

East Wind

**Official Newsletter of the World Blind Union-Asia Pacific
No. 15**

Please visit the World Blind Union-Asia Pacific website!

www.wbuap.org

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Greetings from the Editorial Team

Happy New Year to all our readers, may all your hopes be realised and promises fulfilled.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Diana Swanson, a member of the Editorial Team who has resigned effective from 1 December 2014. We wish her all the best in her future undertakings. In her replacement, the Royal Society for the Blind South Australia very kindly offered the services of Ms. Jessica Hamilton and Ms. Kylie Bauer to the Team. We welcome them on board and look forward to their active participation.

In this issue, we summarise the events that took place during the Mid Term General assembly in Hong Kong. We also include news from the Philippines, Laos, Indonesia and plans for the WBUAP/DAB Project.

We look forward to your feedback and news contributions for further issues of this newsletter. Kindly e-mail any member of the Team. Our contact information can be found at the end of this publication.

Editorial Team

The World Blind Union Asia Pacific Mid-Term General Assembly

The WBUAP held its Mid-Term Regional General Assembly at the Cyberport Complex in Hong Kong from 21 - 24 November 2014. It was splendidly hosted by the Hong Kong Blind Union (HKBU) under the

leadership of Mr. Chong Chan-Yau, President of HKBU and Chairman of the Organising Committee, and efficiently co-ordinated by Miss Stella Ho and the staff of HKBU. The Assembly was given added warmth with the attendance of the WBU officers who held their Executive Committee Meeting at the same venue from 25 - 26 November. Our heartfelt gratitude goes to the HKBU team for a well-managed and action-packed Assembly, and the active participation of the WBU officers.

As planned, there were thematic workshops and symposiums for women, youth, on E-Accessibility, social enterprise and on the UNCRPD. The aspirations and recommendations of these sessions are reflected in the Hong Kong Statement found elsewhere in this issue of East Wind. There were 379 delegates and participants from over 30 countries and territories within and outside WBUAP, but we regret not having representatives from North Korea, Samoa and some of the Pacific island states, although great efforts were made for their representation.

Undoubtedly, you will hear more about the Assembly in the months ahead as the Board and Policy Council and the thematic committees start to implement the contents of the Hong Kong Statement. Of immediate interest is the Silent Auction managed by Dr. Kevin Murfitt. Many interesting items were donated for auction, such as a throwing boomerang and kangaroos from Australia, an origami peacock from Japan, a Malay house from Malaysia, wooden buffaloes from Vietnam, a mermaid from Denmark, and many more interesting items from China, Mongolia, Myanmar and Thailand. The total sum collected is

2,135 Aus Dollars; and to top up the amount, HKBU donated to US \$1,000.

World Blind Union Asia-Pacific (WBUAP) Hong Kong Statement

We the participants at the WBUAP Mid-Term Regional General Assembly (Assembly) in Hong Kong, 24 November, 2014:

1. Call upon all governments throughout the Asia-Pacific region (region) to ratify the Marrakesh Treaty at the earliest opportunity so that persons who are blind or partially sighted (blind) or who have other print disability have full access to works of literature, culture and to educational materials.
2. Welcome the opportunity to cooperate with the United Nations (UN) Development Programme to build capacity across the region so that persons who are blind or who have print disability are able to advocate for greater access to information.
3. Encourage development organisations to work with governments to support data collection, develop disability inclusive policies and strategies to progress the action plan of the Incheon Strategy.
4. Urge all governments and relevant bodies throughout the region to make all efforts toward the speedy ratification and effective implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). In particular, prioritize to ensure the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in strengthening independent monitoring mechanisms, given that fewer than half of the countries in the world who have ratified the UNCRPD have presented country and shadow reports to the UN.
5. Being moved by the enthusiasm and strong determination expressed by women who are blind through the Women's Forum, campaign for the acceleration of women with disabilities' empowerment programmes in accordance with the Asian and Pacific inter-government Ministerial Declaration on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UNESCAP, 2014).
6. In recognition of challenges and opportunities faced by youth who are blind in this region, and the tremendous success of the Youth Forum held during this Assembly in stimulating innovation and social entrepreneurship among youth of the region, it is recommended that:-
7. A youth forum be held at future regional assemblies, and the World Blind Union (WBU) be requested to hold an international youth summit.
8. Call upon all governments, businesses and other global partners to take the necessary steps to ensure that essential technologies are available, accessible and affordable to persons who are blind in the region, as it is through such technology that real inclusion can be advanced and social isolation eliminated.
9. Initiate and implement a web accessibility campaign at the regional level to promote the adoption of internationally recognised accessibility standards in web design, APPs, e-learning and other ICT products and services; in consultation with organizations of the blind.
10. Undertake to actively share best practice initiatives and programmes

in areas of fund raising and capacity development.

