

**Handbook on
Media Relations and
Communication Skills**

Handbook on Media Relations and Communication Skills

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FOREWORD

Secretary General of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia

The members of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR RI) of the 2009-2014 period are the people's representatives elected by the third general election after the Democratic Reform, the advent of democracy in Indonesia. Compared to previous post-Reform elections, we may say that the 2009 election has gone through a more mature democratization process.

The positive development of democracy in Indonesia intensifies the people's demand on their representatives in the DPR to improve their work performance and quality compared to previous periods. In truth the demand must also take account of the fact that the majority of the people's representatives of this period is new to the DPR. They would need relatively more time to study and comprehend their tasks and authorities in performing their functions as the people's representatives.

In addition, it is necessary to immediately familiarize DPR members of this current period with their role, function, tasks, and authorities, because the recently issued Law No.27/2009 on the People's Consultative Assembly, House of Representatives, House of Regional Representatives, and Regional House of Representatives has changed several regulations on the system and procedures of representative institutions in Indonesia.

We understand that in order to improve work performance, DPR members need to increase their knowledge and understanding of their main tasks and functions according to new developments, including new adjustments to existing laws. To help increase such knowledge and understanding, the General Secretariat of DPR is cooperating with Parliamentary Support Programme of UNDP to compose eight handbooks for DPR members.

To optimally realize the hopes and intentions of this book, we have composed this book: (1) based on regulations according to Law No. 27/2009 on MPR, DPR, DPD, and DPRD, which is currently the main foundation for the system and procedures of representative institutions in Indonesia; (2) with the goal to fill practical needs; (3) complete with best practices in Indonesia or in other countries.

It is our hope this book will have significant positive impact on the work performance of the DPR.

Secretary General DPR RI,

Dra. Hj. Nining Indra Shaleh, M.Si.

PREFACE

UNDP Parliamentary Support Programme

On this occasion, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) would like to congratulate the new members of the House of Representatives (DPR) and the House of Regional Representatives (DPD) of the Republic of Indonesia, 2009-2014. We wish you success in your public endeavours. We would like to take this moment to express our gratitude to the Secretariat General of the DPR and the DPD RI, the Australian Agency for International Development, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, and The Asia Foundation for their unwavering support in the development of these handbooks. Finally, we also would like to thank the authors themselves for generously sharing their expertise and experience.

Becoming a member of parliament is a great honor, but it also entails great responsibility. Certainly, the House Members are expected to not only listen to the people, but also represent them and respond to their needs in a timely and effective manner. The UNDP Parliamentary Support Programme gives its full support to the Secretariat of both Houses and all the House Members in the representation of their constituents.

The Handbook on Media Relations and Communication Skill is written to help the House members in their duties and responsibilities, particularly their relations with journalists and correspondents. This book also includes the importance of building good relations with both print and electronic media. Furthermore, the book also provides tips to prepare and give speeches, and to develop press releases. Hopefully, the House members will be able to use the media as a useful communication channel to for their work.

The success of parliamentary democracy in Indonesia depends much on the work of its members. For that reason, the public will have a great interest in overseeing the members' work in parliament. To also support the effectiveness of the members' work, this handbook describes best practices from various democratic countries. The UNDP Parliamentary Support Programme is also continuously supporting the work of members with the necessary knowledge and technical assistance.

We hope that members will find this handbook useful, and will refer to it regularly as a source of information in carrying out their duties. We have compiled complicated and complex issues into a simple and easy-to-read format. We wish all the members the best of luck in all their future work.

Yours sincerely,

UNDP Parliamentary Support Programme

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List of Acronyms

AJI	: <i>Aliansi Jurnalis Independen</i> /Alliance of Independent Journalists
ATVLI	: <i>Asosiasi Televisi Lokal Indonesia</i> /Indonesian Local Television Association
ATVSI	: <i>Asosiasi Televisi Swasta Indonesia</i> /Indonesian Private Television Association
DPD	: <i>Dewan Perwakilan Daerah</i> /House of Regional Representatives
DPR	: <i>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat</i> /House of Representatives
IJTI	: <i>Ikatan Jurnalis Televisi Indonesia</i> /Television Journalists Association
KEJ	: <i>Kode Etik Jurnalistik</i> /Journalistic Code of Ethics
KPK	: <i>Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi</i> /Corruption Eradication Commission
MP	: Member of Parliament
MPR	: <i>Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat</i> /People's Consultative Assembly
PWI	: <i>Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia</i> /Indonesian Journalists Association
PRSSNI	: <i>Persatuan Radio Siaran Swasta Nasional Indonesia</i> /Indonesian National Private Broadcast Radio Association
SIT	: <i>Surat Izin Terbit</i> /Publishing License
SIUPP	: <i>Surat Izin Usaha Penerbitan Pers</i> /Press Publishing Business License
SPP	: <i>Serikat Penerbitan Pers</i> /Press Publishing Union
WTS	: <i>wartawan tanpa surat kabar</i> /journalists without newspapers

The background of the entire page is a repeating geometric pattern of interlocking lines forming stars and polygons, rendered in a light green color against a darker green background. A dark green horizontal bar is positioned in the upper third of the page, containing the chapter title. A thin white horizontal line is located just below the 'CHAPTER I' text.

CHAPTER I

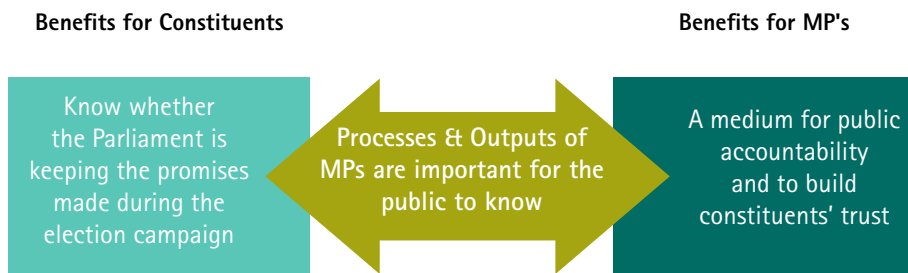
**The Media and the Parliament:
Two Worlds, One Goal**

The Members of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR-RI) and the House of Regional Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPD-RI), hereafter referred to collectively as "Members of Parliament" or "MPs," hold a critical, strategic position. This is because their status has been achieved through a lengthy struggle, whereby they have become the people's representatives. This is why MPs are often called the fighters for and bearers of the people's mandate.

As the bearers of their constituents' mandate, the MPs' struggle obviously does not end with the conclusion of the election campaign. After achieving victory, legislative members are required to carry out the duties of legislation, budgeting, and oversight. The processes the MPs perform and the results they achieve need to be made known to the public (especially to the constituents who elected them) as general right of the public.

Figure 1

Processes and Outputs of Members of Parliament



This process is one means for implementation of democracy: accountability

The problem is how the constituents can monitor what their representatives in Parliament are doing. Obviously, they cannot simply attend all sessions in person to observe what their representatives are doing in Parliament. Likewise, it is quite difficult for Parliament members to constantly visit their constituents. Their very busy schedules mean that they are not always available to go and visit their constituents in their electoral districts. To overcome this problem, it is essential to foster a partnership with the mass media – the press. Good relations between MPs and the press will facilitate communication between MPs and their constituents, and with the broader public.

From the journalists' perspective as well, this complementary relationship is a necessity. The press actually has the same interests as the MPs. The various processes and activities performed by MPs, up to and including the output of their work, are important events that the media cannot possibly ignore. And to obtain accurate information, journalists have to get their information from reliable sources, ideally from the very people who are making the news – in this case, the MPs themselves. For the press, informing their readers about interesting and important events and information is their responsibility, as part of fulfilling the public's right to know. And when it comes to political issues, MPs are a crucial source, and always newsworthy. For these reasons, it is essential to build a partnership between these two elements of democracy. Such partnership will be

healthy when it is egalitarian, based on mutual need and mutual respect: a kind of mutual symbiosis.

Without the press, the voice of MPs could not be heard. And without information from the MPs, the press would have problems presenting accurate, complete, and in-depth news reports on matters of state and politics in the Parliament.

The press is a symbol of democracy, often referred to as the “fourth pillar” of democracy. If the power of the DPR lies in its functions of drafting legislation, budgeting, and overseeing the course of government, then the functions of the press lie in information and social control.



A good partnership with the media – media relations – is a strategic necessity for MPs. And for the media, the relationship with the MPs is equally important, especially to facilitate and accelerate communication with the general public.

To reach an understanding between the two sides, each must understand the world of the other. The MPs need to know the philosophy and mission of the press, and vice versa. With this understanding, the MPs and the press can each gain maximum benefits from their partnership. If clashes or misunderstandings occur between them, the existence of this mutual understanding will make it much easier to resolve such problems effectively and gracefully.

As well as being astute in making use of the strengths of the press, MPs need to be skilled communicators. As a representative of his or her party, every MP is a politician and communicator who has been tested in the field. Many MPs are skilled orators with excellent communication skills. Their resilience has been proven, since they went through the nomination and candidacy process, fought a political campaign, and won. During the campaign period, most of their communication was with party leaders, other party members, and voters; but once they become MPs, the reach of their communication becomes larger still. As well as communicating with their constituents and internally within their parties, they also need to communicate with other MPs, including members of their own party groups and committees, fellow committee members from different parties, government officials, the media, and the general public.

