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<th>Media and economic development in Cambodia: opportunities and issues.</th>
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Dear distinguished guests and colleagues,

Since the outbreak of war in Cambodia in 1970, economic news has been paid attention to less than the current political news or news from battlefields. Sometimes the news about starving Cambodians is overlooked, they turn to the news that praises or criticizes the government instead.

As a matter of fact, the role of journalists in developing the country is very crucial but to achieve this role I personally think that there are many factors combined.

First, journalists need to be competent to perform their job. Second, there must be a fully-guaranteed freedom of press. And third, the government have to know that press is also one of their partners.

Distinguished guests and colleagues,

Since the pre-1970 war, newspapers in Cambodia have focused heavily only on politics and individual scandal. I think this is a kind of a chronic disease and it has become worse and worse within these three decades of war. There is not much experience in doing economic research for Cambodian journalists.

Until this second kingdom was created in 1993, though many newspapers have emerged, they still can not escape from this traditional disease. There was one newspaper aimed at publishing economic news but due to the lack of experience and competence it was pitifully closed down.

Human resources to develop economy in Cambodia are very poor, at the same time human resources among journalists that can perform their job as government watchdogs and economic analysts are poorer. For instance, at our Rasmei Kampuchea journalists graduated from university are only 10%.

To find a solution to this problem we need to have a proper and systematic training and from here I would like to appeal to all of you to fully help Cambodian journalists.

At the same time of the lack of these resources our journalists have not worked hand in hand to settle this problem yet. The division of politicians has led to a division of journalists by dividing into independent newspapers, pro-government newspapers and opposition newspapers.

Among these few groups of journalists they never meet to discuss about how to strengthen their profession at all, on the contrary they often meet in the pages of their papers by painting colours at each other.
Journalists showed the people's anger toward this new policy and told the government that they did not need to increase the price of electricity consumption if they dared eliminate cheating and corrupt activities within the great leadership of the company. As a result the government decided to abandon that new policy.

However, sometimes the government neglect our voice and some government officials even dare say: "Pay no attention to those journalists. When they are tired, they will stop writing to criticize us."

I think that it is useless to wait for the government to wake up. We have to force the government to take responsibility for their activities. This is a tough goal but we cannot put off any longer if we want to practice the role of press in developing the economy.

Dear guests,

I am very excited that this seminar is held in Cambodia amidst the recent ending of the political deadlock and conflict, and Cambodia is starting to talk about developing the country's economy.

I would like to take this floor again to appeal to this seminar, especially, to AMIC to further its assistance to strengthen Cambodian journalists by opening a way and providing chances to Cambodian journalists to attend all AMIC's activities.

Thank you for your attention.