11. Noting the high levels of unemployment and under employment of persons who are blind in the region, task all governments to implement programs that enable full participation in open employment including education programs for employers and the community, transition to employment programs and the provision of specialist equipment schemes by the government.
12. In recognizing that social enterprises have demonstrated their impact in creating employment for persons who are blind, in changing public attitudes and in generating funds to further the cause of the movement for people who are blind, the Assembly urges the WBUAP and WBU to establish a task force to investigate how social enterprises can be promoted and advanced.

The WBUAP-DAB-DANIDA Project

As you might have heard, WBUAP approached the Danish Association of the Blind (DAB) in early 2014 to prepare an application for US three million dollars to the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). These funds were needed to continue the project for the capacity building of Lao Association of the Blind (LAB) and the Mongolian National Federation of the Blind (MNFB), and this time to include the Myanmar National Association of the Blind (MNAB).

DAB, which is a member of the Disabled People's Organisation of Denmark (DPOD) got the support of DPOD, and we are so grateful for their

co-operation which saw the application approved by DANIDA in September. Following the Midterm Regional General Assembly, representatives from the concerned organisations met in Hong Kong from 25 - 28 November to discuss implementation plans for the three year project. Here is the Action Plan Outline submitted by WBUAP to support the Project and to help strengthen the less-developed affiliates within the Region.

1. Engage a Paid Part-time WBUAP Editor:

By June 2015, discuss with the more developed organisations in the region and succeed in negotiating with one of them to assume the responsibility of finding a dedicated person to hold this paid part-time job with some financial assistance on their part and the allocation under the DANIDA Project. Some of the main duties of the part-time Editor will be: To ensure useful and inspirational information is gathered and disseminated through existing regional communication channels in a timely manner, develop new ones as recommended by the WBUAP Editorial Board (including an Internet Radio station), and to co-ordinate the functions of the Country Information Liaison Officers (CILO) described below.

2. Appoint CILO's:

By June 2015, have worked out the main duties for these appointees and have negotiated with at least five countries to appoint dedicated persons for the role. It is hoped that the more developed organisations will consider giving some monetary payments to reimburse expenses incurred by the CILO's appointed by them, and WBUAP to do likewise for CILO's from less-developed countries in our region.

3. Re-design the WBUAP Website:

By June 2015, discussion and agreement upon the hosting and maintenance of the WBUAP Website, investigation of the re-designing and positive actions taken towards the redesign as recommended by the Editorial Board.

4. Fund-Raising Initiatives:

By June 2015, with the participation of the Committee on Resource Generation and through the WBUAP Website, active promotion and sharing ideas on fund-raising initiatives, particularly successful methods used by well-established organisations for their financial sustainability.

5. The ASIA Pacific BPS Youth Summit:

By June 2015, finalisation of the organising of the Summit to be held in Penang, Malaysia in August, and sourcing of funding for participation by youths from the less developed organisations for the sharing of experiences, networking and to come up with recommendations for the development of youth programmes as called for in the Hong Kong Statement.

6. Promotion of Programmes for Women:

By June 2015, through the Women's Committee, active encouragement of the establishment of Women's committees in Member-countries to plan activities and to develop programmes specially catering to their requirements, including advocating for opportunities for younger female leadership.

7. Implementation of United Nations' Conventions and Disability Framework:

Through the WBUAP CRPD Co-ordinator and National Champions, the Co-ordinator for the Marrakesh Treaty and the WBUAP Women's

Committee to promote and provide advisory and technical assistance in advocacy for the implementation of the conventions and treaties adopted by the various agencies of the UN, such as the CRPD, the Marrakesh Treaty, the Incheon Strategy, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and Education for All BVI Children.

