

"Insight of the TOP"

H.E. Mr. Khov Makara
Under Secretary of State
Ministry of Posts and Telecommunication
Cambodia

On the occasion of APT Cybersecurity Forum in Cambodia, we had asked H.E. Mr. Khov Makara about the current policy stance and future perspective of Cambodian government.

"Moving forward, steadily "



- **What are the significant changes of ICT environment in Cambodia recent years?**

The one of the important steps in Cambodia is that we formulated the Telecommunication Law in 2015 and start to enact it. Until 2015, there is no ICT law in Cambodia.

We started to draft this new law in 2013 and stimulated this initiative in the last some years. We believe that this new law provides a good found for establishing enable environment for both government and private sector. There are many points we have considered during the course of discussion and preparation. The list of things we need to consider and analyze is long such as encourage competition among private companies and promote necessary investment.

We also considered licensing regime for fair competition, allocation of scarce resources (such as frequency and number) and universal service fund. Of course, capacity building is very important for our country.

Human capital is the precious resource and key for development. In this connection, I would like to mention that it is essential to think about the way how we can acquire technology transfer to Cambodia. Our capability on this point is limited now but we are making effort to promote this aspect including foreign direct investment.

- **It may be still too early to evaluate the effect of the law, but how do you see the current ICT market in Cambodia?**

I think one of important effects is that it makes clear which policy direction we are moving forward. We also have a plan of Telecom & ICT development Policy 2020 and these policy frameworks provide a good benchmark to look your path.

Let me also give you statistic figures. Now there are 19.5 million mobile subscribers in Cambodia and out of which, 47% is using internet. With this more than 130% penetration rate, the number of data subscribers is increasing, for instance, IoT subscriber is 10%, and volume of data traffic is also increasing rapidly. These phenomena may be observed everywhere but as a small and landlocked country like Cambodia, these changes have a great impact on domestic business environment.



In order to keep eye on this situation, we set 3 indicators to observe and analyze it, namely,

- a) Quality and Quantity. More focus on quality.
- b) Subscription of Internet and mobile
- c) IoT penetration

- **How do you describe the characteristics of Cambodian market?**

Many people and many countries describe current market as mobile oriented or mobile focus. Cambodia is the first country in the world in which the number of mobile subscriber exceeds number of fixed line subscribers in 1993. Since then, Cambodian market is very much mobile centric market. Now the issue is that market is moving very quickly towards mobile data communication era from voice communication era. Mobile competition is becoming tough in Cambodia and at the same time there emerge many so-called smart services using mobile device, such as mobile banking. Now quite a few money transactions are conducted via mobile devices.



I think this kind of new phenomena is a very good and important opportunity and we need to catch up this new opportunity as a country.

Content development is another important domain. Now many people use social network for communications

such as Facebook. In order to promote local content, we need to consider about adopting new technology and services, take demographic advantage (Cambodia has many young generation), promote culture and entertainment, and emphasize on capacity building including English etc. In terms of users of Facebook, many internet users, not only in city but also in local municipality, join to Facebook and they enjoy it. Our Prime Minister also uses Facebook and he has 5 million followers.



- **How about business activities in Cambodia? What is the trend of ICT business?**

Business promotion is also in our targets. From government's point of view, we facilitate business activities, provide a good platform for business and try to attract more investment in Cambodia. At the same time, we put high priority on consumer interests.

For instance, e-commerce is emerging service in Cambodia and we have to think about cross-border data flow from the perspective of consumer protection. Speed of technology and service adoption among people is very quick and people are enjoying e-commerce, especially via mobile phone thanks to 3G and 4G.

Then what we have to do is to carefully think about appropriate

balance between emerging ICT business and consumer protection. These policy issues will not end as ICT continue to provide new services.

- What do you think about APT role and its future for ICT development in this region?

APT is playing a key role in this region. There are many aspects in promoting ICT development in the region. It is not just limited to consolidating regional voice or providing discussion platforms.

As this region is expected to grow rapidly, the work and role of APT will become bigger and more important and it is necessary for APT to represent and implement regional voice and demand. One of good examples is the APT 700MHz Plan. This plan formulates a good coordination among parties concerns and reflects different interests as much as possible.

In order to stimulate these good examples, I think it is necessary to mobilize international cooperation on the issues like increased demand for connectivity, response towards cyber threat to ensure safe, secure and trusted network etc.

I wish APT act as a stronger coordinator in the coming future.



2016. 10. 11

[Editor's Note]

Conversation with H.E. Mr. Makara covers many fields and the topics sometimes went to bigger and broader pictures, not limited to ICT. His enthusiastic perspective on the future of Cambodia enlightened me to understand the situation in Cambodia. It is always enjoyable to have conversation with those who have vision and insight. (M. Kondo)