EAST WIND No. 10

Official Newsletter of the World Blind Union-Asia Pacific

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FROM THE EDITOR

This is not an excuse for another late issue of East Wind, but during the period of my delay, there was of course this devastating earthquake, tsunami

and the meltdown of the Fukushima nuclear plants. Nobody knows the true magnitude of the damage or even the number of people who were killed: we only know

that at least 7 blind persons were killed for some reasons.

I live in Tokyo and that was the biggest and the scariest quake I ever had. Trains stopped their services so I had to spend the night at a meeting room

of our workplace. The chaotic period continued for one month even in Tokyo. I strongly feel that our experiences must be documented so that BVI communities

can learn and will take actions to at least minimize the loss and damage in future events.

I have been saying this at various points, but instead of writing lengthy articles, please allow me to take this opportunity, once again, to express our

sincere and deep appreciation to everyone around the world, who gave their helping hand in spirits, messages, and even resources, to all those affected

by the series of disasters, especially to our blind or partially sighted persons. As long as we live, we will never forget the kindness and friendship

you showed us from all around the corner.

Michiko Tabata: Editor-in-Chief

Editorial Committee: Ivan Ho Tuch Choy

Kevin Murfitt

Kim Mok

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DANIDA PROJECT UPDATES

One year has already passed since the Second Phase of the Capacity Building Project funded by DANIDA started. Following is a brief update on what has been

going on in Mongolia (MNFB), Lao PDR (LAB) and WBUAP within the framework of the project.

Baseline Studies: MNFB and LAB conducted pilot baseline studies on the situation and the needs of blind and partially sighted persons in several areas

where surveys have not covered. The two organizations trained field workers and sent them off to collect information. The database of the collected information

will be utilized for future activity designing and potential membership.

New Branches: MNFB and LAB have been working hard to set up new chapters in provinces. MNFB plans to have 3 additional chapters during the Second Phase,

and with that they will fully cover all the provinces of the country. LAB is planning to have 2 new chapters, one in a northern province and another in

a southern province. They have been forming foundations for the new chapters, such as leadership formation.

Information Resource Centers: MNFB and LAB has been establishing their Information Resource Centers equipped with computer-related equipment and books

and other resources. They will be the foundation for information access to blind peoples of the two countries.

Training Programs: Various training sessions have been going on in the two countries. The key persons have been receiving training in communication skills.

MNFB has been providing business management training, whereas LAB organized a training on fundraising. In 2012, the two organizations will initiate training

of O&M trainers.

LAB General Assembly: LAB held its first General Assembly in the history of the organization, following their third Women’s Forum. The two events were

attended by a number of blind and partially sighted persons, who had the democratic election of their new team of leadership. The event succeeded in attracting

the media greatly.

MNFB Journalists’ Workshop: MNFB organized a workshop for journalists in their country to change their perspectives on the blindness. The workshop was

facilitated by a journalist from Denmark and presented role models of blind persons from Mongolia. As a result of the workshop, MNFB succeeded in formulating

a journalists’ network, to which MNFB will give notices on events and issues they wish the journalists to cover.

Partner Workshop: Our friends in Denmark kindly invited all the Project Steering Group members to the Partner Workshop, which also had members from Ghana

and Rwanda. The team made presentations on relevant issues such as advocacy at national level, communications with branches, and contacts with the media.

The teams then brought together experiences from other members on the same issue. The workshop was a good opportunity to exchange experiences in very specific

and relevant issues. The team then went to the General Assembly of European Blind Union where a breakout session was made available for presentation from

the projects including the one in the AP Region.

WBUAP Website: Meanwhile, we finally have the ongoing WBUAP website, thanks to the fund from DANIDA. It is at:

http://wbuap.org/index/.

It has a number of valuable contents including hints and information resources for funding, but above all, it has the function to receive latest postings

by e-mail. As soon as you read this, go right to the above URL and subscribe today!

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VIETNAM BLIND ASSOCIATION ORGANIZING THE 4TH NATIONAL SINGING FESTIVAL

Tran Thi Hong Hai

Vietnam Blind Association organised the final round of the 4th national festival titled “Singing from the heart” from 4-9 November, 2011. The final round

attrached about 200 contestants from 33 local blind associations at city and provincial level.

