INTERNEWS

February 2, 2011
submissions@aidreview.gov.au
Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness Secretariat
GPO Box 887
Canberra ACT 2601
RE: AusAID – Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness

Dear Sir/Madam:

Please find the attached a submission from Internews Network to the Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness.

We would be happy to meet with the Committee reviewing the submissions, and clarify or provide additional support and documentation regarding our submission.

Yours Sincerely,

Kathleen Reen
VP, Asia, New Media and Environment Programs
&
Susan Abbott
Director of Development

Internews Network
www.internews.org

Inc: Cover letter, submission, annexes (2)

Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness – Submission by Internews Network

Unequal access to information, or "information poverty" - the inhibited ability for ordinary citizens to send and receive, create and act on information that can improve their lives - blocks the growth of civil society, thwarts good governance, increases corruption and at worst, degrades the environment and all efforts to build strong health systems and combat disease. Nobel prize-winning economist Amartya Sen argues "no substantial famine has ever occurred in a country with a democratic form of government and a relatively free press."[1]

Accordingly Internews Network, an international NGO, appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness, and respectfully puts forward the following six main points of consideration; these refer to the TOR section 3, SCOPE.

1) AUSAID has not to date, included the extraordinary changes in media and technology as inherent pillars and supportive of aid development goals. There has never been a better time to make this investment and consider media and information development an essential part of aid assistance, and of increased aid effectiveness and transparency; there is substantial evidence that now supports both these goals including the work of the World Bank Institute[2] and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation support to Media Map Project *(see Annex no. 1)*

2) Due to the increasingly global, interdependent and interconnected realities of governance, finance, commerce, education, health, transportation and communication, foreign aid practices and policies should have a global focus in terms of their relevance and overall ambitions in terms of development goals and outcomes.

3) Media and Communications play a vital and proven role in development goals and outcomes, and, thus should be prioritized in the future aid agenda in Australia; Australia is positioned to take full advantage of the information telecommunications revolution globally and regionally to improve the effectiveness of every aid program, and every aid program deserves consideration for how it is situated in a media and communications environment.

4) Australia has a unique emerging opportunity to engage and influence the global international development agenda in the areas of media and communications and to meaningfully and significantly work together with the non-governmental organization community as well as multilateral and bilateral aid agencies and institutions;

5) Low and middle-income countries are at risk of lagging behind other more developed nations if significant resources and energies are not devoted to modernizing media and communications systems and assisting them in playing an appropriate role in societal development; therefore, Internews concurs with the focus on these countries. The "leapfrogging" of media systems and

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[1] Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom, Oxford University Press, 1999
[2] Dani Kaufmann, Media, Governance and Development: An Empirical Perspective that Challenges Convention (Brookings. former Dir. Global Programs, World Bank Institute)

the pervasive penetration of mobile phones from South East Asia to Africa present more opportunities than challenges for a truly comprehensive engagement[3] that supports the governance and anti-poverty goals; and

6) There is an important balance to strike between the interests and core competencies the different stakeholders who drive and carry out development work around the world. Thus, Internews puts forward that there should be a push for a more collaborative, innovative and evidenced based approach to development work, and as such NGO, multilateral and bilateral institutions should not be singled out as one having more priority or more competency than the other.

By way of background, Internews is a pioneering media development NGO that seeks to empower local media worldwide to give people the news and information they need, the ability to connect and the means to make their voices heard. Internews' work is guided by a core belief that the development of healthy information environments – these include: media institutions, norms, values and legal infrastructure; quality content and information platforms; and modern, innovative and accessible media and communications platforms – is essential to the fulfillment of the most challenging and important development goals of our time, notably amongst them: poverty alleviation, global health issues, gender equality, the closing of the digital divide, environmental and resource demands, and equipping and empowering youth and future generations with sound education and professional development opportunities.

Internews very much adheres to the notion that media is the connective tissue of democracy,[4] information and communication flows are an important aspect of the modern state, and information platforms and their conduits are enablers of change and empowerment. Information networks and freedom of expression are of notable because they provide the foundations for the overall condition and health of society; the protection and nurturing of other individual rights and liberties; the basis for sound, stable, and responsible political practices, modes of governance, and overall accountability of the state to its citizenry.

