SEAPA joins UNESCO, UNDP, TJA and TPBS in observing World Press Freedom Day

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The Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA) will co-organize with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Thai Journalists Association (TJA) and the Thai Public Broadcasting Service (TPBS) the World Press Freedom Day celebration in Bangkok, Thailand on 3 May 2011.

With the theme “21st Century Media: New Frontiers, New Barriers”, the event will feature dialogues on press freedom issues and a photo exhibition. The activity will run from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm at the UNESCO office in Bangkok.

UNESCO will unveil on that day the results of its media development indicators in the Mekong region, encompassing Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, with representatives from the three countries presenting the data gathered. Susanne Ornager, adviser for UNESCO’s Communications and Information for Asia, will discuss this UNESCO project.

The UN General Assembly declared 3 May as World Press Freedom Day in 1993 to raise awareness and remind governments about the commitments to Article 19 on freedom of expression under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The day has been commemorated globally by advocates of press freedom to inform the public about threats to and violations of press freedom and to take stock of the challenges and opportunities confronting the media and journalists.

At the dialogue, SEAPA executive director Gayathry Venkiteswaran will be among the discussants in the first panel entitled, “Media Development in the Mekong Region: Thailand, Laos and Cambodia”, along with Ou Virak, president of the Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR) and Thepchai Yong, managing director of Thai PBS. Thepchai will also deliver the opening remarks. Anothai Udomsilp, director of Thai PBS’ academic institute, will serve as moderator to the panel.

In the second panel, “21st Century Media: New Frontiers, New Barriers”, Supinya Klangnarong of the Thai Netizens Network and Ou Virak will serve as panelists. Lars Bestle, regional policy specialist of the UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Centre, will serve as moderator.