This festival was started from district and commune levels (March, 2011) to provincial level (September 2011). Each blind association in the province were

to select two or three best turns to participate in the final round. As a result, among 1000 turns at local levels, 90 turns were selected in varied genres

such as solo performance, a concert with musical instruments, dances of an ethnic group or even a short comedy.

After two days competion in the final round at the Training and Rehabilitation Center of the Blind, the Jury and organization committee chose 16 best turns

to be shown at the Opera House. These 16 turns represented culturally specific characteristics from each region. In the festival this year, many songs

were composed and performed by blind members themselves, including Vietnamese popular opera and folk songs.

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Vietnam awarded 30 golden medals and 40 silver medals. Vietnam Blind Association also gave 15 certificates

to 15 excellent associations. In addition, a cerfiticate for the youngest contestant was given to Bui Ngoc Thinh (11 years old, male) and the eldest contestant,

Le The Nguyen (63 years old, male).

The 4th national festival “Singing from the heart” contributes to enhance spiritual life quality of the blind and raise the image and awareness of an optimistic,

confident and talented blind to the community.

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UPDATE FROM PACIFIC OCEANIA

Kevin Murfitt

Pacific Education For All Vision Impaired (EFA-VI) Forum, 13-14 January 2011

In January 2011, the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC) Sydney, and Vision Australia (VA) jointly hosted the Pacific EFA-VI Forum on 13-14

January 2011 in Sydney NSW. The Forum participants included 24 representatives of Pacific regional education and health ministries/ departments and organisations

of people with disabilities (DPOs). The main aim of the Forum was to share perspectives and approaches to education of children with vision impairments

in the ten Pacific Island countries represented at the Forum and to establish priorities for growth in current education provision. The Forum also provided

the opportunity to strengthen regional partnerships and collaboration in the field of vision impairment, and to share information about approaches to the

detection of vision impairments in young children and the introduction of Braille in Pacific Island countries.

The countries represented at the Forum (in alphabetical order) were Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand

Palau Islands, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu. Also represented were the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Pacific

Disability Forum (PDF), AusAID, RIDBC, Vision Australia, the Centre for Eye Research Australia (CERA), and the South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment

(SPEVI). Attendance of the Pacific Island participants was supported through the generous financial assistance of AusAID, ICEVI, SPEVI, Flinders University,

RIDBC, Vision Australia, and private donors.

Development of PEDF-VI: Pacific Education Development Framework - Vision Impairment, 2011-2015 The major outcome of the Forum was the collaborative development

of key priorities for education of children with vision impairments in the ten Pacific Island countries represented at the Forum. The priorities are closely

aligned with the Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) for 2009-2015 (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2009), and as a result, the document

is titled Pacific Education Development Framework -Vision Impairment, 2011-2015 (PEDF-VI). The priorities include consideration of the implications for

education of children with vision impairments of contemporary perspectives on the rights of people with disabilities, in particular the Convention of the

Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in particular Articles 21 and 24 (United Nations, 2006).

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people with disabilities, especially the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, (United Nations, 2006); in particular Articles 21 and 24

that have particular relevance to the rights of children and adults with vision impairments:

The participants at the ICEVI Pacific/WBU Pacific-Oceania EFAVI Workshop have established a network so there can be ongoing communication and assistance

to encourage all countries to implement the framework for 2011-2015.

Leadership Development & Governance Workshop of PNG-BU

As Chair of WBU Pacific-Oceania sub-region I assisted Special member of WBU, Papua New Guinea Blind Union, to submit a successful funding application,

to the Pacific Disability Forum, to enable PNG-BU to hold another leadership development and governance workshop with a view to planning and holding a

general assembly and national elections in early 2012. This will assist PNG-BU can become eligible for full membership of WBU.

I co-facilitated this workshop in Goroka PNG in October with Ipul Poasu, the Chair of PNG’s National DPO (disabled persons organization), and Martin Kawage,

Chair of PNG-BU. The workshop was held over two days at Mt Sion Training and Resource Centre (formerly Mt Sion School for the Blind). Participants worked

very hard particularly on clarifying their leadership roles in their own regions and more broadly, and on developing an effective communication strategy.