8. Promotion of Employment and Social Enterprises:

Through the Committee on Employment and Economic Empowerment (CEEE) and the WBUAP Massage Commission, the promotion and enhancement of the employability of BPS persons through such initiatives as the Job Readiness Programme, active encouragement of the involvement of BPS in social enterprises, and the training and upgrading of blind massage therapists in the massage profession.

(Submitted by Michiko Tabata and Ivan Ho, representing WBUAP on the Project Steering Committee).

Autobiography of Aria Indrawati



President of Pertuni
– Indonesian Blind Union 2014-2019.

Educational Background:
Bachelor of Law.

Profession:
Public relations practitioner

Social worker – career counsellor for BVI people
Social entrepreneur

Hobbies:

Reading, writing, travelling, sport.

Motto:

The more we give, the more we get.

Leadership:

It is a matter of power and capability to influence other people to work together to reach common goals and dreams.

Being born with low vision, I experienced painful discrimination especially in pursuing education. I was rejected by teachers and the head master of high school as well as the rector of the university where I sought to enrol, although I was able to obtain the minimum passing grade. It felt sad that there were no accessible books for me during my education, while my brothers, sisters and friends were enjoying reading their favourite books. Many questions came in to my mind and heart about what was happening to me, and why I was being mistreated as a person with low vision.

I was so grateful to have such great parents. They were my heroes, my advocates, and my best friends who were always on my side. They empowered me step by step, supported me growing up, until I achieved independence.

Besides my parents, the ones who contributed most my life were the headmaster and my teacher at the special school for the blind which I attended for my elementary education. The headmaster convinced my parents that the best place for me to study after finishing elementary education was a regular secondary school. That was when I entered the real world, the

world where I was not accepted because I had low vision, but it was also the world to which I could contribute as a person with low vision to make the community and society a better place.

The challenging situations I faced drove me to become a strong person. For me, learning occurred not only at school and university, but during my whole life.

20 years ago in 1994, when I was still in Semarang - a city in Central Java where I grew up – it came into my heart – a wish to help other blind people. A teacher from special school for the blind introduced me to Pertuni, an organization of the blind. Being at the Pertuni office, among other blind people, I felt at home. I decided to join this organization, and accept their offer to become a board member of one of their chapters.

A restless feeling came up one day while attending one of Pertuni's events. There were almost a hundred blind people, mostly lacking in education. Only two of us were university graduates; a few others had completed high school and obtained a diploma. I was shocked by their lack of education, poverty and disempowerment. This was the most important realisation of my life.

In 2004, after spending several years in Jakarta, I joined the Pertuni national board as Third Vice President. One important accomplishment, which contributed a lot to my growing as a leader in Pertuni, was the "higher education project"; a project which was conducted to accelerate participation of blind students in higher education, and to promote inclusive higher education in Indonesia. This project was supported by The Nippon

Foundation through ICEVI. As country coordinator for this project, I had the golden opportunity to work together with Larry Campbell - ICEVI's president. As project coordinator, I had to think strategically, to advocate more systematically – from the grassroots level to national policy change. This project succeeded in encouraging The Ministry of Education of Indonesia to issue a decree on inclusive higher education – a policy guidance for universities in Indonesia mandating them to develop inclusive practices.

At Pertuni's 8th general assembly I was elected as Pertuni's President for the period from 2014 to 2019. There were 7 candidates running for president, and I was the only female candidate.

For me, becoming a leader a national organization like Pertuni was not an instant process. I began from chapter leadership at the provincial level, then moving up to national level.

Indonesia is a huge archipelago. People with BVI are spread over thousands of islands. Based on The Ministry of Health estimation, there are at least 3.6 million people with BVI. Most of them still receive inadequate education, leading to poverty.

For the next five years, Pertuni's main agenda is to "release BVI people in Indonesia from poverty". For school-age children, we will launch a movement called "let's go to school" to promote children's education in either special schools or regular schools inclusively. We believe that government should ensure that 12 years compulsory education is available to BVI children.

We believe blind students should also have qualified access to higher education. Basic and secondary

education is important, but, higher education is a strategic way to achieve personal change. We hope to support young people to obtain educational qualifications and to be the leaders of the next generation.

