

# Panoramic View on the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians (CONSAL)

By  
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Being an active Patron of MLA (Myanmar Library Association), I spent a few days for the preparedness of the 17<sup>th</sup> CONSAL held from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> May 2018 in Nay Pyi Taw, the capital of Myanmar. However, having a great inspiration with a high degree of satisfaction, I cannot control to record such remarkable and internationally recognized events that disseminate the great achievement of the Myanmar Library Association (MLA) to the whole world. It is the first international congress held in Myanmar. In this historic event, I actively participated only in few activities of the glamorous and well-designed program. It keeps me alert forever of being once a retired academic librarian in the Mawlamyine University Library or once a retired Professor/ Head of the Department of Library and Information Studies, Yangon University (now, serving as Part-time Professor) or an active Patron of the Myanmar Library Association (MLA). I would like to present only my personal panoramic view that I have encountered before, during and after the congress.



Fig.1: Daw Aung San Suu Kyi , State Counsellor delivering the Opening Speech

While the other MLA executive members were individually working hard day and night for the necessary preparations for holding the 17<sup>th</sup> CONSAL, in February 2018, MLA formed the Paper Selecting Committee to select the most adequate and high standard papers submitted for the reading sessions in the congress. From 12 February to the middle of March 2018, the committee received (230) papers submitted by local and international scholars. The committee was organized with (6) members comprising of Daw Khin Khin Tun, Retired Director, Department of National Archives and Records and Patron of MLA, Daw Tin Phone Nwe, Retired Chief Librarian of the Universities' Central Library and Patron of MLA, U Tin Maung Lwin, Retired Librarian of Yangon Institute of Technology and Patron of MLA, U Thein Lwin, Retired Professor/Head of Department of Library and Information Studies, Yangon University and Patron of MLA, U Thein Shwe, Retired Professor/Head of Department of Library and Information Studies, Yangon University and Advisor of MLA, U Than Aung, Retired Director, the American Center and President of MLA and Daw Ah Win, Retired librarian of IAEA and Vice-President (1) of MLA. Before papers were selected, the team adopted a statement of selection criteria. After that (5) successive meetings were held in the MLA office and (94) finalist papers were selected from (230) submitted papers. Accordingly the finalist papers were re-sent to the MLA Executive Committee which informed to the concerned scholars in local and abroad.

During the convening period from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> May 2018, on 2<sup>nd</sup> May I served as one of three facilitators in the National Library (Nay Pyi Taw) together with my partner-facilitators, U Nyan Tun, Head Librarian of International Language and Business Center (ILBC), Mandalay and U Maung Maung Soe, Founder of the Save the Library. The topic we discussed was "*Planning Library Period*". We have done the discussion program successfully and we received many comments and responses from the audience. The session was attended by over (50) local and international participants including high school teachers and public and government department librarians.



Fig.2: Facilitating the workshop on Planning Library Hours



Fig.3: Delivering the closing remarks on School Libraries

In the evening of 3<sup>rd</sup> May, I presided in the Parallel Session assigned at Room (D) focusing on the topic of **“New Competencies and Information Professionals”**, where the first speaker from Indonesia was absent. The second paper, *“Orientation and Roadmap to Improve Professional Qualification of Human Library Resource in People’s Public Security, meeting Development Needs of Libraries in New Period”* was presented by Do Thu Thom from Vietnam and the third paper, *“Developing a Future-ready Workforce: the National Library Board Singapore’s Competency Framework for Library and Archives”* was presented by Gee Miaw Miin from Singapore. About (50) local and international participants joined the session. The session was successfully conducted with good comments and fruitful responses. On the same day, there were (6) parallel sessions presenting and discussing on (10) different topic headings. On 4<sup>th</sup> May, the same parallel sessions continued according to the set programs and the day was ended with Gala Dinner in the Convention Hall No.(2), Nay Pyi Taw.



Fig.4: Presiding the session of **New Competencies and Information Professionals**

According to the official statistics, the entire conference was attended by (171) international participants from (20) nations including (33) Executive Board Members and CDNLO members and (460) local participants including (33) MLA members, (22) National Library staff and (28) library students. Among local participants, (126) participants were the most from the Ministry of Education and (40) participants were the second most from Ministry of Information. It is also found that out of (171) international participants, (39) participants were the most from Vietnam, (28) participants were the second most from Indonesia and (22) were the third most from Thailand.

During these days, I have rare chance to meet my old and new friends of local and internationals in the area of exhibition or dinnertime or during the period of entertainment or on the bus or at the hotel. I met some of my old international friends who are Professor Dr. Chutima Sacchanan, President of TLA (Thai Library Association), Ms. Nelly Sunny, President of Brunei Darussalam Library Association and Ms. Tay Ai Cheng, Chief Librarian, National Library Board, Singapore and Ms. Kieu Thuy Nga, President of Vietnam Library Association. It is the best opportunity for me to see my old and new friends sharing our past memories.

Till to date, I am remembering those glamorous days in Nay Pyi Taw because MLAs have successfully and smoothly conducted the 17<sup>th</sup> CONSAL Conference in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Education as well as philanthropic stakeholders and well-wishers and donors.

The last but not the least, I do not want to overlook the following contributors because our grand conference would not be meaningful without their philanthropic contributions. Our sincere and grateful thanks should return to those contributors: (2) bronze Sponsorships by Yoma Bank, Bibliotheca,

(10) packages of local sponsors, (13) commercial exhibitions and (3) in-kinds donation by (a) MCM Printing, (b) Lion Library Support and MLF (Myanmar Libraries Foundation), (c) Marga Youth Foundation (one-day coffee & tea provided), (d) K.500,000/- cash donation by U Maung Maung Thar (SMEC) and K.300,000/- cash donation by Daw Nu Nu Ye. All in all, hosting 17<sup>th</sup> CONSAL Congress in Myanmar is really a great result that comes out from our mission: CONNECT and COLLABORATE.

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