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**Media & Good Governance
November 10-12, 1999, Laos**

Welcome Remarks

By

Joe Ma. Carlos

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Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the seminar on Media & Good Governance: Perspectives from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

This meeting is the third and, hopefully, not the last of a series of seminars in this region organized by AMIC and supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. In November, 1996, we held the seminar on media and the preservation of national identity in Vietnam. Media and Economic development was the theme of the second seminar organized in Cambodia in December, 1998.

Good governance is complex and difficult. For it involves people's participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability and strategic vision. They are the key characteristics of good governance as enunciated by the United Nations Development Programme.

Good governance has become relevant as Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam grapple with the demands of national development, ill-effects of the financial crisis and their increasing involvement in the global economy.

Good governance is not the sole responsibility of the state. The private sector and civil society, including media, have a role to play as well. If media as part of civil society is to contribute to good governance, it must begin from within. This means not just pursuing media's objectives to inform and educate, but more importantly, abiding by a set of ethical values in journalism that demand professionalism, objectivity and truth in reporting.

There are more to media's role in good governance and this seminar aims to articulate that role through the various country presentations on the theme highlighting desirable changes to improve media's responsibility in good governance. This seminar will also generate a set of agenda on how media can promote good governance in their respective countries. We look forward to a healthy interaction among participants from media, government and other civic groups.

We wish to thank the Ministry of Information & Culture, in particular, Vice Minister Bouabane Volakhoune, and Director Khamkong Kongvongsa, for accepting our invitation to be a co-organizer of this meeting, and for extending their hospitality.

Special gratitude too to SIDA and Mr. Olof Milton, charges d'Affairs of the Embassy of Sweden in Laos.

With all your support, we expect a very educational and productive three-day seminar.

Thank you.