

# Welcome Remarks

6th International Conference

## COVID-19 IN ASIA:

Communication • Nationalism • Technology

8-10 SEPTEMBER 2021  
BANGKOK, THAILAND



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Dr. Robin Ramcharan, Executive Director of Asia Centre, Ms. Varinrumpai Puntanaree, Deputy CEO, Thai Media Fund, Mr. Frederic Spohr, Head of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, Thailand, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Graduate School of Communication Arts and Management Innovation of the National Institute for Development Administration, I am pleased to welcome all of you, researchers, parliamentarians, civil society representatives and others, for this 6th International Conference: ‘COVID-19 in Asia: Communications, Nationalism and Technology.’

The goal of this conference is to exchange ideas and good practices, to learn from each other and to create tools to overcome the challenges in communication, address nationalism issues and improve technology in the still-ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Let me sum up some observations that led to the choice of this topic, one year ago already.

In addition to a public health and economic catastrophe, COVID-19 has created a communications challenge called the “infodemic”. As a result, all countries are dealing with the mis- and disinformation relative to the origins of the virus, the under- or overestimated cases, bogus cures, and the reliability of vaccines.

COVID-19 additionally became a matter of nationalism, every country trying to prove that they had the best strategy to limit the spread of the virus, the least deaths, or the highest recovery rate. When a vaccine appeared as the only solution, once again, all countries made plans to create their own vaccine as a matter of national pride.

Meanwhile, technology has been marshalled by governments, businesses and civil society to continue their activities, and adapt to a new normal. However, civil society organisations suffer disproportionately as they are still not receiving appropriate support in their enterprises to combat fake news or support recovery efforts.

In supporting this conference, I hope in the next three days everyone will increase their knowledge on COVID-19’s impact in Asia. While we could not meet this time, I am glad you are able to join us from different countries, even different continents.

Finally, I’d like to express my gratitude to our partner Asia Centre for organizing this event. We look forward to continuing working together. Once again welcome to all of you and I wish success to all presenters, participants and partners.