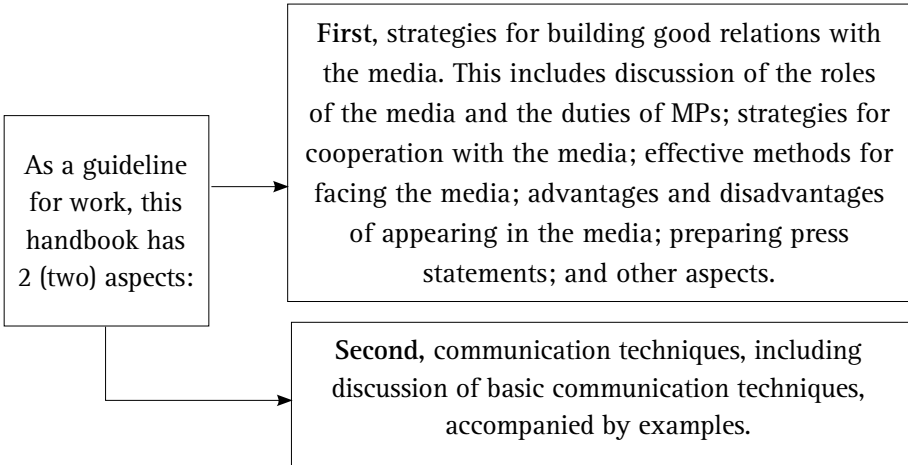
An MP's communication skills are the initial capital for successful performance in the Parliament. U.S. President Barack Obama, for example, admits that his ability to convince the public by using appropriate and impressive language was a decisive factor in his victory. On a different level, the same is also true of the MPs.

Their communication skills will determine the success of their careers in the Parliament. These communication skills therefore need to be continuously upgraded and polished.

A House Member's communication skills are the starting capital for successful performance in the Parliament.

Figure 2

2 Aspects of this Handbook



Because this book is a Basic Manual, readers can improvise and expand on the ideas presented herein, because each individual is unique. Every person has an innate talent for communication. This book is simply a basic guideline for sharpening the skills that you already have, if necessary, or to serve as a refresher.



CHAPTER II

**Media Relations: Building Relations
between the Media and Members of
Parliament**

The Members of Parliament and the press share a common legal umbrella for building their partnership, as set forth in Article 28 f of the 1945 Constitution: *“Every person has the right to communicate and to obtain information in order to develop themselves and their social environment, and the right to seek out, obtain, possess, store, process, and transmit information using any means available.”* The second legal foundation is Article 2 of Law No. 40 of 1999 on the Press, which reads: *“Freedom of the press is a manifestation of the people’s sovereignty based on the principles of democracy, justice, and supremacy of the law.”* This indicates that MPs and the press have similar constitutional rights to communicate as a manifestation of popular sovereignty.

Freedom of the press must reflect the aspirations and interests of the people. Based on this formula, the linkage between MPs and the press must be indivisible. This press freedom is a mandate of the Constitution and a command of the Law, and is the antithesis of the situation that prevailed during the “New Order” period. During that time, press businesses were required to have a Publishing License (SIT), the name of which was later changed to Press Publishing Business License (SIUPP). The SIT and SIUPP regulations were actually a means for the government to control the press through close supervision, censorship, shutdowns of publications, and other forms of intervention.

During the post-reform period, the situation has changed drastically. In the current political system, the press is granted the freedom to oversee the operations of government, which is part of the essence of democracy. As a result, it is currently almost impossible for public officials to avoid the spotlight, and the cameras and pens of news reporters.

This oversight extends to the working jurisdiction and functions of the MPs. The press even investigates “grey” and “black” behavior. They infiltrate the breaks between meetings, lobbying, and other hidden matters that go behind the doors of the MPs’ offices, which would otherwise be concealed. This ability of the press to seek and disclose facts and report them for public consumption needs to be seen positively, because the MPs basically have the same mandate as the press: to fulfill their promises to their constituents. The promise and (moral) contract of the press to its reading/viewing public

is to ensure the public's right to obtain information and to know the actual facts behind certain events. Similarly, the (political) contract of the MPs to their constituents is to abide by the promises they made to fight for the interests and aspirations of the people they represent.

Good relations between Members of Parliament and the media are also important to create and maintain a positive image for the MPs. To maintain and properly utilize their partnership with the media, MPs need to understand the status of the media as a reflection of the political system. In a democratic government such as we have today, freedom of the press is guaranteed and respected. This is in line with the growing idea of the press as the fourth pillar of democracy.

Role of the Media and Duties of Members of Parliament

The media and the MPs each have certain roles. The media play a role in line with their functions: servicing the public's right to know, exercising control, and providing education. The MPs play specified roles in the areas of legislation, budgeting, and oversight. Both institutions perform functions as spokespersons for the people in fulfilling the people's mandate that they bear.

Since freedom of the press is a relatively new idea in Indonesia, it is important for MPs to understand how these functions of the media are implemented. This will help MPs gain a better picture of the similarities and correspondences between the roles of the press and of the MPs. Understanding and being close to the press will, at the very least, make MPs better known to the public. But the most important goal is to make it easier for MPs to communicate with their constituents and with the public as a whole. This is the main reason why the media and the MPs need a healthy partnership.

Below are a number of definitions of press-related terms that MPs need to know:

1. **Press.** The press is everything related to news reporting in the form of communications facilities. The press includes print media, electronic media, and other media channels. The infrastructure for the press must include the following elements:
 - a. **Legal entity.** Newspapers, magazines, tabloids and electronic media must have legal entity status: foundation, cooperative, or limited company.

The press must:

- *Have legal entity status*
- *Publish regularly and periodically*

- b. **Regularly published.** Press activities may not be irregular or infrequent; their publication must be continuous and periodic, for example daily, weekly, or monthly. Without regular publication, the activity cannot be categorized as "press".

When dealing with members of the press – reporters or other press personnel – MPs should keep these two elements in mind.

2. **Journalistic activities.** This is the continuous process of journalistic work: everything from seeking, storing, possessing and processing to reporting or broadcasting of information in the form of text, pictures, sound or graphics through all communication channels that are available. The process must not be seen in a fragmented way, such as simply seeking news without ever publishing or broadcasting it, or conversely not seeking out the news but still reporting "news" with no basis in facts or information gathered from the field.
3. **Journalist.** A journalist is a person who regularly engages in journalistic activities. To be properly called a journalist, a person cannot simply conduct interviews or take photos; the output of this coverage must be regularly reported/ broadcast. A journalist must produce journalistic work. A person who previously worked in journalism but no longer does so regularly and no longer publishes his/her coverage cannot be called a journalist. Such people are often labeled "WTS" or *wartawan tanpa surat kabar*/journalists without newspapers (note: WTS also means "prostitute" – tr.). In the world of the Parliament, such people are regularly encountered.
4. **Right of reply.** The right of reply is one mechanism for resolving differences of perception between journalists and their sources. The right of reply is the right for an individual or community to refute or correct reports that they feel are not in line with the actual situation or not in line with what they actually said. News reports can have negative effects and even be harmful to certain parties. The mechanism for the right of reply is stipulated in Article 5 (2) of Law No. 40 of 1999. This article is intended to protect the public and serve as a control on the press so that they do not act beyond the limits of propriety (unfairness). The right of reply is a mechanism to remind the media to act in a fair and balanced way. The philosophy behind it

is that no freedom is absolute; all freedom must respect the basic rights of others. And because the freedom of the press is a reflection of the people's sovereignty, the people also have the right to protect and supervise the press. The task of protecting the freedom of the press also includes efforts to decriminalize the press by reducing the risk of criminal sanctions through use of the right of reply.

Resolution of a problem with the press through the right of reply should ideally be a final settlement, and not pursued further through legal processes. In practice, however, there are times when press practitioners do not adequately comply with the right of reply. In these cases, the aggrieved party may seek other routes to resolve the problem. In such cases, they may complain to the police or seek mediation from the Press Council.

If an MP has a dispute with the media, he or she is advised always to seek a solution through the mechanisms of the right of reply or mediation. If the MP has good relations with the media, such a settlement will be much quicker and easier. In the view of the media community, a decision to resolve media cases through the courts may be interpreted as being opposed to freedom of the press. For this reason, it is best to avoid pursuing such legal channels, because by their nature, a trial always has a winner and a loser; it is difficult to achieve a win-win solution.

5. **Press Council.** This is a (quasi) independent state institution established to develop freedom of the press and promote the life of the press (Article 15, Law No. 40 of 1999 on the Press).

The main functions of the Press Council are to:

- a. **Protect freedom of the press from intervention by other parties.**

One essential element of democracy is the existence of space for different opinions. Varying opinions may be expressed in writing when there is freedom of the press.

Democracy will die if there is no freedom of the press; and conversely, freedom of the press will die without democracy. As an element of democracy, MPs must support the idea of freedom of the press.

- b. **Establish and oversee the implementation of the Journalistic Code of Ethics.** The press in Indonesia must comply with the Journalistic Code of Ethics (*Kode Etik Jurnalistik/KEJ*) which serves to regulate press activity. The Press Council

established the KEJ in 2006, based on suggestions from press organizations and journalists from throughout Indonesia. The KEJ applies nationwide.

When dealing with journalists, MPs need to understand this Code of Ethics. Several important matters are regulated in the KEJ: (1) In performing their duties, journalists must display their identification, except for certain types of investigative reporting; (2) Journalists must write the news accurately, independently, and free from malice; (3) In performing their duties, journalists must not receive compensation from their sources, in this case the MPs.

c. **Provide mediation or resolution of disputes arising from press reportage.**

If a conflict arises from news reports, MPs may complain to the Press Council and seek alternative resolution to their conflict with the press.