For adults, job opportunities in both formal and informal sectors should be open. Given the limited capacity of formal employment to absorb all the BVI population, I believe informal employment/entrepreneurship should be encouraged, including such fields as agriculture/farming for people living in rural areas/villages. The quality of blind massage should be improved, so masseurs can compete in the massage industry which is now growing very fast in the world.

We believe access to technology is important, and our agenda gives priority to improving access to technology for those having the least access.

In undertaking all these activities, Pertuni cannot work alone. Cooperation with CSOs and the business sector will be continued and developed.

As a DPO, Pertuni's main goal is policy changes for disability inclusion. Therefore, once we succeed in formulating effective policy models in the areas mentioned above, we will convey them to the related government agency/ministry, in order that they can be disseminated at a larger scale. All development should reach everyone with BVI in Indonesia. No one should be left behind.

Indonesia should implement disability inclusive development. In order to implement this new paradigm, Indonesia should have a new disability

act, in whose development Pertuni hopes to take an active part.

Country Report of Lao Association of the Blind 2014

Lao Association of the Blind (LAB) has just celebrated the 7th Anniversary of the organization on 17 September 2014. With the wind beneath its wings from two European associations of the blind: Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted and Danish Association of the Blind, LAB is stronger gradually as we would like to praise their continuous supports and record them in the history of the association.

During this year, LAB together with the Ministry of Education and Sports was registered to be the sixth member of ICEVI in the region of Asia-Pacific. LAB and the Ministry of Education and Sports have been working hard to strengthen inclusive education for the blind and visually impaired students in Laos with the National Policy on Inclusive Education as well as the National Strategy and Action Plan on Inclusive Education 2011 to 2015 issued by the ministry mentioned. Through fabulous cooperation of the ministry, LAB trained 14 inclusive education teachers from two primary schools, two secondary schools, two colleges and the National University of Laos with training in basic Orientation and Mobility, Daily Living Skills and Lao Braille. A number of teachers from those educational institutes providing inclusive education for the blind and officers from the Ministry of Education and Sports were supported with study tours in Thailand for the purpose of raising awareness of actual practices of inclusive education and to allow

them to learn how to provide inclusive education in Laos.

Moreover, with support from ICEVI and coordination of the Christian Foundation for the Blind in Thailand this year, at least nine blind and visually impaired students from Laos were sent to Bangkok to be trained in ICT and all of them could access education at a higher level with notebook computers provided by ICEVI.

Through the supports mentioned above and numerous meetings with educational institutes, eventually students with visual disabilities have been allowed to study at colleges and the National University without costs of registration, tuition and dormitory fees.

LAB collaborated with disability organisations to perform many advocacy activities in the past few years that resulted in the issuing of the Prime Minister's Decree on Disabilities on 18 April 2014. This was only an initial success however, LAB's activities will be continued in order to encourage the Government to actively execute the decree.

Through the support of the Danish Association of the Blind and the Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted, LAB kept on performing community based rehabilitation activities. The Learning Project provided for a number of staff and members of LAB by the Danish Association of the Blind and good plan synchronized perfectly and supported LAB with lessons learned from experiences of organizations of the blind such as Ghana, Nepal, Bangladesh, etc. The learning workshop empowered LAB with knowledge and techniques for implementing its community based

rehabilitation activities in three target provinces: Xiengkhouang, Luangprabang and Champassak as well as the capital, Vientiane. People with visual impairments who were identified through surveys received appropriate educational, vocational and physical rehabilitation.

During 2013-2014, the rehabilitation allowed 12 children who are blind or vision impaired to have access to education at two blind schools in Vientiane, supported 38 adults how are blind or partially sighted with vocational training and around 450 people with permanent blindness were supported with training in Orientation and Mobility as well as Daily Living Skills.

In 2013, with magnificent effort from staff of Duxbury in the United States of America, a Lao Duxbury Program was developed and in 2014 it facilitated LAB's production of nearly 100 Braille books more conveniently. In addition, the US Embassy to Laos also approved an application for a small grant enabling LAB to create a screen reading program for people with vision impairment. During 2014-2015, with collaboration of the E-Government Centre under the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunication of Laos and NECTEC, an ICT institute in Thailand which produced a Thai version of the NVDA program, it is anticipated that LAB will be able to distribute a Lao NVDA program to beneficiaries throughout the country via a free download website by mid-2015.