The most widely used and cost effective means of communication is mobile phone so access to talks software for mobile phones to enable texting is now a

sought after technology. If anyone can assist in this regard please contact me.

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WORLD BRAILLE COUNCIL

Tetsuji Tanaka

The Second meeting of World Braille Council (WBC) was held under the Chairmanship of Mr. Kaul, between January 20 and 21, 2011 in Delhi, India.

First, the leaders of the various groups formed at the first meeting in Madrid, reported their activities and progress:

From Technical Sub-Committee: Although there are various Braille codes for mathematics and science, it might be advisable for specific language groups

to have a common code. The possibility of a unified punctuation code for similar languages should be explored.

Proposal for funding for a research project on a common mathematics and science code: Due to resource constraints by economic downturn in Europe, RNIB

has not been able to extend help. RNIB was also committed to supporting work for Unified English Braille. Now, it might be better for specific language

groups to work to consolidate their own codes instead of a global exercise. After the discussion, Dixon informed that there is the second proposed unified

code being evaluated in the US that would integrate its mathematics, literary, and computer Braille codes into one system.

Braille/tactile representation of pictures: a document is being prepared by the Braille Authority of North America. That work focused primarily on Braille

transcription aspects.

A list of Braille libraries across the world now covered 127 libraries in 69 countries. WBU’s Secretariat may be requested to obtain information on the

libraries from national affiliates and regional Unions. The existing directories of libraries and data-base formats might also be consulted. Links to these

additional libraries on the WBU website may be given, while posting the data-base there.

Braille Authorities: the work of the 3rd edition of ‘The World Braille Usage’, had been rather slow. It is now likely to gain momentum with the help of

some useful resource databases like the work done in Japan, European Braille codes gathered by RNIB and the useful information available with Duxbury systems.

Preparation of resource material for Braille teaching and production: that comprehensive bibliography dating back to 1956 is prepared.

In the next session, the issues concerning Braille signage and standards for public places, consumer and pharmaceutical products were considered.

At the first meeting, a small group was formed to look into the question of Braille signage and labels for various consumer products. As a result, a statement

regarding Braille signage and labelling was prepared.

A sub-committee of ISO was established under the Technical Committee 173 to deliberate on Braille signage and standards for international acceptance. Mittal

and Tanaka attended the meeting of the sub-committee held in Tokyo on 29th and 30th November 2010

There are some divergences of standards being proposed at different levels for different purposes. Some kind of unification of standards should be therefore

necessary to ensure uniformity and harmony. It was advisable for WBU hereafter through the World Braille Council to step in.

That draft proposal considered by the sub-committee in Tokyo had three parts. Part 1 is ‘Principles of Braille signage’. Based on this part, the remaining

draft gives guidelines for the use of Braille signage for public facilities (part-2) and for Braille signage for consumer products (part-3).

After the discussion, the members recommended that WBU may constitute a small group with substantive representation from WBC to examine the entire question

of Braille signage including the three-part proposal put forward by Japan.

In the next session, 6 representatives from various WBU regions made reports on the status of Braille and the challenges faced concerning Braille: ABU

region, Arab speaking countries, EBU, Francophone Union, ULAC and WBU/AP.

As regards the WBU/AP, the status of Braille of 14 languages in the region varied considerably between the developed and developing countries, with Japan

and South Korea representing one extreme and countries like Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar the other. A major challenge faced by some countries has been

the urgency for developing a standard Braille code for their languages. Japan has assisted some countries to meet the challenge of Braille production and

standardization but much still remains to be done.

Following the regional reports, the President of WBU highlighted the measures initiated by WBU for Braille promotion. The initiatives of ICEVI and the

supports of NABP and RNIB were also outlined.

Furthermore, the three groups met separately and discussed their tasks.

Group 1: Braille Codes including science and maths notations.

Group 2: Identifying resource material on different facets of Braille teaching and production; preparing a statement on research needs and priorities for

teaching Braille; considering issues pertaining to Braille/tactile representation of pictures and drawings; Braille authorities; the proposed 3rd edition

of the ‘World Braille Usage’.

