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<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Sek Barisoth.</td>
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Welcome Address

Sek. Barisoth
Cambodia Communication Institute
WELCOME ADDRESS

Consultation on Media & Economic Development in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam
Phnom Penh, December 7 - 9, 1998

by Sek Barisoth
Cambodia Communication Institute

HE, Sieng Lapresse, Media Adviser to the Royal Government of Cambodia

Mr Jose Ma. Carlos, Head of Seminars & Institutional Development Programme, AMIC,
Colleagues from Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the name of the Cambodia Communication Institute, I would like to express my deep impression over the role of CCI as AMIC’s partner in organizing this very important seminar. And in the name of the Cambodian media, I feel proud and honored by AMIC and Sida for their decision to hold the seminar in my country, Cambodia.

I think it is good timing that we are now meeting and discussing economic development. The word economics and development seem to be prevalent all over the world during this post-cold war period. The seminar is held just at the time when globalization and liberalization of the world’s economy is on the way and Asia as a whole is facing the worst economic crisis it has ever had for decades.

The three Indochinese countries are not as badly affected by the current crisis as our regional neighbors but it is still a concern for every country sharing the world. As societies become more and more integrated into the global village, media coverage
shall not be limited to only within their national boundaries but it shall be expanded to cope with an additional expectation- that is to keep the public informed of international events and what happen in the outside world that could likely affect their lives and and those of their children.

The media, no matter in what kind of regime, share a common goal - that is national development. There are different ways to reach that goal. But whatever the way we take, one of our roles is to follow up then inform or warn the public and policy makers of what shall likely happen so that precautious actions could be taken.

Mr Joe Stiglitz of the World Bank compare developing market economies to boats on an open sea of capital. No one can predict when they may capsize. Bad steering increases the chances of disaster, and a leaky boat makes it inevitable. But chances of them being broadsided by a wave of capital are always present, no matter how well they are steered and no matter how seaworthy they are.

No one has ever said it was easy. It is a fact that every individual country has its own potential for economic development. But the challenge is how it can be sustainable, how it will affect other countries, how it can be shared by others, at what price it shall pay and how the people can benefit from it. These are the sorts of things the media should deal with.

As we all, the three Indochinese countries, are either on the way or in transition to free market economies, there are a lot of lessons we can learn especially from our neighbours. The media’s role is threfore seen as even more important at least in the sense that the policy makers and the public are either reminded not to repeat our neighbours’ mistakes or introduced by the media to a more secured way.

It is in this spirit that this seminar is held. I hope it is a good opportunity for us to meet and exchange our ideas on the role of the media for the sake of national development in particular and regional development in general.

As a facilitator of this gathering I would like to extend warmest welcome to all participants and wish the seminar a great success.

A special thank to His Excellency, Sieng Lapresse, Media Advisor to the Royal Government of Cambodia who has kindly shared his time to preside over the opening of this seminar and deliver a keynote speech.

Thank you!