future workshop sessions as follows:

- Fund raising
- Marketing of websites
- Analysis of traffic ("analytics")
- SMS as political communication tool
- Practical know how with software, technological trends, podcast, RSS
- Internet/Intranet – internal communication (security)
- Grass-root participation.

The Democratic People's Party (DPP) had agreed to host the next CALD Communication in Taiwan in 2006 and the communication and publicity workers of the CALD member parties were invited to give their support to attend the Workshop in 2004.

Acknowledgement

The Workshop could not have been without the contributions of the many colleagues in CALD and FNN, they were:

- Dr. Ronald Meinardus of FNN and Mr. John Joseph Coronel of CALD as were facilitators to the Workshop;
- Mr. James Gomez of FNN as a resource person; and, in particular
- Mr. Brian V Gonzales, Mr. Narwin Espiritu and Ms Yeam Hui Nih as the secretariat staff, who had worked hard through the nights to ensure the smooth proceeding of the Workshop.

However, it was with the generous sponsorship from FNF that had made possible the re-union of CALD communication workers in Kuala Lumpur. Special thanks to the FNF and its Malaysian Program Director, Mr. Rainer Heufers, who was with the Workshop on the morning of September 18, and had updated the participants on FNF Malaysia.