

“Prospects for the Establishment of Public Service Broadcasting in Cambodia”

BACKGROUND

The primary mission of public broadcasting is that of public service, speaking to and engaging the citizenry. PSB embodies the following principles: universal accessibility (geographic), universal appeal (general tastes and interests), particular attention to minorities, contribution to a sense of national identity and community, distance from vested interests, direct funding and universality of payment, competition in good programming rather than numbers of listeners, and guidelines that liberate rather than restrict program-makers.

Common aims of broadcasting policy are to ensure that diverse and high quality programming is supplied that caters to all interests and communities. In addition, programs that yield educational and other social benefits are encouraged, including programs that might make the population more tolerant, and also more aware of their regional and national identity. And, in a related vein, sufficient locally produced content should be made available⁹

PSB should be non-governmental and financially independent. Decisions about its mission, programming, financing, and organization should be made publicly by a politically and commercially independent body.

This type of broadcasting does not yet exist in Cambodia. The need for a PSB system in a developing country such as Cambodia can be considered high. In addition to providing news and entertainment and supporting cultural preservation, PSB can play an important role in fostering a country’s educational standards and can contribute indirectly to poverty alleviation.

In 2008, Im Sothearith conducted his doctoral dissertation research on “Public Service Broadcasting Model for Developing Countries: The Case of Cambodia” to identify challenges and define prospects and options for the establishment of PSB in Cambodia. In-depth interviews and focus groups were undertaken with 68 informants, including policymakers, media executives, media practitioners, civil society activists, and representatives of donor organizations, as well as with ordinary citizens from different regions. Research data were also collected from primary materials. He examined four main factors – political circumstances, economic conditions, civil society and donors, and socio-cultural compatibility – to determine their impact on prospects for a future PSB system.

This forum will serve as a floor for sharing the research findings and recommendations regarding the potentials for the establishment of PSB in Cambodia. In addition, Mr. Thepchai Yong, Managing Director of Thai PBS, which was one of the models cited in the study, will also share experiences and challenges of establishing the PBS system in Thailand.

Program

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Wednesday 18th January, 2012

Inter-Continental Hotel, Phnom Penh

- 13.30 Registration
- 14.00 **Opening of Forum**
- Welcoming Remarks by **Mr. Denis Schrey**, Country Representative,
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Cambodia
- 14.10 “Prospects for the Establishment of Public Service Broadcasting in
Cambodia.”
Dr. Im Sothearith, Researcher
- 15.00 Development of the Thai Public Broadcasting System (Thai PBS)
Mr. Thepchai Yong, Managing Director of Thai PBS
- 15.30 Coffee Break
- 15.45 Q & A
- 16.30 **Closing Remarks**
H.E. Khieu Kanharith, Minister of Information