Regarding the question of developing a document on Braille graphics and tactile representations, the group decided to await publication of the ‘Promising

Practices’ document on which the Braille Authority of North America is currently working.

ICEVI has currently established a committee to look into research in Braille. The working group will try to establish contact with the ICEVI research committee

to incorporate their findings into our bibliography document and to determine how we might work with them.

Group 3: Technology Award on behalf of WBU/WBC and Braille21 Congress.

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VISIT TO THE PHILIPPINES

Dato Kulasegaran

I, together with Ivan, made a visit to the Philippines from 6 - 8 January 2011. This was the follow-up action agreed when I met with Michael Barredo in

Japan during the WBUAP Mid-Term Regional Assembly in my capacity as Chair of SEASRC, and also on the requests of WBU and the WBUAP Board for the purpose

of re-activating the Philippine Blind Union which had remained dormant for the past few years.

The first action which I persuaded PBU to take was to apply for re-classification of their membership. This, they did and the WBU Officers approved their

application in Melbourne in November 2010.

During the visit, a meeting was held with Capt. Oscar Taleon, Michael Barredo and Marita Capadocia who formed the "Core Team" to take the necessary measures

to re-invigorate PBU, and to draw up an Action Plan to be based on the points agreed at the discussions. They informed me that all their important documents

were destroyed when their office was damaged by a typhoon some years back.

They have, on 28 February 2011, formulated the PBU Re-organisation Plan of Action. It will lead to the re-registering of the organisation, the holding

of the National Assembly of Regional Leaders, the ratification of a new Constitution, and the installation of new PBU Board by the third quarter of 2011.

PBU then held a strategic planning workshop between October 14 and 16, where I again visited. WBUAP provided USD1,000 of financial assistance to realize

this session.

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2011 ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL BLIND MEDICAL MASSAGE INSTRUCTORS' INTERNATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

Zhu Gang / Peng Lei

2011 Asia Pacific Regional Blind Medical Massage Instructors' International Training Program, which was initiated by WBUAP Regional Massage Commission,

hosted by China Blind Massage Administration Center and Hunan Yeahcome Health Care Co., Ltd. It successfully completed all contents and achieved the prospective

target last May, after 60 days of bilingual study and training. There were altogether 15 trainees coming from 8 different countries or territories in the

Asia Pacific Region. They are from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Malaysia, the Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, and China Taiwan. This training course

is totally free of charge to every trainee.

The training program involved both theoretical knowledge and clinical technique and courses included basic theory of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Soft

Tissue Release, Meridians and Acupoints, Massage Therapy of Astriction, Obesity, Diarrhea, Vertigo, Headache, hypertension, Insomnia, Stomachache, Massage

Therapy of Frozen Shoulder & Cervical Spondylosis, Gynecological Diseases Massage, Tuina manipulation of children, Palpation Diagnostics, Clinic Technique

Exchange etc.

The program had profound meaning to improve blind massage enterprises, strengthen academic exchange and promote blind massage development beyond regions.

No pains, no gains! Through diligent work, all trainees achieved 2 Certificates. I. Certificate for Senior Massage Therapist, issued by the Ministry of

Human Resources and Social Security of the People’s Republic of China. II. Certificate of Graduation, issued by the WBUAP Regional Massage Commission and

China Blind Massage Administration Center.

All trainees are blind massage therapists from Asia Pacific countries/territories. In two-month study, they grasped the basic theory and clinical skills

of medical massage in many fields, especially traditional Chinese massage. Meanwhile, all trainees established a cooperative relationship of discussion

in blind massage through exchanging massage experience and ideas with each other. In their training in Changsha, China, they took care of each other, and

cultivated deep friendship. They also exchanged their experiences and findings, and established discussing and development cooperation relationship of

blind massage.

China is courteous and hospitable. China opens the friendly gate to the blind massage specialists, scholars and friends in the Asia Pacific region, even

all over the world. And Chinese government has always made great efforts to support the works for disabled persons, which made continuous improvement in

rehabilitation, education, employment, poverty alleviation and blind massage. We hope this pattern will spread to other countries/territories and we share

the rich experience and unique methods in management, education and massage clinic in the region.

