

DAJA Awards 2006
Remarks by President Haruhiko Kuroda, Asian Development Bank

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of the joint sponsors, the ADB Institute in Tokyo and the Asian Development Bank, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to tonight's awards ceremony.

I particularly want to extend a sincere greeting to the stars of the evening, the journalists who have been chosen as finalists in this competition.

I am delighted that we are joined tonight by an important group of ambassadors and diplomats, eminent persons from the world of journalism in the Philippines, our three distinguished judges, and our host, Ms. Lorraine Hahn.

ADB is very proud to support the Developing Asia Journalism Awards program. As a development institution, we are deeply committed to the vision of an Asia and Pacific region free of poverty. And we deeply appreciate the contributions each of you makes to development by drawing the public eye to the many faces of poverty and deprivation, and to potential and lasting solutions.

This awards program, which is now in its third year, was designed to recognize the impact of journalists on the process of development. And I would say that this impact is most profound at the level of governance.

Good governance, as we know, is based on a set of key principles, including transparency, accountability and the opportunity for citizens to participate in development. None of these can be achieved in the absence of information.

But to say that the role of a journalist is simply to provide information would be a gross understatement. The stories we honor tonight, the stories you tell every day, are crucial to the process of change itself. They encourage public debate, create groundswells for reform, and indeed assist governments in promoting changes that may be difficult or not well understood, but clearly necessary to a nation's well being.

These are weighty responsibilities, requiring the utmost integrity, persistence and passion for justice and human dignity. The work of a journalist can no doubt be challenging at the best of times. In developing countries, it can be even tougher, given the political complexities, lack of resources and sometimes dangerous environments in which the press operates.

Even so, it is crucial work – a factor we recognize through our awards tonight. Many of you will be familiar with the World Summit on the Information Society. Through this important Summit, the global community has affirmed its commitment to “build a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society.” A society in which

“people everywhere can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, to achieve their full potential and to attain the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals.”

To tonight's finalists, I say that your personal and dedicated efforts are helping the world to move towards such a society. For that, we applaud you.

Let me close by saying that we appreciate the involvement and cooperation of so many journalists and others from the media for supporting the awards by submitting entries. We greatly respect the tough decisions faced by the judges, led by Mr. Anthony Rowley, in whittling these down to the final 16 who are here tonight.

To all of the finalists here tonight, I again extend my heartfelt congratulations. And if I may borrow a well-known sign-off of the famous broadcast journalist, Edward R. Murrow, *“Good night and good luck.”*