6. **News value** is the value given to a piece of news, which is measured by the level of interest it generates. News value is always illustrated through the old saw: "Dog Bites Man – not news; Man Bites Dog – now that's news." Research on news value proves that political issues are in top place in terms of reader interest, and this includes MPs. MPs who offer incisive analysis and are willing to speak out (vocal) will be constant sources of news for the press. Automatically, a Member who is regularly quoted in the press will become better known. And as well-known persons, MPs are constantly being asked their opinions. But MPs must also be careful with the agenda set by the media; often reporters first design and frame their story and then seek out sources to confirm what they have already planned. Reporters sometimes stop MPs just to request a word or two in line with the reporters' agenda. If you sense this kind of situation, it is best not to comment, in order to avoid being misquoted. Statements made in such contexts may end up being insubstantial, shallow, or merely sensational. News reports derived from brief statements run a high risk of being misquoted or taken out of context. When this happens, a formal correction is needed, even though such published corrections are rarely read or noticed.

News value is also often correlated with unsavory matters or those with a negative flavor. The public still has a right to know, because these problems relate to the public interest. This is why we hear the expression "Bad news is good news." Bad news attracts the public's attention, so for the media, this is good news. MPs should avoid becoming "news makers" in connection with negative behavior or bad news. If this happens, you could well become a target of constant press reports that

MPs also need to watch out for agenda setting by the media: framing of stories designed by the press, who then use sources to confirm what they have framed.

When this happens, it's best to AVOID commenting.

become hard to stop. You no doubt remember a number of cases of bad news relating to behavior of MPs – sexual affairs or corruption – that ultimately led to their dismissal from office.

In the context of the partnership between MPs and the press, news value should ideally be built within the domain of each MP, depending on the scope of duties of the committees they serve on. The MPs who serve on a particular commission need to know about the matters it deals with. Then they need to be astute in seeking perspectives that will make an interesting story. Examples of this include (a) Exclusive issues or major cases; (b) Background to cases that involve important persons; (c) Hot new issues that have just emerged..

7. **Deadline refers to the time limit for performing journalistic activities.** Time is a critical factor in the news media, as it relates to the "freshness" of the news. Obviously, this is due in part to the competition among news media; each seeks to "scoop" the others by being the first to report a story. The stories with the highest news value will be sought out, read and viewed, so the media have to obtain the news and convey it to the public as quickly as possible. And as we know, those media that have the highest reader or viewer penetration, due to the speed of their reporting, will have the strongest bargaining positions when selling advertising space/time.

It also needs to be recognized that each news medium has its own ways of organizing publishing/ broadcast times. Print media have relatively longer deadlines than the electronic media. Print media have a reasonable amount of time to gather stories, process them, and print them in the paper. In contrast, electronic media such as radio, television and online media have very little time to meet their broadcast schedules. Often they compete to report or broadcast news live from the field.

8. **Media convergence (merger of ownership):** This is a type of reporting in which a journalist has the freedom to send the results of his/her reportage to various media. The process of journalistic activity in media convergence is quite different from that in other, more conventional media. Media convergence practitioners perform

journalistic activities for more than one medium at the same time. A journalist may write a news report on the internet and at the same time file reports for several other print and electronic media.

In Indonesia, many press businesses have converged in this way. For MPs, partnership with converged media will be even more advantageous, because these journalists may be associated with several or even dozens of media.

9. **Map of the media industry.** The print and electronic media industries are, briefly, organized as follows:
 - a. **Print media.** In Indonesia there are currently around 1,000 publishing enterprises: newspapers, magazines and tabloids that publish regularly. In addition, there are many other publications that appear irregularly, lack sufficient capital, are amateurishly managed, are unable to recruit professional journalists, and/or face other problems. Media of this type are often perceived as a public nuisance because of these unprofessional characteristics.
 - b. **Electronic media.** This includes 2,000 licensed radio stations and 8,000 unlicensed ones. There are currently 202 television stations in the country. The situation of the reporters for the electronic media, especially television, is quite interesting; most of the reporters are "contributors". They are given permits to work for and in the name of a particular station in a certain region, but they are not permanent employees.

This status as contributors to electronic media often leads to a "meet the deadline" type of work orientation. The process of sending the report to the broadcast station often seems extremely rushed. Text, pictures and statements are often disjointed or out of context. To avoid this, MPs should be careful in making statements to media of this type, because corrections in electronic media reporting are seldom noticed by viewers. Special interviews or taping will be much safer for MPs. Good relations with contributing journalists or with the news editors of the television stations will be very helpful.

10. Journalists' and press business organizations:

- a. A journalists' organization is an institution that accommodates the interests and aspirations of journalists. Journalists' organizations have grown rapidly, but only three were verified by the Press Council in 2006: (1) the Indonesian Journalists Association (*Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia/PWI*); (2) the Indonesian

Television Journalists Association (*Ikatan Jurnalis Televisi Indonesia/IJTI*); and (3) the Alliance of Independent Journalists (*Aliansi Jurnalis Independen/AJI*).

- b. Press business organizations are organizations that accommodate and fight for the interests and aspirations of print and electronic press media businesses. The Press Council has verified four press business organizations: (1) the Press Publishing Union (*Serikat Penerbitan Pers/SPP*) in the print media sector; (2) the Indonesian Private Television Association (*Asosiasi Televisi Swasta Indonesia/ATVSI*); (3) the Indonesian Local Television Association (*Asosiasi Televisi Lokal Indonesia/ATVLI*); and (4) the Indonesian National Private Broadcast Radio Association (*Persatuan Radio Siaran Swasta Nasional Indonesia/PRSSNI*) for the electronic media sector.

Media to Improve the Performance of Members of Parliament

Although the media and Members of Parliament each carry out different roles, they still have a very close relationship – in fact, one of interdependence. Through the media, MPs can communicate with their constituents; and from the MPs, the media can obtain information to be disseminated to their readers or viewers.

Media exposure can improve MPs' performance. The public can learn about the level of the MPs' involvement in all processes of legislation, budgeting and oversight in the DPR or the DPD. This can be seen through open meetings that allow direct media coverage, and through working visits to the regions. MPs can also use the internal media within the Secretariat General and/or existing media outside the Parliament.

Experience indicates that the press is always interested in covering statements by MPs and session activities – particularly plenary sessions. This is understandable, because in plenary sessions the important figures relating to the issues under discussion will be present. Another thing that is bound to attract the attention of the media is when a Member dares to speak out with an opinion that is different, or even controversial or critical, and that takes the side of the people.

So what is the strategy for selecting the best medium to convey your message? After all, each medium has its own set of readers or viewers with their own flavor and characteristics. No matter how neutral they may try to be, each media outlet is associated in readers' minds with a certain group or ideology. During the "New Order" era, for example, the media were categorized based on their ideological perspective as

nationalist, religious (Islamic), or relatively neutral. In the reform era, this categorization has become more fluid, yet relics of the ideologies of the past remain, at least in certain media with a religious or strongly nationalist-secular outlook. So as a Member of Parliament, the first thing you need to decide is what target group of readers you want to reach: urban, rural, a certain religious group, or the broader public. If you want to address a national audience, choose media with nationwide circulation that are based in Jakarta. On the other hand, if your target is your own electoral district, it is essential to build a good relationship with journalists from the region who report news from the DPR /DPD buildings.

Also, be sure to make active use of the media facilities available at the parliamentary complex. Members of Parliament can use the facilities provided at the Secretariat General. And if you use these facilities regularly, with proper preparation and presentation, it will be an excellent way to communicate with the public.

Here are the media facilities provided in the parliamentary complex:

(1) Internal facilities :

- a. **Parliament TV.** This internal television channel broadcasts live all activities in the DPR. It is shown on every floor of the DPR buildings and can be used by MPs to communicate with members of the public who happen to be at the parliamentary complex.
- b. **TV Swara.** This television station airs many talk shows relating to the duties of the Parliament. In addition to MPs, they regularly invite well-qualified outside resource persons. Building relationships with resource persons you meet through talk shows is also very important, as you can obtain high quality input from them.

Though all MPs are expected to understand their duties and functions, obviously you cannot have a perfect command of everything relating to your authorities, duties and functions.

For this reason, building good relationships with activists and experts in their respective fields will be very helpful to you in your work. Being humble when you ask them questions will also help your work and, in turn, help the community you defend.

- c. **Advertorials (Public Service Announcements/Advertisements).** The Secretariat General often runs advertorial programs in cooperation with public media to boost the Parliament's image. Smart MPs will make use of this facility. Don't be shy about asking the Secretariat General personnel responsible for these programs about the themes of the advertorials that are going to be broadcast or published. If the theme happens to be in line with your background or expertise, you can offer yourself as a resource person. But remember, you need to have something worthwhile to say!
- d. **Talk shows or blocking time in television broadcasts conducted by the Secretariat General.** Again, if the issues and themes are relevant to your duties and expertise, don't hesitate to offer yourself for these programs. Obviously, thorough preparation is essential before you appear in such an arena. Failure to prepare is suicide!
- e. **House of Representatives – Republic of Indonesia Journalist Coordination Group.** This group of journalists coordinates the activities of all journalists operating within the DPR/DPD. They are generally familiar with and know the nature of the MPs' work. Communicating with them should, therefore, be quicker and easier. This journalists' group also has a Code of Ethics for Coverage in the DPR. Various media from outside the Parliament, both print and electronic (television, radio, and online) can also be used. MPs need to be wise about choosing the appropriate media, depending on what audience they wish to target, as each medium has its own characteristics, audience, and penetration.