This type of international training program is an initial attempt in the education of blind medical massage, and we will make great efforts to achieve

co-prosperity. This training program is elevating medical massage academic level and massage skills in the Asia Pacific region, and promoting the development

of blind massage career too!

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EXCHANGE ACTIVITIES OF JAPAN FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

Michiko Tabata

Japan Federation of the Blind recently made two visits to the organization of our friends during the recent months.

1. The Sports Council of JFB visited Manila early November, to seek sports exchange with our friends and colleagues in the Philippines. The leaders from

Japan brought to Manila all the equipment and expertise on various ball games for the blind, such as volleyball, baseball and tennis. Our Filipino host

invited blind kids and their parents from the organization called VISTA, which was formed to promote sports for blind kids. The team from Japan went on

a TV feature and talked passionately about all the good things about sports. It was a great day for the kids as well as the sports leaders from JFB, playing

together, chasing balls, hitting the ball with rackets or bats, and quickly clearing the field to escape from the tropical rain shower.

2. JFB delegates visited Korea Blind Union late November, as part of the arrangement for biannual exchange between the neighboring countries. In 2010,

our friends from Korea came to Japan in a huge group of 70 persons during the time of our Mid-Term Assembly, and in 2011, about 10 delegates from JFB visited

Seoul. Part from visiting some of the major institutions and organizations, the delegations from the two countries exchanged their views on the implementation

of CRPD, the latest trends in the massage business for the blind in the two countries, and ideas to promote activities of the two organizations. The mutual

visit will continue every year or two years.

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AGEING AND VISUAL IMPAIRMENT WBU REPORT

WBBU Elderly Working Group

This report puts forward the case for member organisations to consider strategically how they plan to meet the needs of the growing number of elderly persons

with newly acquired sight loss.

World population is growing and at the same time the balance is shifting to a higher percentage of older people. Population growth is exponential: in 1800

the global population was 1 billion, by 1930 2 billion, 1974 4 billion, 1982 5 billion, 1999 6 billion, 2011 7 billion and projected to rise to 9 billion

by 2045! 95% of future population growth will be in the less developed world. Looking back, high birth rates were matched by high death rates. Improved

sanitation, health care and food supply all lead to higher life expectancy. Birth rates decline as women are educated and child mortality declines. This

leads to a situation where there are fewer children and more older people. Where the elderly outnumber the young we must ask the question, “Who will support

the old?”

There is strong global evidence that despite significant strides in terms of prevention of blindness we are likely to experience a significant growth in

the number of older people experiencing sight loss. The WBU Elderly Blind Working Group has worked to try and evidence the impact on a regional basis and

to produce a report that will help influence the development of services, particularly in those countries that do not have a strong infrastructure of health

and social care support.

Available data, particularly from WHO, is confusing and more recently has been showing some reduction in global blindness. APB agrees that without more

detail it is more difficult to interpret. They suggest that, “It is possible that we are now seeing a downward trend in numbers as a positive indication

of some success after 10 years of VISION 2020.” WHO gives two explanations of the downward trend – socio-economic causes and governments implementing eye

health programmes, there may be a third, that is more data and evidence of lower prevalence rates in Africa.

However, the working group believes, and this report provides evidence, that we will still face a global growth in age related sight loss and this needs

to be fully acknowledged in service planning. Useful data exists in developed regions which have good census data, prevalence and pathology data and in

most cases a system of recording legal blindness. This is not the case elsewhere and whilst it is still possible to establish good approximations, the

report concentrates particularly on Europe, Australia, New Zealand and North America. Inter-regional comparison is not easy and readers need to be aware

that estimates of the number of people experiencing vision loss differ based on the definitions of vision loss used.

So why should we take this seriously? Why is it so important? Serious sight loss is in the top 10 causes of disability, a disability which in older people

can lead to a decrease in the quality of life, has an adverse impact on activities of daily living, causes falls and injuries and leads to social exclusion

and depression.

