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Summary Report
CONSULTATION ON MEDIA & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
December 7-9, 1999, Phnom Penh, Cambodia  

Summary Report

Fifteen senior media professionals and policy makers from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam participated in the three-day Consultation on Media and Economic Development held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on December 7-9, 1998. This was the second of a series of consultations with senior print editors, broadcast managers, and policymakers in the region. The first meeting which focused on the role of media in the promotion of national identities and culture was held in Vietnam in November, 1996.

Two senior officials from the Royal Government of Cambodia attended the Consultation's opening ceremony, namely; Minister for Information Lu LaySreng and Media Adviser Sieng La Presse. They endorsed the three-day meeting and stressed its relevance in the region which is grappling with the impact of the economic slowdown, and the process of globalization and liberalization in Asia.

Joe Ma. Carlos, SIDP Head, welcomed the delegates and stressed that the process of economic development demands an increasing flow of relevant information. He said that the presentation of this information must be in such a way as it awakens interest, stimulates aspirations for change and encourages commitment to national development. In this area, he noted that mass media can play a critical role. He thanked the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency for its support and AMIC's local partner, Cambodia Communication Institute for its assistance in organizing the event.

Mr. Sek Barisoth, officer-in-charge of the Cambodia Communication Institute reminded the participants to report how Indo-China's neighbors have addressed the challenges of economic development so that Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam can learn from them and do not repeat the same mistakes as they increasingly open up to the process of globalization and liberalization.

Two resource persons were invited to the three-day meeting; Mr. Harish Mehta of the Singapore Press Holdings who presented a paper on the development of information technologies in the three countries, and Ms. Anita Doraisami of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore who discussed the impact and implications of globalization and liberalization in the economies of Indo-China.
Four participants from each of the Indo-Chinese countries presented their papers highlighting the challenges and opportunities facing media in their efforts to promote economic development, and policy considerations that government ought to address in strengthening the role of media in reporting and analyzing economic issues.

The consultation was an unqualified success as participants spoke openly on three major issues that emerged during the presentations and open forum. These were the following:

a. To what extent should freedom of expression be enhanced to further the role of media in promoting economic development?

b. To what extent are journalists prepared in promoting economic development?

c. How ready is government to assist media in promoting economic development?

The participants were divided to two groups to come out with a list of recommendations on how mass media can promote economic development and how government can assist media perform this role (see attached).

The Consultation generated a reasonable amount of publicity in Cambodia's major newspaper daily, Rashmey Kampuchea, and the National Television of Kampuchea.
Fifteen senior media professionals and policy makers from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam met on December 7-9, 1998 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia for a three-day consultation on the role of media in promoting economic development in the region. The Asian Media Information & Communication Centre organized the event with the cooperation and the support of the Swedish International Cooperation Agency and the Cambodia Communication Institute.

Cambodian Minister for Information Lu LaySreng endorsed the consultation and stressed its relevance at a time when the three countries are addressing the impact of Asia’s economic slowdown, globalization and liberalization.

Sieng LaPresse, media adviser to the Royal Government of Cambodia, welcomed the delegates and asked media to support Cambodia’s entry into the ASEAN organization.

The participants presented country papers setting out the opportunities and challenges whereby the print and broadcast media can fulfill their role in promoting their respective economies, and policy considerations that need to be addressed to assist the mass media in this role.

Two resource persons were invited to the consultation; Mr. Harish Mehta of Singapore Press Holdings who presented a paper on the development of information technologies in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, and how the three countries are increasingly using the Internet to improve the business climate. He also cited the need to improve the quality of education to enable the three countries to leap forward into the new information age; Ms Anita Doraisami of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore who discussed the impact of foreign direct investment flows, capital flows and official development assistance as the three countries address concerns about globalization and liberalization.

The delegates were divided to two groups which generated a list of recommendations on how media can effectively fulfill its role in promoting economic development and how the government can assist mass media in performing this role.