



Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union

ABU News

ABU Sports Group reduces subscription fees

Subscription fees to the ABU Sports Group will be slashed from 1 July this year, following a decision taken by the Sports Group at its mid-year meeting in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on 8 May.

Presently members who wish to participate in the ABU Sports Group pay an extra annual subscription that helps cover the cost of operating the ABU's Sports Department.

Substantial reductions

A recommendation from the Sports Group's Finance Committee to substantially reduce the fees was greeted by members with loud applause.

The new subscription fees will be:

- Groups A to H – US\$300 per annum
- Groups I to P – US\$600 per annum
- Groups Q to W – US\$900 per annum

The issue of a separate subscription for Sports Group members has been debated for many years.

In 2006, at the mid-year meeting of the Sports Group held in Kota Kinabalu, members agreed on a new scale of fees ranging from US\$625 for the smaller members to US\$5,000 for the larger members to take effect from 1 July 2006.



A large billboard on the airport road greeted the Sports Group delegates on their arrival in Ulaanbaatar

Prior to 2006, some members were paying more than US\$10,000 annually to be members of the Sports Group.

At the Kota Kinabalu meeting it was also agreed to seek further reductions in the membership fees in the future once the event surpluses in the Sports Fund grew to a level that were sufficient to support the operations of the Sports Department, without having to rely on the Sports Group subscription fees.

At its meeting in Ulaanbaatar, the Finance Committee made the

recommendation to reduce the fees after reviewing the current balances of the Sports Fund and event surpluses.

They felt that as the surpluses now totaled a figure that was about 10 times the annual operating costs of the Sports Department, it was appropriate to reduce the annual Sports Group subscription.

The surpluses are earned from a small margin that is added to the collective rights contracts and the sale of rights and programme feeds to non-ABU members.

(cont'd on page 22)

ABU back to a balanced budget

Cost saving initiatives taken by the ABU Secretariat during the past year had enabled the Union to achieve a balanced budget earlier than forecast, the Secretary-General, David Astley, told the 84th Administrative Council meeting held in Macau on 12 May.

The Council approved a balanced interim budget for 2009/10 and at the same time noted that the Secretariat was projecting a small surplus for the 2008/09 financial year.

The Secretary-General explained that this was due to higher interest income and the fact that membership of the ABU had continued to grow with no resignations received during the year.

Mr Astley also reported on the key achievements of the Union since the Tehran General Assembly, the most significant of which were:

- the acquisition of the broadcasting rights for the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics and 2012 London Summer Olympics – helped by the General Assembly's approval of the 'Tehran Declaration' at a time when it appeared that the free-to-air rights



Councillors pose for a group photo in front of the iconic façade of the Sao Paulo church

might be sold to an international pay-TV channel;

- the success of the third World Electronic Media Forum held in Kuala Lumpur in December and the fourth Digital Broadcasting Symposium in March – both of which had received excellent feedback from ABU members; and

- the establishment of the Asia-Media AIDS Initiative (AMAI) as a regional arm of the Global Media AIDS Initiative (GMAI) as an important joint venture with the Asia-Pacific

Broadcasting Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD).

The Secretary-General reported that membership of the ABU had grown to 194 members in 57 countries and noted that there were now seven members in Mongolia – more than any other country in the region.

The Council accepted an invitation from Mongolian National Broadcasting (MNB) to hold the 2009 General Assembly in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

The President of Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI), Parni Hadi, attended the meeting to brief Councillors on the preparations for the 2008 General Assembly to be held in Bali in November.

Following the Council meeting, a co-operation agreement between TDM-Macau and TRT-Turkey was signed by Manuel Goncalves, CEO of TDM, and Dr Mehmed Ali Gemuhluoglu, Secretary-General of TRT.

The day-long meeting was hosted by TDM-Macau at the new Venetian Resort on Cotai Island and Councillors were taken on a half-day tour of Macau's historic old town on the morning after the meeting. □



TRT-Turkey Secretary-General, Dr Mehmed Ali Gemuhluoglu, addresses the Council after the signing ceremony as TDM-Macau CEO, Manuel Goncalves, looks on

Digital Broadcasting Symposium 2008

‘Holistic approach to digital transition needed’

The transition from analogue to digital broadcasting requires a holistic approach involving members of the industry, regulators and governments, the ABU Digital Broadcasting Symposium 2008 heard.

The four-day event, held in Kuala Lumpur in March, attracted more than 300 delegates. In addition to a conference and exhibition, it featured 17 workshops.

