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WORKING GROUP I RECOMMENDATIONS

THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING

It is imperative that public service broadcasting find ways to be independent of any government interference while not losing its financial commitment.

[A] FINANCING

Options that might be adopted by individual countries for guaranteeing the provision of sufficient funds to preserve public service broadcasting include:

- * CORPORATISATION
- * LICENCE FEES/ADVERTISING/SPONSORSHIP
- * CROSS SUBSIDIZATION OF PSB BY THE COMMERCIAL SECTOR
- * TAX INCENTIVES
- * COMMUNITY BASED FUNDING

[As well, public debate should be encouraged about this issue to stimulate the community, and influential sections of it, to support public service broadcasting.]

[B] INDEPENDENCE

Options for increasing the level of independence from government of public service broadcasting include:

- * THE INTRODUCTION OF INDEPENDENT BOARDS OF DIRECTORS
- * INCREASING THE EXTENT OF PARLIAMENTARY INFLUENCE OR CONTROL (WITH A CORRESPONDING DECREASE IN GOVERNMENT CONTROL)
- * INTRODUCING INDEPENDENT LAY PEOPLE IN AN ADVISORY ROLE (EG. ADVISORY PANELS TO DEAL WITH COMPLAINTS)

☐ PROGRAMMING

Options for maintaining or improving the quality and quantity of public service broadcasting include:

- * PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAMMING QUOTAS (AS A LICENCE CONDITION)
- * LICENCE RENEWALS LINKED TO PERFORMANCE IN PROVIDING PSB.
- * THE ADOPTION OF SPECIALIST OR MIXED SERVICES
- * PROGRAMMING AS A COMMUNITY SERVICE - INTANGIBLE BENEFITS ACCRUE TO OPERATORS
- * INCREASED CONCENTRATION ON NEWS/CURRENT AFFAIRS (revises a link with independence)
- * ADOPTION OF INDEXES THAT MEASURE AUDIENCE APPRECIATION/QUALITY/CONTENT

WORKING GROUP II- Fostering the Development of Public Service Programming

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Public service programming provides a vital social function to inform, educate and entertain the people. As such, public service programming should continue to be developed and given the necessary support to flourish in the new media environment.

Recognizing the changing broadcast media environment in Asia characterized by globalization, influx of new communication technologies, deregulation and increasing competition from commercial broadcasting, the members of the working group agreed on the following recommendations:

1. Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) organizations should be operated independently with an impartial board of directors comprised of representatives from various sectors.
2. PSB organisations should pursue innovative and creative ways of generating revenue and should not be overdependent on government funding.
3. The possibility of charging commercial broadcasters for the use of the spectrum, which is a public resource, should be explored, with the proceeds used to subsidise PSBs.
4. PSBs should pay very close attention to their audiences, conduct periodic audience research, target their audiences and develop appropriate programmes and promotional strategies. They should identify their niche audiences.
5. Public service programmes should be presented in a manner that appeals to audiences. It should entertain as well as educate in order to be more competitive with commercial programs.
6. The training of PSB programming personnel is essential to provide the necessary skills in order to cope with the demands of the new media environment. Training should be encouraged and supported, especially in areas where PSBs have resource limitations. Joint training programmes and personnel exchanges between PSB organisations can be explored.
7. Radio continues to be an important medium in both the developing and developed countries of Asia, as exemplified during man-made and natural crisis. It will continue to be important for local content and immediacy, even with the introduction of new communication technologies. The development of radio should be supported. Subsidy from revenues of television should be explored, if necessary.