You no doubt already know that the print media and electronic media have different impacts on the public. The print media tend to create longer-lasting and deeper impressions in their readers. And what people read is not so easily forgotten, because it can be clipped out and saved. Information from electronic media, on the other hand, is more exciting but also more transient. Except in extreme cases, electronic news is easily forgotten, especially the details. However, electronic media have tremendous penetration; in addition to the visual impact, anyone can watch TV – a viewer doesn't need to be able to read well, as is the case with the print media

Effective Ways of Facing the Media

Now that you know the ins and outs of the media, it's important for you as a Member of Parliament to understand the ways to meet the needs and desires of the mass media. In this way, you will know how to position yourself when dealing with the media.

The key is to position yourself as not just a colleague, but an important partner for the media. If you keep your distance from the media or close yourself off from the media, you will only be hurting yourself. But you also hurt yourself if you play favorites among the media.

An example of playing favorites is paying attention to only certain large media and ignoring the smaller ones. Press enterprises need interesting information to grab their readers' attention, no matter how large or small the newspaper or radio station is. And as a result, you can benefit from this need.

Good relations with the media are essential, both with institutions and with individual journalists as the media personified. The basic strategy to apply is to maintain good relations with the mass media and with journalists. But remember that having good relations with the mass media and their personnel is just an intermediate objective, because the ultimate goal is to communicate with the public.

To achieve a good partnership between the MPs and the media, and so that the objectives of both parties – to serve and fulfill the public's need for information – can be optimally realized, MPs need good media relations. That is, MPs must make it easy for the mass media to obtain information – easy to contact you in person or by telephone, and easy to obtain basic information in writing.

Here are several essential things you need to do before facing the media:

1. Before facing journalists, MPs need to prepare accurate and complete data and information. For example, if you're going to discuss a certain bill, you need to prepare a draft of the bill in question. You can also complement that basic information with other data related to the draft bill, such as data or information relating to the discussion of one crucial article in the bill, or other issues relating to policies recently issued by the government in certain areas. With preparation of accurate and complete information or data, the statements made by MPs will

not just be self-serving hot air but will have a strong basis for their arguments. Avoid using expressions that are either too bombastic or too coarse, even when you are facing political opponents with very different views on the matter being debated in the DPR.

When you are going to talk with journalists or appear on camera, be sure to check your appearance.

If necessary, practice in front of a mirror. Look at your facial expression: do you look annoyed, or seem arrogant?

Do you speak fluently or haltingly?

When you have been speaking for a while, does spit start to accumulate in the corners of your mouth?

How is your smile – does it seem sincere, or cynical?

What about your gaze – threatening, or happy and pleasant?

Does your voice become shrill when you get emotional, or do you remain authoritative-sounding?

All these things can be studied and changed, if you want to be a public figure that is accepted by the people.

2. Prepare a media kit or press kit. It is essential to prepare and provide a media kit, press release, or your main ideas set forth in writing. A media kit is a compilation of information arranged for the interests of the media, who are the work partners of the Parliament. The information could be the bill that is being discussed, a short biography, address and telephone number. This basic information should provide useful background information to enhance the journalists' stories. The media kit can also help reporters to produce accurate reports. Informative personal details will make it easier for journalists to contact you again when they need further information or confirmation of your statements.
3. Use communication technology. One way to foster interpersonal relationships with reporters is to use communication technology, for example by sending text messages or email. Every MP certainly already has up-to-date communication devices, such as cellular phones, PDAs, and so on. Text messages are a very effective way to convey information. After receiving your text message, reporters will usually follow up on the information by seeking confirmation from others,



assuming that your text message has reasonable news value. For example, a Member may have some information on a case of misappropriation of funds in a government agency. This is interesting, exclusive news; sensible journalists will follow it up by seeking confirmation from the relevant government officials. MPs can give journalists many kinds of information using text messages and email.

4. Conduct "maintenance lobbying," for example by holding a coffee morning with the press. The reporters who cover the Parliament will normally be in the DPR reporters' group. DPR members can maintain relations with the reporters through the reporters' group. Invite them somewhere for a coffee morning in an informal, relaxed atmosphere, though the content and topics may still be serious. Such discussions are often off the record – not meant to be disseminated, but intended as useful background information to help reporters grasp the whole picture.
5. Conduct media functions and gatherings, for example a limited lunch or dinner with the press. Media gatherings with the press at lunch or dinner are basically the same as coffee mornings; the meetings are held informally in a limited way with representatives of certain mass media. MPs may personally invite the managing editors of the mass media to these events. As well as bringing MPs and the media closer together, these limited lunches and dinners can also be a useful way to convey important information and obtain input from the media leaders who are invited.
6. Give journalists gifts. On certain occasions, MPs may give small but meaningful gifts to journalists, such as new books that will support the reporters in their work of covering activities at the Parliament. The books may also relate to the Members' House Commission and its scope of duties. Gifts often fall into a grey area, where it is unclear whether they count as gratuities or not. But if the gifts are in the form of books that are both relevant and useful to improve the journalists' understanding of the issues in the MPs' area of work, it would seem that these do not count as "reward". The problem is that in practice, gifts to journalists are not always just books. What about transportation money? Most state institutions and cabinet ministries apply a "transport money" system when reporters are invited to cover activities outside the cities or at significant distances. Does this fall into the category of "reward"? Clearly, the decision depends on the policies of the media themselves in adhering strictly to the Journalists' Code of Ethics.

7. Undertake media visits by visiting the media on their own turf. With a better understanding of the media's operations, we become aware that the reporters are just one element in the system; behind them are editors, managing editors, and chief editors, not to mention owners. For this reason, cultivating good relations with the mass media should not stop at the reporters. MPs need to recognize that the decision to publish a news item lies at the editors' level, so it is important to have good relations with all elements of the mass media. Once good relations are established with a given media organization as an institution, then no matter which individual reporter is on duty, the solid relationship between the MP and the media institution will not be disrupted. This is why it is essential to pay a visit now and then to the editors, to maintain friendly relations and signal your intention to foster good relations with the media. Such relations are beneficial for both parties. When visiting the editorial offices, an MP can discuss things with the editors, especially matters relating to the MP's committee and its scope of duties. When visiting the media, an MP can also explain the background of issues and crucial problems faced by the House directly to the chief editor (or deputy chief editor) and to the relevant ranks of the reporters. One advantage of such media visits is that the MP can present information openly on the various problems faced in connection with the duties and authorities of the Parliament. This information may be given off the record, that is, as information that is provided only for the journalists' knowledge and not to be published. Off-the-record information may also require further investigation, but is certainly not meant to be published or broadcast as a statement from the person who provided the information. In addition, from their discussions with editors, MPs can also receive valuable input from the editors' perspective regarding the media's difficulties in dealing with the Parliament.
8. Foster informal, human relationships. Send greeting cards – birthday, Christmas or Lebaran cards – to journalists and to news organizations. As humans, journalists crave warm personal relationships. If we refer to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, as individuals, journalists need recognition and self-actualization. Sending greeting cards at appropriate times, sending a text message thanking a reporter for an excellent article, attending weddings, visiting or expressing concern when they are sick or suffer personal misfortunes – all of these are forms of appreciation for journalists as individuals. In this way, the relationship that is built between the MPs and the journalists goes beyond a purely functional relationship to become a personal one as well.

As representatives of the media, journalists have a functional relationship with the Parliament (MPs). But the existence of this functional relationship does not mean ignoring their human dimension. As persons, journalists have their own needs. Some of these needs relate to their profession as seekers and writers of news; other needs relate to their personal lives. One of a journalist's personal needs in connection with his/her profession is the need to be appreciated.

No journalist wants his/her profession or the institution where they work to be disrespected. This means that there must be no discriminatory treatment toward journalists; they should be treated just the same as MPs.

Journalism is a noble profession that serves the public interest. Granting decent and equal service to all journalists is a form of appreciation for journalism as a profession.

Among the important matters that MPs need to keep in mind when facing the mass media (journalists as representatives of the media) are the following:

1. Foster friendly relations with reporters. Reporters are normal people; treat them as friends. Respect them as humans and build friendly, human relationships. The relationship between MPs and journalists is a professional one. As well as serving the public, MPs are also obliged to serve the press in a professional manner.
2. MPs also need to understand the operations of the press, including the rhythms of its work for each type of media and the functions of the mass media. This means that MPs also need to understand the concepts of news value, the importance of deadlines for journalists' reports, the map of the mass media at the regional as well as national levels, the Journalistic Code of Ethics, the Broadcasting Code of Ethics, Law No. 40/1999 on the Press, Law No. 32/2002 on Broadcasting, the power of the mass media, the vision and mission of the media, and so on.
3. MPs should, ideally, also know the journalists and editors personally. This is essential for MPs to be able to communicate effectively with their press counterparts.

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4. Do not discriminate against any media or journalists. All professional journalists (young or old, neatly attired or not, male or female) and mass media (large or small, local or national, partisan or independent) must be treated fairly and equally.
 5. MPs should, insofar as possible, provide the important facts or information that the press needs in connection with the issues they are raising. MPs should also provide straightforward explanations and not cover up any facts. But if the data you have still require further follow-up, you must state honestly that you are still gathering the data in question.
 6. If you have a disagreement with a journalist, seek a resolution through the journalists' corps (organization).

No matter how annoyed you may be, never be antagonistic toward reporters if they produce inaccurate reports about you.

This is, in fact, an opportunity to build a better relationship by restating what you actually wanted to convey to the media. Use the right of reply.

Help them understand. There's no need to blow the problem out of proportion by blaming a journalist over some trivial matter.

7. If you are misquoted, or if coverage seems to be one-sided, try to use the right of reply. If you do not get good service through the right of reply, use the mediation services of the Press Council. The key point is that miscommunication or misunderstandings need to be resolved promptly and not allowed to persist. Always remember that the media are your partners.