Philippine Blind Union

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First Blind Ladies to Participate in the Philippine Fashion Week

By: Gina Rose Balanlay, Philippine Blind Union

The crowned 2013 Ms Philippines Vision Arhjessa Ashley Leechain Espiritu and first Runner Up Michaela Czarinah Mercado were the first blind ladies who participated in the Philippine Fashion Week Holiday, on 31 May, 2014 at 4pm in Hall 3, SMX Convention Centre, Mall of Asia, Pasay City.

The participation of the blind ladies in the fashion arena was made possible through the efforts of the Philippine Blind Union (PBU) Committee on Women and Nationwide Organization of Visually-Impaired Empowered Ladies (NOVEL), Inc. through the help of Mr. Gerry Gonzalo, a former recognized model who became blind due to an accident. He endorsed the two particular disabled people's organizations (DPOs) to Mr. Audie Espino, an executive director of Runway Productions. Fortunately, its proposal to involve at least two blind ladies in the Philippine Fashion Week

primarily for societal inclusion and equality was approved. Runway Productions, the organization behind the event, gave the blind models reasonable accommodation to be well-oriented on the rectangular or a 40 feet longer and 32 feet shorter base stage using their white canes and high heeled shoes on 30 May 2014. They were trained by Ms. Mila Wayno, an orientation and mobility trainer from Resources for the Blind. The fashion show opened with modelling of luxury wear, visions and trends collection of the country's top designers by professional ramp models. It ended by the latest signature clothes of Lyle Ibañez and Audieae where it was followed by a four minute white cane advocacy video presentation from the DPOs followed by a parade from the two blind models using their white canes, accompanied by a rendition of "You'll Never Walk Alone".

The DPOs, NGOs and women with visual impairment, who significantly contributed to its preparation, were emotional about the success of the show and the reaction of around one thousand audience members encompassing businessmen, young professionals and politicians.

Instantaneously, the fashion show was noticed on social media. The most touching feedback was the blog of Myusefultips blogger. According to him, inclusion matters in 2014 Philippine Fashion Week. He further added, "...it was an awareness campaign on social equality, one of the main challenges of the world today. Of the 50 Filipino fashion designers which participated in the said event, only Audie Espino and Lyle Ibanez were bold enough to embrace the aforementioned blind beauties as part of their ramp models, the best fashion statement so far which should be

replicated in other countries by fashion gurus and experts particularly in developed fashion capitals of New York, London, Milan, Paris and Tokyo....."

The blind models were featured on the news and current affairs of the country's three leading television networks. Arhjessa Espiritu's story was even shown in a drama anthology and recently in a documentary program. Indeed, the PBU Committee on Women and NOVEL's advocacy in making the rights real of women with visual impairment will not happen overnight, yet the recently concluded event is a great step towards its progressive realization.

Philippine Blind Union Committee on Women & Brgy and Mambugan Persons with Disabilities Association Spearheaded a training session on how to assist persons with visual impairment in Antipolo City

By: Gina Rose Balanlay, Philippine Blind Union

The Philippine Blind Union Committee on Women and Barangay Mambugan Persons with Disabilities Association spearheaded a training course entitled "Courtesy Guidelines: Orientation Training in Relating to people with Visual Impairment" on 23 May 2014, to empower the staff and residents of Barangay Mambugan, Antipolo City on how to properly guide and assist people with visual impairments within their locale.

The half day training was attended by 40 participants headed by its Barangay Captain Marlon Zingapan and Barangay Councillor Roble Estrella, the chairman of the committee on persons with disabilities vigorously performed the different techniques of

how to be of help to persons with blindness and low vision as discussed by Ms. Mila Wayno, the resource person from Resources for the Blind.