As former World Bank President James D. Wolfensohn said in a November 1999 speech to the World Press Freedom Committee: "A free press is not a luxury. A free press is at the absolute core of equitable development, because if you cannot enfranchise poor people, if they do not have a right to expression, if there is no searchlight on corruption and inequitable practices, you cannot build the public consensus needed to bring about change." Buoyed by expectations and long held beliefs in the power of free media and expression, efforts by philanthropists and government donors have launched a variety of programs to aid in the development of free and independent media, often with the view that a country's media environment has a significant impact upon its economic, political, social and cultural leanings. In an influential paper produced by USAID in 1999, *The Role of Media and Democracy, a Strategic Approach*, the following goals of media development were offered:

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[3] Clay Shirky, The Political Power of Social Media, Foreign Affairs, January/February 2011

[4] Democracy and the Media: A Comparative Perspective (Communication, Society and Politics), Eds. Richard Gunther and Anthony Mughan, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Within the context of supporting democratic transitions, the goal of media development generally should be to move the media from one that is directed or even overtly controlled by government or private interests to one that is more open and has a degree of editorial independence that serves the public interest. If the media is to have any meaningful role in democracy, then the ultimate goal of media assistance should be to develop a range of diverse mediums and voices that are credible, and to create and strengthen a sector that promotes such outlets. Credible outlets enable citizens to have access to information that they need to make informed decisions and to participate in society. A media sector supportive of democracy would be one that has a degree of editorial independence, is financially viable, has diverse and plural voices, and serves the public interest. The public interest is defined as representing a plurality of voices both through a greater number of outlets and through the diversity of views and voices reflected within one outlet.[5]

Even with the enormous number of changes that have taken place in the information society since 1999, the main mission and rationale for media development has largely remained unchanged. Free and independent media matters as much today, as in previous generations. Information and communication platforms have the ability to make or break a variety of development goals and many of society's most pressing public policy challenges. Whether it's the environment and how to address matters of climate change; health, and how to best tackle HIV/AIDS or resurgent malaria outbreaks; or coping with a humanitarian crisis and the aftermath of massive flooding; or, the devastation caused by a severe earthquake or other natural disaster, information matters and information saves lives. Simply put, media is fundamentally essential to include as part of Australia's future development agenda.

The field of media development and healthy information societies is still often seen by parts of the donor and aid assistance community as an adjunct to PR, marketing and outreach. While these elements are critically important to increasing awareness about the role of aid itself, and getting the buy-in of local communities, it's critical that these not be confused with the more fundamental facts of how media and information environments are locally owned and serve, aid and effect societies and communities that AusAID can seek to assist.

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[5] See: http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/publications/pdfs/pnace630.pdf.

The Media Map Project
A resource on the impact of media development worldwide

Most stakeholders in international development would agree that news media are indispensable to achieving a broad range of development goals. A growing body of widely accepted evidence suggests that a robust, editorially free and independent media sector strengthens transparency and public accountability of government.

This in turn lowers corruption and engenders the free flow of information that is the oxygen of democratic governance, commerce, and a market economy. Similarly, most observers agree that when media provide accurate, reliable information on health, food security, financial services, environmental safety, and other development issues, people are better able to cope with and find effective solutions to these problems on personal and societal levels.

However, there is little empirically-based analysis to guide policymakers and donors on how to make the most effective use of their resources when assisting media development, and how

There is little empirically-based analysis to guide policymakers and donors; The Media Map Project is filling the gap in current research on media and development.

best to measure the benefits of media assistance.

The Media Map Project will fill the gap in current research by analyzing the empirical correlations between data on the media and its enabling environment on the one hand, and data on development on the other. It also will closely describe how specific media and communications interventions have affected development outcomes. Media Map focuses on the impact of media assistance in the development areas of democracy and governance, economic growth and poverty reduction, human rights and gender equality, and health.

A two-year collaboration between Internews and

governance, development, and media economists at the World Bank Institute and the Brookings Institution, the Media Map Project is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

In the first phase, we are collecting and examining existing data on media and on global development, such as: the World Bank's World Governance Indicators and their disaggregated source data, other global development indicators such as the UN Human Development indicators, media indices such as Freedom House's Freedom of the Press Index and the Media Sustainability Index, sector-level data like that collected by the World Association of Newspapers, global opinion polls, audience research, and other relevant data sources.