Box 1

Tips for Dealing with the Press

Here are some suggestions from a communication expert, Schuman, on dealing with the press:

- Do not hesitate to ask for their background information: name, name of their media organization, and what they want to learn from you. If you feel you are not the right person to comment, do not hesitate to refuse to comment and direct them to a more appropriate person to provide the information they want.
- Prepare yourself to answer standard questions that address the 5 Ws (who, what, when, where, why) + 1 H (how). Complement your facts with easily understood examples.
- Be positive, honest, and to the point.
- Pause briefly before answering. Think about the right words to use. Consider the question until you really understand it, and then give an informative answer. Remember, they have chosen you because they know that a statement from you will have news value. Avoid giving judgmental evaluations of persons, including your political opponents.
- If the question is confusing, repeat or restate the question until the reporter agrees that it is what he/she meant.
- Beware of trick questions, such as “Are you disappointed with the vice-presidential candidate the president has proposed? Why?” or “In your opinion, did that parliamentary faction betray the people’s struggle by passing this Law?”
- Do not be trapped by giving answers in negative forms; use positive sentences. Do not make ambiguous statements such as “It is not that I do not agree, but...”

- Do not give short, one-word answers such as “yes” or “no,” because these do not provide the elaboration that the reporters need.
- Provide statements that are brief, clear, and quotable.
- Remember the three basic techniques for communicating with the media: bridging, flags, and hooks. “Bridging” means repeating the question while thinking what you are going to say. A flag is a statement that will be a focus of attention, or a key word that will attract attention. A hook is a technique that draws the interviewer in to the main point of the discussion.
- Repeat the statement you have made as your confirmation. This will enable the reporters to understand your statement better.
- Get in the habit of anticipating likely questions and practice giving answers. Certain questions can be expected, so we can prepare our answers in advance.

In addition, if you find yourself a source of news, here are some other things to bear in mind when contacted by the media:

1. *Rapid response.* As soon as the media contact you, respond immediately, because reporters work against deadlines. If you are too slow, the reporters will seek their information from other MPs.
2. *Reveal facts,* not just empty or flowery statements.
3. *Reveal the facts in the form of clear statements rather than vague expressions.* When a reporter asks a question, respond with a statement with a clear meaning, rather than with some idiomatic phrase that is open to interpretation.
4. *Repeat the question in the answer.* This is a good way to indicate the logical sequence of the answer to the question posed by the journalists.
5. *Choose statements that will be clearly and accurately quoted by the media.* Quotes, such as direct sentences for the print media or sound bites for the electronic media, will be taken from sources of information whose statements are unique,

characteristic, and clarify the narrative sequence. It is therefore important to pay attention to the clarity and firmness of your statement. If you are "forced" to respond to a sudden question, try to give a lively answer, not just slogans or bombast.

6. *Play the role of a well, not a fountain.* "Being a well" means that we invite the interviewers to seek the information that they want. "Being a fountain" means that we only provide certain information that is ready for the journalists to receive; as a consequence, the journalists do not receive sufficient information. Invite the reporters to draw as much information as they want from the well.
7. *Speak to the reporters, not to the media.* This means that we treat journalists as people. The relationship we build with the interviewer is a relationship between two humans.

Dealing with "Envelope (Paid-Off) Journalists"

The journalistic code of ethics constitutes a set of ethics that must be upheld to maintain the integrity of the journalistic profession. Freedom of the press does not mean freedom with no ethics. There are certain limits to ensure that the profession serves the best interests of the public. The mass media are also regulated by a code of ethics. Each media institution has its own standard operational procedure, or SOP, that applies internally. In Indonesia, the most fundamental standards of these internal codes of ethics are to "have journalist identification and do not receive compensation from news sources." This part of the internal code of ethics is usually stated in the editorial details box in print media.

But in reality, journalists and envelopes (bribes) are often inseparable. So-called journalists who are always on the lookout for envelopes are known as "bodrex journalists", a reference to the old advertisements for Bodrex cold medicine. These reporters come flocking to certain events or conduct mass interviews and always expect remuneration for carrying their reports. While many journalists do come just to seek news and do not expect envelopes (pay-offs), it is also undeniable that there are also quite a few who are simply pursuing bribes. The "anti-envelope" (anti-bribe) journalists are generally those from bona fide, respected media outlets. They will refuse if you offer them a bribe, and if they take one rather than offending the sensibilities of the other reporters who accept the bribes, they will usually discreetly return it to you.

Envelope (Paid-off) journalists can be found everywhere, including the Parliament. There are also journalists who own media, publish reportage, but gladly accept bribes. There are others who have no media associations but claim to be journalists, the “WTS” (reporters without newspapers) referred to earlier. Because they have no media connections, obviously they cannot publish their reportage. Their main purpose in coming is simply to receive a pay-off. If they do have journalist identification, it is usually expired or from a media organization that is defunct.

Reporters who uphold the journalistic principles expounded in the Journalistic Code of Ethics will certainly refuse any bribes offered by news sources. However, there are some people who take advantage of their professional status as journalists to seek personal advantage, for example by being envelope journalists. Actually, low salaries are not a legitimate reason for reporters to request compensation from their sources. People should not need to provide compensation to reporters who interview them or cover their events. By refusing to give bribes, the public (including MPs) contribute to the effort to uphold journalistic ethics and eradicate practices that abuse the journalistic profession.

Box 2

Strategies for Handling “Envelope (Paid-off) Journalists”

1. Give the information they need and do not conceal any information or play favorites by only serving journalists from large media organizations who do not ask for bribes.
2. Do not be in the habit of – in fact, do not even get started – giving money or goods after interviews.
3. Be firm and consistent in not giving payments, but make yourself a sought-after source of news. Make yourself a “source of news” rather than a “source of income” for reporters.
3. Politely refuse if someone asks for money or other remuneration as compensation for covering your story.

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4. If they insist, smile and thank them for interviewing you, and if necessary remind them that the Journalistic Code of Ethics prohibits journalists from receiving bribes or any form of compensation. MPs who need a copy of the Journalistic Code of Ethics can obtain it from the Press Council.
 5. Recognize this type of reporter, but do not try to avoid them and continue to treat them in a polite and friendly way.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Appearing in the Media

The press uses MPs as sources of news, not only for the routine matters of the Parliament (creating laws) but also for other current issues in society – the controversial Anti-Pornography Law, rising fuel prices, public transport accidents, education costs and budget, domestic violence, and so on. Especially for political and party issues, what MPs have to say is sure to be considered newsworthy. Reporters usually know which MPs are willing to speak out critically, so it's not surprising that these are the persons who are regularly sought out as news sources and constantly appear in the print and electronic media. There are even certain MPs who become media "stars" because of their views and opinions. But there are many other MPs who rarely if ever appear in the media. It could be that these MPs are unwilling to be interviewed or happen to be "low profile" personalities and prefer not to be too prominent. But there are also many who do not speak simply because they lack the skills to speak.

Whatever the motivation, appearing in the mass media – print or electronic – will be advantageous for MPs. A person who regularly appears in the media becomes well known to the public. Especially if his/her views and opinions are somewhat outspoken, this brings added value for the existence of MPs in general. The public will know the quality of their legislators from the views and opinions they express through the media.

For the MPs themselves, appearing in the mass media is a source of pride. Through these appearances, they can interact with the public or comment on current issues related to the matters their committees deal with. Appearing in the media is also a boost to their popularity which can be advantageous when they run for office again.

MPs who regularly appear in the press can take advantage of this to promote themselves by building an image. For example, a Member who often speaks out on every issue related to the public interest will build an image as someone who deeply cares about the public's needs. In a world where so much is determined by the power of the media, having such an image is very important for a Member of Parliament.

By appearing frequently in the media, an MP will automatically become a public figure. The MP will become a center of public attention, particularly for his/her constituents. Every step he/she takes will be in the spotlight. But as a public figure, an MP must also be prepared for the risk of gossip and negative rumors. And if he or she does something wrong – corruption, adultery, domestic violence – the public and constituents will be the first to pass judgment.

These are the consequences one must bear as a public figure. Things will obviously be quite different for MPs who rarely or never appear and do not become public figures. They are relatively more protected from gossip exposure in the media even if they are involved in similar scandals.

MPs who do appear in the media may well become involved in disputes with the media, often because of being misquoted or having their words "twisted" by the media. This kind of mistake may occur because the media world is one of competition and differences of opinion. The statement expressed by a representative of another party that the Golkar Party might win only 2.5% of the vote is a good example of how an offhand remark can blossom into a large-scale political blunder and become a major obstacle in the future relations between the two parties.

Box 3

Tips for Settling Press Disputes

1. Although you are an MP, you do not have legal immunity to do whatever you want, and the same applies with the media. So if you feel you have been treated unfairly by the press, immediately use the right of reply and right of correction to provide data and facts as rebuttal. Don't worry – the editors will carry your reply, because they have a legal obligation to do so. They will promptly print a correction, together with an apology and clarification. According to journalistic standards, the correction should be placed on the same page as the original erroneous information (report).
2. If you are a news source and feel you have been harmed by a press report, do not try to settle the problem yourself through threats or by taking the law into your own hands. Instead, complain to the Press Council. As a mediation institution, the Press Council will provide advice and work for a settlement. In resolving the problem, the Press Council will ask the press company to comply with its obligation to fulfill the right of reply and right of correction for any harm caused by the reporting. True, the correction published to comply with the right of reply is sometimes not commensurate with the loss suffered by the error in reporting, but that is the form of legal resolution available at this time.
3. Press disputes can also be taken to court, as that is also part of every citizen's right to seek and obtain justice. In resolving the dispute, the court will use the Press Law as its legal basis.
4. If a dispute arises and the press is unwilling to implement the right of reply and right to correction, you can also file a civil suit under the Press Law, so that the charges that are used are articles of the Press Law.