Whilst there is this clear moral case for action, there is also a clear economic case. Work carried out in the UK calculated that in 2008 the direct health

and social care expenditure associated with sight loss was £2.14 billion. To this was added £4.34 billion of indirect costs including £2 billion as a calculation

of the additional cost of informal care. This is not all, WHO in 2000 adopted ‘Disability Adjusted Life Years’ (DALY) as a measure of the overall disease

burden, expressed as the number of years lost due to ill health, disability or early death. In this 2009 published study a monetary value was put on the

DALY of £15.5 billion, giving a total of £22 billion.

Vision 2020 and the organisations associated with the programme are working to prevent avoidable blindness. This report concludes that we now need an action

plan to reduce the impact or burden of sight loss, particularly on older people, achieved through the delivery of improved support.

The WBU Working Group on Elderly Blind calls all organisations in member countries to help raise awareness of this challenge. The Working Group for its

contribution, plans to prepare materials to assist in awareness raising and to aid service development through the promotion of models of good practice

that can assist countries to plan for the future. Together we believe that we can all contribute to making the world a better place for older blind and

partially sighted people.

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COMING UP…..

THE 11TH WBUAP Regional Seminar on Massage for the Blind

The 11th WBUAP Seminar on Massage will be held at Hotel Istana, No. 73, Jalan Raja Chulan. Kuala Lumpur. This venue was selected for its location and convenience.

Situated right in the middle of the business triangle of Kuala Lumpur, delegates will find it very easy to reach all the points of interest, including

the many shopping complexes and eateries. Hotel Istana was also selected for its ability to accommodate the whole seminar within one floor, thus participants

need not have to move around too much.

In order to ensure that the seminar will be professionally handled, the National Council for the blind, Malaysia has invited Bonvo Travel, a company that

is registered in Malaysia and Singapore to be a joint organizer for this event. As Bonvo Travel has agents in many of the Asian Pacific countries, we are

sure that involving Bonvo Travel will bring about benefits to all the participants from the different countries.

As Malaysia has also placed emphasis on Complementary and Traditional Medicine, the Ministry of Health, Malaysia, through the department of Traditional

and Complementary Medicine, (TCM) is supporting this seminar as a joint organizer.

The Theme of this year’s event is “Therapeutic Massage for Better Health and the topics for the plenary include:

• Country Experience : Recognition and Regulatory for BVI Massage

• BVI Massage Techniques for specific medical conditions (muscular skeletal conditions, neurological conditions & internal organ)

• Rebranding BVI Massage towards Entrepreneurship

• Way forward : International Collaboration for Advancement

As usual, there will be two sessions of workshops where there will be an exchange of ideas on Hands-on massage techniques. Though we are only just a couple

of weeks to the event, we welcome anyone whom still have yet to sign up for the seminar. As requested by the Massage Commission, we are keeping the registration

to as low as possible, as such, we are maintaining the price of registration at USD250.

For those who would like more information about the seminar, you can go online at:

http://wbuap2012.com/

or even request for the forms in PDF or Word files from

moseschoo@ncbm.org.my

While the registration fees only covers all official receptions and meals during the seminar, hotel accommodations can also be made through this same web

site. Though Hotel Istana is a 5\* hotel, Bonvo Travel has managed to bring the cost of staying at this hotel down to only USD107 for singles and USD114

for twin sharing. This price is inclusive of breakfast.

With all this information, we, at the NCBM look forward to receiving and welcoming more people to Malaysia, Truly Asia.

THE 8TH WBU GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The 8th WBU General Assembly will be held in Bangkok, Thailand, between November 12 and 16. November 10 and half day of November 11 will be spared for

Diversity Forum. There will be our regional meeting as well. Registration will start toward the end of April, so be sure to mark your calendar.

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We Are Waiting for Your Contributions!!

Send in your writings…reports, essays, poems, commentary, just about anything, that you might want to share with your friends and colleagues in the Region.

Your Donations Is Always Welcome!!

Help us make a difference of what it means to be blind. Your donations will help our international blindness movement in particular from our friends in

less economically privileged circumstances.

Your generous contribution is very much appreciated. Please note that, following the election of our new Treasurer, we have our new USD account in Australia.

Please direct your payment to:

National Australia Bank

Bank Address: 330 Collins Street , Melbourne, Australia

BSB: 083-004

Account Number: WBUAPUSD01

Swift Code: NATAAU3303M

Name: World Blind Union – Asia Pacific

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