

Communicators meet on Global Communication and Justice

From January 8 to 15, 1992 journalists and experts in the fields of sociology, religion and education attended an eight-day consultation in Quezon City, Philippines, on Global Communication and Justice.

The 25 participants who represented eight countries in Asia and North America came to examine in-depth the issues of global communication and justice and to devise a plan of action to change communication policies in structures of governments, development agencies and religious institutions.

La Rainne Abad-Sarmiento and Eliz Reyes-Martinez, coordinator and program officer, respectively, of Isis International Manila were invited to give a presentation on media messages and values from the context of Asia and the experience of women in the global community. In the session, "Taking Control: Media Education and Awareness," the Isis resource speakers gave their inputs on what is being done by women to raise awareness about the images and content of the portrayal of women in media and specifically the impact of media in stereotyping, consumerism, sexism, racism, etc.

As the world moves towards a global village there is a growing concern over how the media is communicating to the people. Along with the messages of buy and sell, there is a message of domination from those controlling the media and the new communication technologies.

North America is recognized as one of the cultural dominators. It not only exports form and content but western economic-based theories of media regulation that serve the interests of the transnational corporations rather than those of the people - especially women, the *dalits* (outcasts) in India, the indigenous people in Asia as well as

the marginalised groups in North America.

The consultation allowed the participants to examine how the transformation of communication impacts on us and our communities.

Participants in the consultation had intense discussions with local grassroots organizers from the fishing and farm communities, labor movement and urban poor. They also visited the various communication agencies. These visits, together with the research papers presented helped participants to see firsthand how the communication process is being used and abused.

Participants called on communicators and educators in both North America and Asia to work together for a more just global communication environment.

Religious authorities were called on to see the impact of communication as an object of social action and reform and take the lead in promoting change and justice.

The participants also recommended that an Asia-North America forum be held in the next three years to conduct studies, work on the building of a resource network, and organize the exchange of resources.

The consultation was sponsored by Intermedia, Asia Region-World Association of Christian Communication (AR-WACC), Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) in cooperation with National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC) USA, Asian Social Institute (ASI), People in Communication (PIC) and National Council of Churches Philippines (NCCP). □

Source: Article based on press release written by Shala Koshy and Jeneane Jones.

David Bridell, director of Intermedia of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, New York and a member of the planning group of the Interregional Consultation on Global Communication and Justice (See above story) visited the Isis International office in Manila after the consultation. David was responsible for coordinating the participation of Isis in the consultation. □