Procedure for Complaints to the Press Council

In an effort to promote freedom of the press and enhance the life of the national press, an independent Press Council was established. As well as protecting freedom of the press, the Press Council also serves to establish and oversee implementation of the Journalistic Code of Ethics and to provide advice and work for resolution of public complaints in cases relating to press reports.

- o The Press Council accepts complaints from the public, including Members of Parliament, relating to implementation of the Journalistic Code of Ethics or other cases of media reporting.
- o The Press Council will not examine a complaint that has already been filed with the police or the judicial system. Therefore, an MP who feels he/she has been harmed by the media must carefully consider whether to file the complaint with the police or with the Press Council.
- o Complaints may be submitted to the Press Council in writing or in person. The complainant must give his/her full name and address (telephone and facsimile numbers, and email if applicable). Even though you are a Member of Parliament, you will be treated equally as a seeker of justice; you will not receive any special treatment just because of your status as an MP.
- o Complaints should be addressed to the Press Council (*Dewan Pers*) at Gedung Dewan Pers Lantai VII, Jalan Kebon Sirih No. 32-34, Jakarta 10110. Telephone: 021-3521488, facsimile: 021-3452030, Email: dewanpers@cbn.net.id.
- o The complaint is directed to the management of the media organization concerned. In your complaint, you must state an objection to a news report that you feel is detrimental to yourself, your institution, or the public.
- o Complaints regarding print media, broadcast institutions, and internet media must state basic information regarding the name of the press medium, publication/broadcast date, title of the article/broadcast program, description of photos and illustrations that are being complained about, and attach relevant data and supporting documents.
- o Complaints may be filed for journalistic material published or broadcast within the previous two (2) years, except for special cases relating to the public interest.



- o The complainant should contact the Press Council as soon as possible. Your proxy may be accepted as the complainant if provided with a valid power of attorney.
- o A complaint is deemed to have lapsed if the complainant fails to comply twice with summons from the Press Council. The complaint cannot be filed again.
- o If the complainee has been summoned twice but does not attend, the Press Council will proceed with the investigation.
- o After receiving a complaint, the Press Council will hold a meeting to discuss the complaint.
- o In handling complaints, the Press Council may summon and question you as either complainant or complainee.
- o The Press Council may resolve certain complaints through correspondence.
- o In handling complaints, the Press Council may request opinions from experts.
- o The Press Council will seek a settlement through deliberation to achieve consensus, which will be set out in a statement of settlement.
- o If the deliberation fails to achieve consensus, the Press Council will continue the investigation process to make a decision.
- o The decision of the Press Council, in the form of a Statement of Evaluation and Recommendation, shall be determined in a Plenary Session.
- o The parties in the dispute will be openly notified of the Press Council's Decision on Statement of Evaluation and Recommendation.
- o A media company that receives a complaint is obliged to implement and carry or broadcast the Press Council's Statement of Evaluation and Recommendation in the media concerned.
- o If the media company does not comply with the Statement of Evaluation and Recommendation, the Press Council will issue a special public statement for that purpose.

Preparing Press Conferences

Just a few hours after the bombs exploded at the Hotel J.W. Marriot and Hotel Ritz Carlton in Jakarta on Friday, July 17, 2009, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono held a press conference at the State Palace, which was covered by reporters from print, electronic and online media, both domestic and foreign. In his statement, as well as discussing the bombing, promising that the perpetrators would be caught and brought to justice and expressing his condolences to the victims, the President also displayed several photos, which were identified as terrorists who were engaged in weapons training, using the President's face as the target. This action by the President gave rise to controversy regarding the accuracy of this news and the content of his statement, which many considered tendentious.

From this incident, we can draw the lesson that every press conference must have a clear purpose: to provide clarification, to make an official statement regarding a particular issue or decision, to refute an accusation, or to calm the public in connection with conflicting reports. A press conference should also be guided by a statement previously prepared in writing. This is important, in order to avoid giving information that deviates from the original purpose. If that happens, rather than becoming more focused, the information will instead become more diffuse, and the perspectives of the reporting will also be varied, rather than being directed toward a common objective. The press conference can in fact be even more confusing or create new controversies.

In certain important cases, a person may need to issue a press release. For example, when the police stated that the murderers of Nasrudin Zulkarnain had been traced, reports were heard of the involvement of a high official with offices in the Kuningan area in Jakarta and the initials AA. Reporters swarmed to the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) to seek clarification from its chairman, Antasari Azhar, and so Antasari Azhar had to hold a press conference.

Press conferences can be conducted not only by heads of state or top officials; Members of Parliament can also hold press conference to present important information regarding current issues in the community or in the Parliament. Such press conferences can help MPs disseminate information to the public. And for issues such as deliberation of bills, or issues relating to government policies such as fuel price hikes, MPs can also issue press releases. The purpose of a press conference is to introduce important information or to provide official clarification to the mass media on certain issues.



Press conferences are commonly used by members of parliament in many countries. In Egypt, for example, members of parliament often conduct press conference to oppose the president's policies. To criticize President Hosni Mubarak's decision to close the Rafah crossing into the Gaza Strip in January 2009, for example, several members of the Egyptian Parliament held a press conference at the headquarters of the Ikhwanul Muslimin Party in Cairo, which was covered internationally. In the press conference, they stated that closing the crossing could be categorized as a crime. They described the Egyptian government's policy that opposed channeling relief to the citizens of Gaza as an act of oppression of the Palestinian people.

Noting that the cities of Rafah and Al-Arish were already full of volunteers who wanted to take aid from several countries to the victims, the Egyptian MPs demanded that their government open the Rafah border crossing immediately. In the press conference, these MPs allied with the Egyptian Islamic Brotherhood, declared their approval for the resistance and the importance of defending Palestinian territory from Zionist Israeli aggression.

From this example, we can see that the members of parliament used this press conference not only to provide information to the global public about a situation that occurred in a conflict area, but also to provide information about their party's stance, which opposed the policy of those in power. Through this activity, they showed the world that their government's policy of closing the border crossing was opposed by certain members of the country's Parliament. Thus, through a single press conference, two or three objectives were achieved.

A press conference is actually a collective interview – an interview conducted simultaneously by many media. The information presented in a press conference has strong news value, because the public are waiting to hear it. By holding a press conference or issuing a press release, MPs can communicate with the public effectively and efficiently through several media at once.

A good press conference should be able to convey complete and accurate information related to the issue at hand. Therefore, the information needs to be prepared accurately and carefully. The MPs' viewpoint on the issue presented needs to be reported positively. This is where the challenge lies: how to make the information from the MPs have high news value. A press conference is chosen as a tactic when there is clarity and certainty about what is to be presented and which issues are to be addressed, using justifiable arguments. Journalists are always interested in new and valid data, and a press conference is one of the best ways to give it to them.

Box 4

Tips on Holding Press Conferences

1. Determine what issue is to be presented to the media. It should be a topic of current interest and have news value for the media.
2. Decide who will be the spokesperson. For a formal press conference, the spokesperson should be the leader or someone from the leadership, such as the chairperson or deputy chairperson of a committee. But it is also possible to appoint one person as spokesperson who is accompanied by other members of the leadership to help in answering questions after the press conference.
3. Prepare a team, with clear allocation of duties. Some team members will write the presentation material, others will prepare the media kit, prepare the list of invitees, and so on. This team is the organizing committee who will conduct the press conference.
4. Prepare the media kit. You also have to provide written data to be given to the reporters. A media kit is a collection of materials that are given to reporters when conducting an interview or a press conference. The written data provide background to the explanation that is given orally. Journalists can also study the written data before the press conference starts so that they can prepare relevant and appropriate questions.
5. Prepare a press release. The press release contains the material that is to be published through the media, in line with the perspective and viewpoints of the MPs. The press release must be factual, brief, accurate, and only contain the points of information actually needed by the reporters.
6. Prepare presentation material and facilities. A press conference to which many reporters are invited also needs presentation media such as a projector so that the presentation can be presented visually.

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7. Prepare a list of invitees. Based on the existing list of media, select which media will be invited to attend the press conference. In practice, reporters who are not on the invitation list will probably also attend; they cannot be refused admittance and must be treated the same as the invited journalists, as long as it is clear what media outlets for which they work. The invitations that are sent out should be cross-checked by telephoning the media offices one or two days before the press conference to make sure they received the invitation.
 8. Determine the time and venue for the press conference. The time and venue need to be considered carefully, with attention to several aspects. The press conference might be held at a hotel and followed by a lunch to enable reporters to obtain more in-depth information in a more relaxed, unofficial atmosphere. Or the press conference might be held at the DPR building, with no lunch but only snacks at an appropriate time. There is no set formula for the right time to hold a press conference. But bearing in mind the reporters' deadlines, a press conference should ideally be held before 12.00 noon so that the news can be published in the next day's papers, or broadcast the same day in the electronic media. It is also important not to schedule a press conference for the day before a public holiday, as the reportage will be delayed.
 9. After holding the press conference, evaluate how it went. This evaluation is done by collecting news clippings of all the reports. Then analyze whether the reports carried in the media conform to the objective, or actually have a negative impact; sometimes reporters make mistakes. Often, too, they seek alternative perspectives to complement their reports, and from these, the MPs can learn the views of other parties on the same topics.

