**APrIGF Seoul 2013**

**Workshop Summary Reports**

**Workshop Title: Internet accessibility in the AP region**

[**http://2013.rigf.asia/workshop-proposal-33/**](http://2013.rigf.asia/workshop-proposal-33/)

Date: 09/04/13

Time: 16:30-18:00

Track: Access

Moderator: Ho Woonog Lee, Ministry of Science, ICT & Future Planning, Korea

Panelist

: Phetsamone Xilyvong, Ministry of Post & Telecommunications of Laos

Rommel Natividad, Ministry of of Transportation and Communication, Marshall Islands

Tran Xuan Dung, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology of Vietnam

Asif Kabani

Peter Major, UN CSTD

As Internet Access is becoming one of the pivotal issues in the development agenda in ICT sector, this session was prepared as a forum for sharing the current status and practices in each country and improving cooperation among governments in Asia Pacific countries.

Ho Woong Lee gave a presentation on the role of government in the success of Korea's ICT and Internet development and current policy situation. He attributed the success of ICT and Internet development in Korea public-private partnerships, with heavy investment from the government and incentives for private investment since the 1980s. This also helped to bridge the digital divide between urban and rural populations. The government also works in partnership with other Asia Pacific economies in joint research, policy consultation, and training initiatives, including contributions to the ITU. He noted that part of the Korean infrastructure policy is to restrict the illegal collection of personal information from online users. This has all served to promote broadband use and competition, lowering barriers to market entrants and boosting demand for services and infrastructure. He concluded that policy makers should have a long-term perspective on broadband policy.

Phetsamone Xilyvong presented on Internet access in Laos. The Ministry of Communication of Laos was established in 2007, and then the government changed hands in 2011, leading to department shuffles. The Communications Ministry has many departments, including LANIC, the Laos National Internet Center, which is a carrier neutral non-profit organization and government agency.

There are six ISPs in Laos, with 40% of the market share at Lao Telecom (LTC), established in 1996. Some of the other ISPs are private, and some are partnered with ISPs in other countries including Russia and Vietnam. There are 5.4 million mobile subscribers in Laos, and Internet penetration is about 5% (600,000 users).

He mentioned that the security threats and concerns on their radar is the same as anywhere, and they are particularly aware of spreading malware through email. There is currently no policy to address cyber crime, and there are few security and ICT experts in the country. There are some laws currently being drafted through the Ministry of Public Security based on international standards and best practices.

Tran Xuan Dungdiscussed the current policy situation in Vietnam and gave an overview of the situation in Vietnam, which has been connected to the Internet since 1997 with cable ADSL with coaxial cable, fiber optic, wireless, and mobile. There are free public access areas in major centers; however out of 90 million, about 70% of the population lives in rural areas.

The policy surrounding Internet legislation is a reformed version of the Press Law, which was reformed in 2002 to encompass the Internet. The changes aim to address pornography, abuse such as data theft and network attacks, copyright infringement and so on. The government also intends to monitor Internet user activity, while raising subscriber rates to 6-8% for fixed connections and 20-25% for mobile subscribers; to increase household access to 35-40%, and overall users to 55-60%. They aim to achieve this through partnerships with VNNIC and NTT; also to build a national IPv6 test network.

Rommel Natividad gave an overview on the Marshall Islands situation as a small island developing state. There is one telecom provider, MINTA. Fiber optics have been available through Guam since 2010, and the outer islands communicate by HF radio. There are 29 telecenters; each center costs USD 30,000 to set up. The challenge is to find a way to make infrastructure development sustainable. Currently the connections are primarily 64kbps, and there is ADSL in Majuro but it's very expensive; there is a 2G broadband network, and that infrastructure is also very costly to upgrade.

In 2010, MOTC and MINTA signed an MoU for all ICT initiatives, and in 2013 MINTA regained the .mh domain. Other projects include ICT related work in partnership with APT, ITU, discussions of establishing an ISOC MH chapter, and a cyber crime bill.

John Uregave an analysis of the emerging polices in the region that he viewed as problematic, saying that approaches to law in "linear and non-linear" (or hierarchical) society are different.

He said that laws that applied to society before the Internet will not work for the Internet era, because they will serve to undermine the role of the Internet; this approach will also limit foreign trade and investment when international companies will be restricted where their national laws are in conflict. He used Vietnam as an example.

Asif Kabani gave a brief overview on the status of Internet development in Pakistan, as there were some remote participation difficulties.

Internet penetration in Pakistan is currently 16% with 120 million mobile users (70%) and 10% of those are smart phones. This is very high considering the average annual household income is less than USD 3,000.

He noted the challenge posed by censorship, citing the 2012 national URL filtering system that blocks social networking sites; a total of 4,000 URLs. This poses a significant challenge for educational institutions and news channels that rely on YouTube. The government is apparently preparing to lift the ban. He suggested the solution would come through multilateral discussions about freedom of expression and privacy and consumer rights in Pakistan, working with trade partners to address these issues and develop infrastructure while preventing Internet misuse. Pakistan would work closely with MSIP (Korea), and learn from experiences of others in the AP region.

Peter Major from UN CSTD talked about how these concerns were currently being addressed in the CSTD WG.