

Media and good governance

Savankhone Razmouny.

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**Savankhone Razmouny, Deputy Director general, Lao Press in Foreign Languages
Editor, Vientiane Times
Ministry of Information and Culture,
Lao People's Democratic Republic**

1. Role of Media in Lao PDR

The media in the Lao PDR plays an important role in society, acting as a bridge between the Government and people in giving information through two-way communication to promote and protect the interest of the country and its people in all areas.

In the economic area, the media promotes continued economic growth of the country for the happiness and well-being of the people. This is to achieve the long-term goal of moving the country from the least development status by the year 2020.

In the social area, the media works for the people to enjoy social justice in terms of income distribution, health care and education services. It gives information on activities in social development as well as rural development to boost the government efforts to reduce disparity in development between urban and rural areas.

In the cultural area, the media supports the protection and preservation of the cultural values and identity of the nation.

In the area of national defence and security, the media encourages the people in the entire country to take part in the national effort to maintain political stability and social order.

2. Media and Good Governance from Lao perspectives

So far more than 40 laws have been enforced in the country. Before adoption by the National Assembly, all the draft laws have been brought down for public consultations at the grassroots level.

Promoting good governance, the media reports on accountability and transparency among the people in both public and business sectors. With the Government and the National Assembly, it encourages law enforcement by disseminating laws and reporting instances of violating laws to ensure that all the people in society conform themselves with the laws. The media covers all events and developments occurring in the country and reflect the issues of public concern, including the opinions and needs of the people to the Government. It informs the people on ways the government reacts in response to the issues of public concern.

The media also encourages the people to participate in all development activities.

3. Opportunities

The media works in line with the Party policy and state decrees governing the functioning of the media. The policy and decrees will be developed into a press law. All the media institutions are state owned and receive budgets from the Government. The media people are confident of their job as they have the right to report news that are beneficial for national development,

and make critics on any irregular practices that undermine the interest of the country.

4. Challenges

There are a number of challenges facing the media in the country:

-Some government officials and business people still do not fully trust the media as they do not want to meet and speak with the media on their work or business. In this circumstances, the media people have to work harder to improve their credibility among both the government officials and business people.

-The media people need more skill training in reporting.

- There is a need for government agencies to have information officers who can deal with the media in providing information concerning their respective activities.

5. Recommendations

- For the media in the three countries to cover good governance issues, a follow-up workshop should be held on such a topic as media and development. The workshop participants will include officials who are concerned with information in various government agencies.