

1074

TRANSNATIONAL DATA REPORT

TEN RULES OF QUALITY OF LIFE

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In the course of the closing plenary, the first lead paper was offered by Justice Michael Kirby (Australia) titled "Information, Government and Social Responsibility". The substance of the paper is dealt with elsewhere. Justice Kirby, a member of the Tide 2000 Club, was chair of the OECD Expert Groups on Privacy (1978-80) and Security of Information Systems (1990-92).

At the end of an extremely busy conference and following a late night of 'extraordinary celebrations culminating in fireworks, offered at the Rose Garden, Bangkok, by Tide 2000 to all conference participants, Justice Kirby gave a lively address and sometimes came close to astonishing his audience.

He began the address by recounting his conversation the day before with a fellow Commissioner of the World Health Organisation Global Commission on AIDS, Dr Mechai Viravaidya of Thailand. Unless information technology, including the media, could be mobilized effectively to spread the message of the dangers of HIV/AIDS, the impact of the epidemic on Thailand, and elsewhere in Asia and the world, would be devastating. With the help of Dr Mechai, Justice Kirby produced and tabled in front of him a vase of "condom flowers". He pointed out that radio and television stations in Thailand carry hourly messages about the needs of AIDS prevention.

Justice Kirby then proceeded to give his own "description, not a definition" of "quality of life". He drew on the events of the remarkable conference dinner the previous evening. He said that quality of life was:

1. *Having a police escort for three large buses through Bangkok's notorious clogged traffic;*
2. *Arriving at a conference dinner to be greeted by the co-chairman seated on an elephant;*
3. *Receiving a wai from a beautiful Thai citizen accompanied by a circle of orchids (which the judge*

reproduced from his bag and wore again);

4. Receiving an ice-cold towel of fragrant perfume on a warm Thai night;
5. Joining children merrily laughing at play as a red dusk fell;
6. Enjoying the variety and beauty of Thai food and dancing;
7. Observing, in one dance, the symbolic triumph of the womens' movement in Asia when, with a clash of swords, the woman dancer gained a surprise victory over the male;
8. Observing a demonstration of Thai boxing in which, ultimately, the referee was knocked out! (Justice Kirby did not encourage the extension of this idea to courtrooms);
- 9'. Listening to the music of the Ankaloon, a bamboo instrument shaken by a team of children into a harmony greater than the separate individual sounds; and
10. Joining all conference participants at the riverside to send into the enveloping darkness of the night, floating candles committed to the water with the humble hopes and prayers of people from a great variety of lands joined together by technology and their common humanity."

At the close of the presentation of his paper, Justice Kirby said that; in the age of information technology everybody could be an information Superman. With this, he said everyone could enter a telephone booth, literally. Removing his coat he was heard to utter Superman's famous words: "off with these clothes". He then pulled aside his shirt revealing to the astounded audience the inscription on the T shirt below: "I am an Infomaniac". By information technology we all have greatly enhanced powers, the judge concluded. The Chairman of the Session, Ambassador Hiromu Fukada (Japan) wryly commented that Justice Kirby's talents should not be confined to a courtroom in Sydney!