Another important aspect during a press conference is how to respond to reporters' questions. The spokesperson should preface responses by expressing appreciation for the question, for example by saying "good question," "an excellent question," or "that's an important question." Sometimes a reporter will only ask you to repeat your original statement and not develop the discussion. But we need to recognize that not all reporters will have a good understanding of the issue being presented, so it's not surprising that some unnecessary questions may be asked. It could be that these reporters did not have the chance to study the material presented in the press conference; or they could be tired and unable to concentrate fully during the press conference; or they might simply not understand the issues. But whatever the situation, you still need to reply accurately, clearly, and without deviating from the statements you made previously.

Express your appreciation to the reporters at the close of the press conference. Appreciation can also be conveyed to the media organizations that delegated their reporters to attend the press conference you held. This is a concrete form of fostering good relations with the media – a mutually appreciative relationship between two parties that truly need one another. The relationship that is developed must be one of equality and mutual respect.

Factors Affecting the Success of a Press Conference

Many factors determine whether press conferences or press releases meet their objectives and are reported in the media or fail to gain the attention of the media. Here are some of these determinant factors:

1. Closeness with reporters

This factor is quite important for the success of your press conference. The personal relationship between the people holding the press conference (MPs) and the reporters present will affect its success. A good relationship with reporters will help get a press release carried or broadcast in the media. (For how to develop good relations with journalists, see the preceding discussion.)



2. Press release with news value

The mass media obviously have their own criteria for whether a news item or article is worth publishing. Though these criteria may vary from one media outlet to another, certain aspects will be common to all media. MPs who are preparing a press release or press conference need to keep several aspects in mind. The press release should be something that is new, important, and worth quoting because it has news value; the Member of Parliament who issues the press release should be competent in that particular area; the press release should have a mission for the public interest; and the press release should have an impact for the next several weeks.

3. Have more value than other events

A reporter's daily task is to seek out news that is considered both interesting and important. So if you want your press conference to be reported widely, the requirements are not very complicated. If the MPs' press conference or press release is really important in terms of social, political and economic issues, and in the public's interest, then even without a press conference or press release, the reporters will be pursuing the MPs to seek information and time for an interview.

The purpose of a press release is to present information to the public through the mass media. Writing a press release is, essentially, writing a news report, so when you write a press release, it must be written from a reporter's perspective. Therefore, the press release itself must fulfill the reporting standards prevailing in the mass media. In other words, the press release has to have news value.

Box 5

Tips for Writing Press Releases

1. *Prepare the press release in the format of a partly-prepared news report.*

The press release is meant to be sent to newspapers or radio stations. Magazines do not need the “finished product” format, because each magazine has its own house style. The purpose of this “partly-finished article” format, which contains only preliminary information that is relevant, important, and interesting, is to make it easier for journalists to prepare their reports, as they are often very busy. The partly-finished article format also helps to avoid misquotation or misinformation.

2. *Prepare the press release using several different approaches.*

The media usually do not want to duplicate the news presented by other media. So try to produce more than one version of your press release, each from a different perspective depending on the type of media you are targeting, but with the same essential content. For example, a press release for an economics magazine would be oriented toward an economic perspective; for a political newspaper, the press release is written from a political angle.

3. *Prepare a press release complete with facts and data.*

Note that the facts and data should be in the form of attachments. The data can be in info-graphic form, such as tables, diagrams, statistics, and so on. This will make the press release look more solid and help reporters in writing their news reports. However, the press release itself must still be in the form of an article or narrative. Sometimes the media prefer to write their own articles, once they have clear facts and data.

4. *Don't forget the 5W + 1H formula.*

This is the main, basic requirement for any press release: it must contain clear information on Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How. The information to be presented through the press release needs to be reasonably complete to respond to the public's curiosity. The completeness of the information is usually easily and simply measured with these six questions, popularly abbreviated as 5W + 1H.

5. *Use a journalistic writing style.*

The writing style of a press release should employ journalistic language – the language register usually used for producing journalistic works. The characteristics of journalistic language include information that is concise (presented in short sentences), compact (not long-winded), simple (using words easily understood by the public), and clear (sentences constructed and arranged in a way that makes it easy for the public to grasp their meaning).

6. *Brief – no more than one page*

The content of the press release should be no more than one page, double spaced. Present the essential information in the first paragraph and use the following paragraphs for more detailed or additional information. The paragraphs should present the information in a logical sequence. Avoid using direct quotations in the first paragraph. Remember that the press release is only meant to convey the basic points. After the first paragraph, responsible use of quotations can make the press release more interesting and substantial.

7. *Provide a telephone number and name of person to contact for confirmation (interview).*



CHAPTER III

**Communication Skills for Members
of Parliament**

Communication skills encompass a person's ability to package an idea or message and convey it effectively to others to achieve an intended purpose. Communication skills are important for everyone to master, no matter what type of work they do. Skills in communicating effectively help people to form good relationships and resolve conflicts that arise in society. Everyone needs effective communication to live their lives.

Each person has his or her own way of communicating messages to others, both verbally and non-verbally. Verbal communication skills involve mastery of the elements of persuasion, such as sentence structure, intonation, pauses, and presenting messages through framing and reframing. Non-verbal communication includes body language, symbols, personal appearance, and facial expressions. These two types of communication are widely used in all kinds of activities and can be developed professionally. These communication models can be studied and learned, particularly for self-empowerment and dealing with the public. Communication skills are an important part of public leaders' ability to display attitudes, behavior, actions and hopes as indicated by persuasion and body movements.

Many experts have explained the importance of communication skills. Dale Carnegie, the famous motivator, says that leadership is a combination of self-confidence, human relationships, and communication skills. Stephen R. Covey says that communication skills are the most importance expertise in life.

In the legislative elections, Members of Parliament (for both the DPR and DPD) are elected directly by the voters. The MPs who are elected are, therefore, well known to the voting public, their constituents. Before this, through campaign events and meetings with voters, the legislative candidates introduce themselves and their programs. For this, candidates need to have good communication ability to convey their ideas to the public. Public speaking is therefore actually a very common activity for legislators.

Similarly, when MPs perform their duties, such as taking part in plenary sessions, discussing legislation, visiting their provinces and other activities, all these activities are based upon communication. MPs need to have good communication skills to support their work as legislators. This means that a Member of Parliament must be ready to make a speech at any time, whether prepared or impromptu. Thus, good speaking skills are essential.

In this regard, one important type of communication skill is speech-making. Through speeches, MPs can present their ideas, thoughts and information orally to others (the audience). As well as presenting their ideas, thoughts or information, through their speeches MPs can also influence the audience. Indeed, oratory is often referred to as *"the art of persuasion"*.

Heads of state such as President Soekarno, President John F. Kennedy and Prime Minister Winston Churchill were renowned as great orators. Every time they spoke, they commanded the full attention of their people. Through their speeches, they were able to persuade and influence their listeners. Many of the phrases from their speeches remain famous to this day. President Soekarno, for example, said *"Never forget history."* Kennedy is remembered for the sentence in his inaugural address, *"Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country."*

Speech-making is not just the art of persuasion, but also the art of rhetoric, as shown in those well-known quotations. Rhetoric is the art of using language efficiently and effectively. The art of oratory can be studied; speech-making is a learnable skill. And because it is a skill, your oratory skills can be developed. In other words, public speaking ability is not solely the result of innate talent; it can also be acquired through intensive and repeated practice.

Basically, everyone has the potential to become an effective public speaker; it all depends on your ability to develop this talent and potential. If you are willing to practice, you have the chance to become a good speaker. On the other hand, if it is not honed and developed, this talent and skill will fade away. In the disciplines of rhetoric and communication, there are many strategies and theories to enable a person to become a good speaker who is effective in presenting ideas through good communication skills.

Preparing a Speech

To make your speech appropriate to your objectives, certain communication techniques are needed. Preparing a speech is, therefore, no easy matter. Many aspects determine whether a speech will succeed or fail. These include the speaker, the listeners, the purpose and content of the speech, preparation, and oratorical techniques and ethics.

Briefly, speeches can have several purposes, as follows:

First, to present information, reports, knowledge, or something of interest to the listeners.

Second, to persuade and instruct – an effort to encourage, convince and urge the audience to do something (election campaign speeches are an example).

Third, to educate – the speech emphasizes educational aspects such as the importance of good hygiene, respect for human rights, family planning, harmonious relations between different religious communities, and so on.

Fourth, to entertain – more relaxed speeches that are simply aimed at delighting the audience.

In theory, there are four main techniques for giving speeches:

- a. Speaking with a prepared text. This is the technique usually used for formal, official speeches; the text is simply read out. Using a prepared text, the speaker reads out the content of the speech without any additions or omissions. The reason is to avoid any possible errors, because every word that is uttered in an official situation will be widely disseminated and quoted in the media. The weakness of this approach is that such speeches may tend to be boring and monotonous; the advantage is that the speech is safe and kept within the time limits.
- b. Speaking from a memorized text. This type of speech is almost the same as the first. This technique is often used for formal or semi-formal events where the audience is closely following the content of the speech. The speech is based on a prepared text, but delivered from memory. The weakness is that if the speaker forgets the content, the delivery will be severely disrupted. The strength of this approach is that it fosters strong communication with the audience because the speaker can maintain eye contact with the audience.

- c. Speaking spontaneously: giving a speech without using a written text, perhaps using only written notes of the main points of the speech. Such speeches are common in events that are not very formal, when the agenda is not so tight. Certain people with good speech-making skills can make very good speeches without a prepared text, even for formal events. The advantage of such spontaneous speeches is that they can create a fresh and communicative atmosphere, often with elements of humor that may elicit laughter or applause from the audience. The weaknesses are that speakers who are not used to this approach may become very nervous and be at a loss for words, while those who are more confident may lose track of the time and ramble on and on.
- d. Speeches using the technique of elaborating from a set framework. In this technique, the speaker presents material that is complete and thoroughly structured. This technique is highly recommended. The meaning of "structured" here is that the material to be presented is prepared beforehand in the form of an outline of the most important points. Nowadays, speeches are often made using sophisticated audiovisual technology such as PowerPoint or animations.

