

DEVELOPING ASIA JOURNALISM AWARDS CEREMONY: 7 APRIL 2004

Opening remarks

**By Mr. Kiyoshi Kodera
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Good evening, honorable members of the Foreign Correspondents' Club, ambassadors, all of the welcome guests from Asia, and ladies and gentleman.

I am very pleased to be here for this important awards ceremony. Speaking as a representative of the sole donor to the Asia Development Bank Institute, I would like to make two remarks.

Asian Development Bank

First, on the Asian Development Bank. I have been dealing with the multilateral development bank (MDB) business for many years. I know that at any time there are various new challenges for the MDBs, and that both the World Bank group and the Asian Development Bank group need to face these challenges. One of the new challenges these days is the need for more accountability and more transparency. In this context, until a few years ago the ADB's public relations policy sometimes seemed rather reserved and perhaps even timid. But I have to say that things have changed. The ADB group has clearly changed its policy for external relations and has strengthened the quality of its staff. There is now a more proactive outreach to the media and indeed I note that a new media consultant has been hired in ADB's Japan Representative Office here in Tokyo. All of this is most welcome.

I believe this ceremony here tonight, which supports developing Asian journalism, is another good example of the ADB's efforts to improve the outreach to the public. Peter McCawley, the head of the ADBI, you should be proud of the ADBI's initiative in this area.

Good Governance

Second, I would like to say a few words about good governance. I would like to underline that achieving good governance in Asian borrowing countries is one of the three major pillars of the ADB's poverty reduction strategy adopted in 1999.

Good governance is a wide-ranging and very broad concept. Unfortunately, it is even a fact that the Japanese language doesn't have a proper translation for good governance. But we all know that there is a need for good and efficient budget execution, efficient tax and custom administration, efficient and impartial civil servant systems, and a good legal and judicial system. All of these elements contribute to the overall good governance of a country.

In building and implementing these systems, the role of journalism and other parts of the media is critical. Observations and voices of journalists themselves facilitate people in the streets and villages of developing countries understand the complex linkages between good policies and outcomes on the ground.

With this award ceremony, ADBI has reminded us of the important role of journalism in enhancing good governance. So, tonight I'm very much looking forward to see who's going to be the winner for this important award.

Thank you very much.