Regional Conference of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (East Asia Region)

Date: 28 September – 1 October 2015
Venue: Hotel Sanur Paradise Plaza
Bali, Indonesia

EFA-VI Beyond 2015: Asian Perspectives

**Organised by
ICEVI Indonesia Network**

International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) is a global association of individuals and organizations that promotes equal access to appropriate education for all vision impaired children and youth so that they may achieve their full potential. For more information on ICEVI, visit the website at www.icevi.org

East Asia Regional Conference
Keeping in view the global agenda of “Education For All” children, ICEVI East Asia region is attempting to deliberate on the issue of treating education of children with visual impairment as their fundamental human right and ensuring that the global campaign beyond 2015 includes these children too in the vast Asia region, which is reported to have the largest number of visually impaired persons of the world.

Theme: Education For All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI) Beyond 2015: Asian Perspectives

The conference theme will be discussed in the light of global perspectives on education for all, Legislations, curricular strategies, human resource development, technology and higher education and the plenary sessions will focus on the following main topics.

- EFA and Disability: Global Perspectives
- EFA-VI – Progress and Asian Perspectives
- Legislation for inclusion – ASEAN Experience – SEAMEO
- EFA: Strategies to serve low vision children and MDVI
- Role of Technology
- Higher Education
- Audio-visual aids such as TV, LCD projector, Slide Projector, OHP, Flip-charts, etc., will be available for the sessions.
- Poster presentations can also be made by the participants in the designated exhibition area.
- Translation facilities will be made available in Chinese, English, Japanese and Bahasa languages during the plenary sessions. However, simultaneous translation cannot be assured for the parallel sessions.

The abstracts of conference papers not exceeding 200 words should reach the Programme Committee Secretariat:

Dato' S. Kulasegaran (Chairman, Programme Committee) Kompleks MAB Jalan Tebing, Off Jalan Tun Sambanthan 450470, Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA on or before **May 31, 2015**. Abstracts can also be sent by e-mail to (ranthoku@streamyx.com) with

a copy to the CEO, ICEVI Dr. M.N.G. Mani (oficevi@gmail.com)

Regional Organising Committee

The Regional Organising Committee of the conference is chaired by Dr. Suwimon Udampiriyasak, Chairperson, ICEVI East Asia Region with Dato' S. Kulasegaran as the Vice-Chairman. Other members include Sri Soedarsono (Indonesia); Dr. Mudjito, Ak., M.Si., Faculty of Education, State University of Surabaya, Indonesia; Ir. Sri Renani Pantjastuti, MPA, Director, Special Education, Indonesia; Aria Indrawati, President, Pertuni, Indonesia and Dr. M.N.G. Mani, CEO. The Regional Organising Committee will be responsible for the overall policy decisions pertaining to the conference.

Host Committee

The ICEVI Host Committee is headed by Sri Soedarsono, Chairperson, ICEVI Indonesia Network. The members include Dr. Mudjito, Dato Kulasegaran (Chair, Programme Committee), local members from the Government, and Aria Indrawati or Representative of Pertuni. The host-committee will form committees such as reception committee, resources mobilization committee, transport committee, entertainment committee, etc., based on needs. Dr. Suwimon Udampiriyasak and Dr. M.N.G. Mani will serve as ex-officio members of the Host Committee.

Programme Committee

The Programme Committee is chaired by Dato' S. Kulasegaran from Malaysia which includes Dr. Suwimon Udampiriyasak, Regional Chairperson, Dr. Mudjito, Aria Indrawati, Amy Mojica, Herve and M.N.G. Mani (ICEVI) as members.

Registration Details

The Registration Fee (in US Dollars) for the conference will follow the following categories:

- Early Bird Registration (before May 31, 2015):
US\$250 – Participants from countries other than Indonesia
US\$150 – Participants from Indonesia
- Regular Registration (after May 31, 2015):
US\$300 – Participants from countries other than Indonesia
US\$200 – Participants from Indonesia
- Accompanying Person:
US\$150 – Participants from countries other than Indonesia
US\$150 – Participants from Indonesia

The Conference Hotel is Hotel Sanur Paradise Plaza. Participants are expected to stay at this hotel by indicating their preference through the registration form. There are some other hotels in the vicinity which can be opted by the participants. More information on the hotels and the rates will be available soon and shared with the members in the next announcement of the conference.

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Registration Form for the conference should be sent to the Chairperson, Host Committee, on or before June 31 2015.

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