Normally, the content of a speech, whether using a prepared text or not, is divided into four parts:

- Introduction, which serves to lead the audience toward the main points to be discussed and to mentally prepare the audience. In this section, the most important thing is to arouse the listeners' interest and direct their attention toward the main issues to be discussed.
- Content. In this section, the topic of discussion is presented, beginning with the background to the situation. The topic is presented in a way that makes clear its importance to the interests of the audience.
- Discussion. This part gives reasons that support the points made in the content section. This section usually contains further explanation, contrasts, charts, models, and possibly humor when relevant.
- Conclusion. This is the end of the speech, which pulls together the conclusions from the entire preceding explanation.



Several stages of preparation are needed before making a speech, including the following:

- a. Deciding the purpose of the speech.
- b. Choosing a topic.
- c. Knowing and analyzing the audience and the atmosphere.
- d. Gathering material for the speech.
- e. Preparing an outline for the speech material.
- f. Practicing the speech.
- g. Eliminating "stage fright" by focusing your thoughts on yourself, being self-confident, assuming that the audience does not know what you are going to tell them, gaining a deeper knowledge of the material, preparing a draft of the speech several days in advance, repeatedly reviewing the material, preparing yourself several hours before you are to appear, not being rushed, and being well-rested. Finally, of course, pray.

When you give the speech, the opening is the most important part; it determines the rest of the speech, because this is when you make your first impression on the audience.

There are many different methods a speaker can use to start a speech: introduce yourself, start with a joke, or begin with a general introduction to the topic.

Next, present the main points. In the closing section, you may give a summary and conclusions, or simply restate your main points. You could also tell a short but interesting story, quote some words of wisdom, a popular expression, or even a bit of poetry, or persuade, urge and praise your audience.

Speeches also have their own ethics. When speaking in public, etiquette requires that you dress neatly and appropriately for the nature of the meeting; present yourself politely, unpretentiously, and sincerely; insert a bit of appropriate humor into the speech; use polite, refined, simple words; and in closing, do not forget to offer your apologies for anything you have said that might have offended anyone.

Box 6

Tips for Making Speeches

- *Position of the speaker.* In as far as possible, the speaker should be visible to the entire audience. If you are not required to sit, try to stand where the entire audience can see your face and appearance. While speaking, avoid unnecessary gestures. Do not stand in a rigid and overly formal position, but also do not be so relaxed that you do not appear serious. An orator must be able to discover a stance that is comfortable, pleasant to look at, and effective.
- *Exercise good voice control.* Try to produce a voice that is clear, confident, and sufficiently loud, but without shouting or seeming overly emotional. Adjust your voice to the size of the room so that everyone can hear you.
- *Volume, intonation, and enunciation.* When speaking, try to regulate your volume, intonation, and enunciation. Volume, pitch, and expression signal the speaker's ideas. If the message is presented in a monotone, the listeners will get bored. Your certainty about what you are saying will be reflected in your speaking voice.
- *Use a bit of polite, refreshing, and relevant humor.* Avoid any humor that is smutty, offensive to ethnic, racial or religious groups or gender, or relates to women's bodies. Use facial expressions to convey humor, surprise, confusion, or concern. Variation of expression is the key to sustain your audience's interest and enthusiasm. Nobody wants to look at a cold, empty, expressionless face for a long time.
- *Control your gestures.* Control the movements of your arms, hands, fingers, head, and face so that they do not interfere with the content of your speech. Use these gestures to enhance the appeal of your speech, but don't overdo it; keep your gestures appropriate to what you are discussing. Movements of the head, arms or shoulders can help provide clarity in communication. These gestures function to help explain or illustrate what is being said, to gain and hold the attention of the listeners, and to emphasize certain points.



- *Use of microphones.* If there is a microphone, use it correctly. Try not to place the microphone directly in front of your mouth, because your voice will be distorted. Hold the microphone far enough from your mouth so that your voice can be heard clearly.
- *Use of visual aids.* If there are slides (OHP or LCD), models, or a whiteboard, use these as necessary to make your speech more effective, but be sure you know how to use the technology!
- *Avoid unnecessary movements.* Try not to touch your face or mouth, scratch your head or your rear end, or wipe the sweat from your brow when you feel panicked, because this will just make you look even more confused. Take a deep breath and concentrate! Carry on, or repeat what you were just saying to recapture your train of thought.
- *Notes/ note cards.* Use notes containing the main points of your ideas as a guide for your speech. You can also use equipment, such as a laptop. If you use cards, number each of your points, and if you use pages of notes, number them as well if you have more than one page. This is to prevent confusion in case your notes get out of sequence.

When we read a book or listen to a lecture on speaking techniques, it all seems very simple, but things are very different when we have to put it all into practice. So do not get bored with practicing, and learn from your mistakes. Among the many causes of unsuccessful speeches are failure to master the material, inability to control the audience, lack of self-confidence due to lack of experience speaking before groups, poorly organized content, and monotonous tone of voice. Things will be even more complicated if you are not well prepared. One very important thing is that we can learn from simple, seemingly insignificant situations. Every time you hear someone speaking in public, whether they are presenting a paper or simply making welcoming remarks, observe carefully and try to assess their strengths and weaknesses. Use the strengths as examples to follow and the weaknesses as things to avoid.

Speaking like Barack Obama or Winston Churchill

In every speech he makes, Barack Obama sets fire to millions of supporters with his inspiring vision, his enthusiasm, and his attractive appearance. His extraordinary communication skills have spurred the support of a political movement as never before. These communication skills are the key to his success, which brought his election as the first African-American President of the United States.

But this ability to inspire and persuade thousands of listeners is not due solely to innate talent. Barack Obama honed these communication techniques over many years, making him a highly effective speaker before audiences of 30,000 to 200,000 listeners. As a child, Obama was a weak speaker. He had a stammer, especially when starting an utterance. But he overcame this weakness through practice. And all the communication techniques he employs can be used not only in the political arena, but also by business executives, managers, and leaders in all aspects of life.

Speaking and winning like Obama has led to a number of theories on speaking techniques that can be used to plant positive changes in any group by studying speaking techniques. These can be summarized as follows:

- > Ability to make a strong impression
- > Ability to use voice and body language
- > Ability to build a foundation of shared understanding with the audience
- > Ability to gain the audience's trust and confidence
- > Ability to win the audience's hearts and minds
- > Ability to persuade and to convey the essence of the speech
- > Presenting a vision through descriptions and resounding words
- > Ability to build to a climax and leave a lasting impression

Many historians believe that the most influential speech Winston Churchill ever made was his commencement address at Oxford University. Churchill prepared his speech for hours. When the time came to give his speech, Churchill spoke only three words: "Never give up." He then descended from the podium to thunderous applause.



Five secrets of Winston Churchill's speeches:

1. Start the speech in an impressive way

The audience is giving its full attention at the beginning. The listeners are waiting to see what kind of person the speaker is. The beginning of the speech is the most important part, the critical time when you capture your listeners' attention. The speech should not begin with commonplaces, but rather with something unusual that is not normally heard in other speeches.

2. One theme for one speech

Churchill knew that a speaker normally has two or three points in a speech, but all of these should derive from a single theme. According to Churchill, a speech is like a symphony, and the speaker or orator must be like an orchestra. There may be three movements, but they all derive from one dominant melody. That single melody is the single theme of the speech.

3. Direct and simple language

For Churchill, a speech should be like a radio text, not like a newspaper article. The language of radio is simple and easy to understand, while the language of a newspaper article uses more complex technical terms. The language of a leader is simple language.

4. Paint a picture

Speeches usually contain abstract words such as imperialism, militarism, tyranny, and so on. These abstract words need to be "illustrated" so they can be more easily digested. Illustrating or describing is like painting a picture. The proper description of abstract words is like producing a beautiful painting.

5. Emotional ending to the speech

The speech should end with statements that engage the listeners' emotions. Churchill ended many of his wartime speeches with expressions of pride in his nation (the United Kingdom). Pride is a form of emotional expression that influences and inspires the listeners. Hope, like pride, is another form of emotional expression. A speech can end with a hope that invites the emotional feelings of the listeners. Dr. Martin Luther King, the great American civil rights leader, ended his most famous speech in 1963 with the words *"I have a dream that one day..."*

CHAPTER IV

Conclusion It's All Up to You!

Everything described in this book is simply guidance. The content is taken from experience, various theories, and many people's successes and failures in communicating. But behind all these theories, you are the determining factor. Success or failure in building good relations with the media, in communicating with audiences and with the public, all depends on your own diligence, perseverance, hard work and attitude toward communication and your willingness to keep learning. Each person is unique. Everyone has their own ways of communicating. Humans even try to communicate with animals and with nature, and of course with other humans. There is always an appropriate way to communicate, no matter who your audience is.

Members of Parliament and the press depend on one another. They can work together effectively thanks to communication; communication helps them to build their partnership. They are similar in many ways; both MPs and the press are reflections of the people's sovereignty. The difference is that MPs have a relatively restricted range for their communication, while the press has a much more extensive reach for its communication. If this can be used properly, it can greatly help the MPs in doing their work more easily and quickly.

Every Member of Parliament is basically already a skilled communicator, but these skills need to be constantly polished, upgraded and refined. The spectrum of legislators' activities requires every MP to have even better communication skills. Communication ability is needed in internal tasks – in commission meetings and plenary sessions, and in dealings with other party groups, other committees, and officials from the executive and judicial branches.

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