This phase will result in a publicly available database that pulls together a number of these data sources so that media development stakeholders have a resource for further analysis. It will also result in a report analyzing one or more key aspects of the correlations between media and development, and

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outlining other critical topics for further analysis.

The second phase, running simultaneously with the first phase, will investigate the evolution of how donors evaluate the impact of media development interventions over the past two decades, focusing on a group of donors with diverse motivations, strategies, and spending patterns. It will examine how these donors use (or fail to use) impact assessments to inform intervention strategy and budgets.

The research from this phase consists of a review of available studies that assess impact at the project and sector level, plus a series of approximately 25 interviews with donors. This phase will result in a better understanding of how donors make decisions around their investments in media assistance, and what

stakeholders consider to be the most effective investments.

The third phase uses eight country-level case studies to analyze the most effective investments in media development and their outcomes from interventions over the last 20 years.

Mali, DRC/Congo, Kenya Peru, Bosnia, Ukraine, Cambodia, and Indonesia will be the case study countries. Case study research will look at what donor-driven media development was done in each country, what worked and what didn't work, and why. This phase will result in a brief report giving an overview of the findings, to include an assessment of which tools and approaches should be applied to various development conditions. The report will also outline an agenda for action and next steps.

The Media Map Project will provide donors, media development organizations, policymakers, and other stakeholders with:

- A better understanding of available data related to media and development

- The analytical tools to evaluate the extent to which media has contributed to various development objectives

- The ability to use empirical evidence of which interventions are most effective to define their priorities

- A clear picture of why and under what conditions media interventions have had an impact

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Annexes cont'd 2) About Internews

Internews Network (www.internews.org) is an international nonprofit organization that has worked with local media in more than 70 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Latin America and North America. These efforts over the past 28 years have been guided by core values that underscore the power of credible information to transform lives, uphold the highest standards of journalistic integrity, champion innovation and new technologies for development and emphasize a commitment to developing local leadership and alliances for sustainable change. Internews truly believes that healthy information ecologies help create healthy societies.

Together with local partners such as universities, media networks, public broadcasters and other nonprofit organizations, Internews has supported the development of more than 4,800 media outlets worldwide including radio and television stations, newspapers and online news sites; and mentored and trained over 80,000 media professionals worldwide. Internews has realized these achievements in transitional, conflict and post-conflict environments, and remains deeply involved in supporting media systems and information

> **"I think media development has been a remarkable transformation since the end of Taliban period. Working through Internews is a success story. To get free and open media operating in this country from a period where there was no media whatsoever or media that was completely programmed… the change has been remarkable."**
>
> **-- William Frej,** Director, USAID/

Internews supports professionalism, viability and sustainability of local media in various economic and political settings. The organization carries out a range of interventions such as training and skills-building, on-going mentoring of trainees, support for program and content production, and infrastructure (including the construction of radio and TV stations and networks), equipment grants, and specialized training in thematic areas such as business, gender, democracy and governance, and health. In doing so, Internews helps improve citizen access to diverse information by developing a more editorially independent and politically balanced media and information sector.

For example, since 2002, Internews has implemented a combination of these interventions in Afghanistan, with results that far exceeded expectations for independent media. Among our most significant achievements has been the establishment of 44 independent radio stations, four owned by women. Internews estimates that close to 13 ½ million people, approximately 50% of the population, have access to the broadcasts from these stations. Internews and its local partners have been critical in helping to set the stage for free and fair media, and also for ensuring established media are self sustainable. This network of independent Afghan media stations enjoys un-biased quality programming provided by Internews' award winning production unit, Salam Watandar. To distribute these programs to stations, Internews established *Tanin*, a distribution mechanism for many organizations, disseminating newspapers, civic education material and advertisements to 88 recipients across the

provinces. Internews created a fully independent local media support NGO, Nai, and assisted Pajhwok Afghan News, Afghanistan's only independent news service.

