

January 23, 1961 1961 MANILA POSTAL CONFERENCE

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For the first time in the history of the Philippine Postal Service, the Philippines has invited its neighboring Asian countries to a conference to consider the possibility of forming a restricted postal union in Asia.

A restricted postal union under the provision of the Universal Postal Convention which binds the countries of the world into a single postal territory for the reciprocal exchange of correspondence, is permitted to be established among member-countries of the Union "provided always that they do not introduce provisions less favorable to the public than those laid down in the Act to which they are parties."

Within this framework, the countries of Afghanistan, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, Nationalist China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaya, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand and Vietnam were invited, through diplomatic channels, to join the Manila Postal Conference for the purpose of establishing such a union in this region. Four countries accepted the invitation to join, namely: the Republic of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Thailand, besides the Philippines; while four countries agreed to send Observers, namely: Australia, Malaya, Burma and New Zealand.

Because of the importance which is believed, Australia and New Zealand can contribute to the work of the proposed restricted Union, the Philippines has invited these two countries to appear as delegates in case the participating countries decide to invite them to become members of the Union.

The conference opened on January 10, 1961, with the aim to unite for service in closer cooperation with one another so that these countries can be in a better position to solve their common postal problems and meet their mutual needs and thus prepare to contribute more fully and effectively to the improvement of postal services beyond their respective shores.

The need for such a union among Asian countries which was but a dream during the past Universal Postal Congress will be realized should these countries in Asia and Oceania reconcile their different views and positions and organize a cohesive group, notwithstanding varying backgrounds and geographical barriers.

It is significant to note that this will be the first Asian Union to be established within this region; and more significant is the fact that this is the first postal conference ever undertaken by the Philippine Postal Service.

To commemorate this historical event, the Bureau of Posts has issued a 6-centavos and 30-centavos (Airmail) denomination stamps bearing the map of Asia as general background and the messenger of the Greek gods, Mercury, carrying in his left hand a letter. His attributes are the winged sandals, Caduceus and a winged helmet. (A winged salaket has been used to give oriental color).

The stamps, panoramic in shape (length double the width), the first of its kind, horizontally composed was designed by Nemesio Dimanlig, Jr., Philatelic Designer of the Bureau of Posts, printed in four colors by heliogravure process.