These notable developments in Afghanistan would not have been realized without Internews' long experience supporting burgeoning independent media in other *transitioning and conflict societies*. In neighboring Pakistan for example, Internews has been supporting the professionalization of Pakistani independent media over the past six years, most recently in the highly volatile Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) and Northwest Frontier Province regions of the country. Some of Internews' pioneering work includes the creation of a radio broadcast academy at Peshawar University targeting Pashtun students for training in news gathering and conflict-sensitive reporting and the development of the first newsroom in FATA at Khyber Radio. Journalists from the tribal regions have also been trained on the use of mobile phones as field recording tools for radio reports in support of peace-building in the region. In Indonesia, Internews assisted local media's ability to report on *Reformasi*, the decentralization of political and economic governance reforms in districts across the country. With local partners, we provided training for commercial and community radios throughout Java, North Sumatra, and Aceh and a bi-weekly national program called *Suara Negeriku* (Voice of My Country), which examined how communities dealt with changes brought about by the reforms. The project resulted in new growth in local media markets and ensured emerging media outlets were capable of producing accurate, quality programming responsive to public need for locally relevant information.

Internews Network also deploys an array of *special global programs* in *youth activism, health journalism, humanitarian media*, *governance* and *reconciliation*. *Reporting for Peace in Kenya*, for example, helped to calm local communities following the violence ridden 2007 elections through extensive training on conflict sensitive journalism. In the Caucuses, Internews-supported "*Kids' Crossroads: a Pan-Caucasus Television Program Instilling Values in Youth*" is a unique vehicle using journalism to link young people from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Harnessing the powerful medium of television, the heart of the project is a weekly program reported, filmed and edited by teenagers and broadcast nationally in each country with messages of tolerance, peace and freedom as universal values. Survey research indicates *Kid's Crossroads*, a now self sustainable program, has been successful in reaching nearly half of its target audience of young people, aged 12-18.

Internews' commitment to *empowering dynamic indigenous leadership* reflects how the organization approaches local development. Technical assistance to independent media capacity building enables local ownership of activities in both transitional and fragile states. In Eastern Europe, Internews has created local organizations such as the *Educated Media Foundation* (EMF) in Russia that have become viable enough to receive U.S. and European government funding and provide financial assistance to others. In Ukraine, Internews supported the creation of numerous media associations including the *Independent Association of Broadcasters* http://www.nam.org.ua/, the *Ukrainian Association of Press Publishers* http://www.uapp.org/ and the *Association of Independent Regional Publishers of Ukraine*. These organizations are now independent and receive multiple streams of funding.

In Africa, Internews is implementing the *Radio for Peace, Democracy and Development in Southern Sudan* project to provide news and information and give voice to thousands of Sudanese. This USAID

funded four-year project links community radio stations with local civil society organizations to produce creative programs and offer an open forum for dialogue on current issues. Five community radio stations have been built and Internews is training nascent journalists to run them. Just north of Sudan, working with seven key governorates across Egypt, Internews' USAID-funded *Partners II* program institutionalizes principles of civil education and participation through media. Used for instruction by partner universities, Internews created a unique Arabic language civic education manual that highlights new technologies such as Facebook, YouTube and other interactive forums to connect university students across the country.

Internews Network currently works in over 35 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and North and Latin America. Since 1992, Internews has successfully managed over $275 million in government grants and cooperative agreements, over $59 million in private "pass-throughs" of federal funds, and over $30 million in private awards for assistance in more than 75 countries.

Internews integrates personnel, financial and administrative management to ensure rapid roll-out of new projects and consistent, timely and professional support of on-going complex media development projects globally. Our organizational principle of supporting local leadership and ownership is bolstered by a commitment to non-discrimination with respect to beneficiaries and adherence to equal opportunity employment practices. Internews' accounting practices follow the highest international standards and fully meet all reporting requirements. Audits in accordance with the US provisions of OMB Circular A-133 have been completed successfully for all required fiscal years through 2009. Annual audits are performed by Gelman, Rosenberg and Freedman, at 4550 Montgomery Ave., Suite 650 North, Bethesda, Maryland 20814, phone number (301) 951-9090 and website: www.GRFCPA.com.

Internews Network maintains core administrative and finance offices in Arcata, CA and Washington, D.C. Regional hubs provide localized training, guidance and support to all programs including the Central and South and South East Asia programs, MENA programs and E&E, and Africa programs.