In kicking off the industry debate on the third day of the event, Chris Jaeger of Broadcast Australia said government leadership was crucial in defining the national agenda and the structure of the industry.

He added that consumers were the “ultimate driving force” of the industry as well as for new content and devices, and affirmative action needed to be taken for faster consumer uptake of digital services.



Some of the speakers in the industry debate which drew some interesting discussion and feedback

“My belief is that the industry and government need to have a clear collective approach on the transition to digital. This must cover all aspects – spectrum, infrastructure development and consumer uptake,” he said.

DVB’s representative for Asia, John Bigeni, said while governments had a

great role to play, especially in making available cheap receivers, broadcasters should also entice consumers to take up their digital offerings.

“People have to be enticed to buy the receivers and they should perceive that they are getting something better. Also, they have to be able to afford them. At the end of the day, it’s the dollar that counts,” he said.

The speakers also agreed that enhanced content and new offerings were able to drive consumer take up of digital services. Consumers, they said, did not want “more of the same” content.

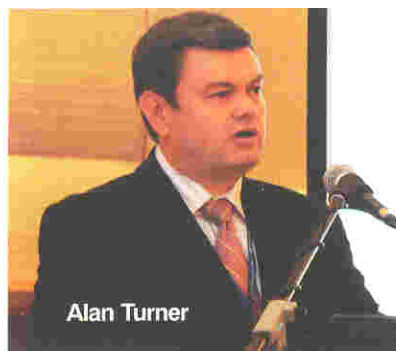
Joining forces

Broadcasters were also told to work together with manufacturers to come up with specifications for digital receivers to protect their own reputation and get the best value.

“We cannot leave the manufacturers to come up with it. If you really want



The Panasonic booth attracted plenty of visitors keen to check out the latest broadcast technology



Alan Turner

to get the best value, broadcasters must work with them to make sure the equipment supports what you do," said Alan Turner, Project Director at Kordia.

Mr Turner said this during the workshop on 'Key business decisions on DTV implementation' on the last day of the symposium which was themed 'Progression to Digital and Mobile Services'.

Kordia was a major sponsor of the event, along with Broadcast Australia, Harris Corporation and Sony.

The event was supported by HD Radio, GlobeCast Asia, Dolby, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development of France, Canal France International (CFI) and Panasonic.

Other sponsors were Technomedia, Qualcomm MediaFlo Technologies and Rohde & Schwarz.

Mr Turner added that it was necessary for "some sort of certification process" to ensure that digital receivers such as set-top boxes (STBs) were compatible with the system being used in a particular country.

He said this was necessary if broadcasters wanted to avoid being blamed for poor quality signal or incompatible devices.

Protecting free-to-air content

Free-to-air broadcasters should look into various mechanisms, including government intervention, to prevent their content from being illegally redistributed on the Internet, the symposium heard.

Isa Seow, Director of Motion Picture Association International based in Singapore, said that while pay TV content had certain content protection measures in place, free-to-air content had generally been neglected in this area.

"During the digital television transition, it becomes more and more important to protect our content from going on the Internet for free. We can encrypt content at the signal source and we can also have protection upon reception," he said.

Among the measures governments could take to protect free-to-air content were to have effective copyright laws, redistribution control regulations, adequate enforcement of laws and educating industry players and consumers.

Mr Seow said that a centre had been formed in Singapore to spearhead issues related to content protection for broadcasters. He hoped that the centre's website, www.contentprotection.net, would become a good resource site in the future. □



Isa Seow

"Who do you think would look bad? The finger pointing would fall on the broadcaster. Your platform is at risk if people don't have devices that are compatible with your network," he said.

Interactivity crucial

The symposium also heard that broadcasters' content for mobile phone services needed to be different from that on television, with a lot of interactivity.

Speakers at a session on content creation for mobile services gave a range of ideas on the kind of content that could help make these new services successful.

There was agreement that, although a reliable business model had not yet emerged, interactivity – such as

users entering quiz shows – was a key ingredient.

Jang Doohee of KBS-Korea said sports was another good application, as long as it included extra coverage not seen on TV.

Mari Shimizu of TBS-Japan said mobile content should be linked with TV programmes on air at the time and should contain additional information. Pay-per-view sports highlights were another good option.

Navonil Roy of Media Prima-Malaysia said mobile services were still at an experimental stage. Broadcasters should "throw things on the wall and find out

(cont'd on next page)

Digital Broadcasting Symposium 2008

(from previous page)

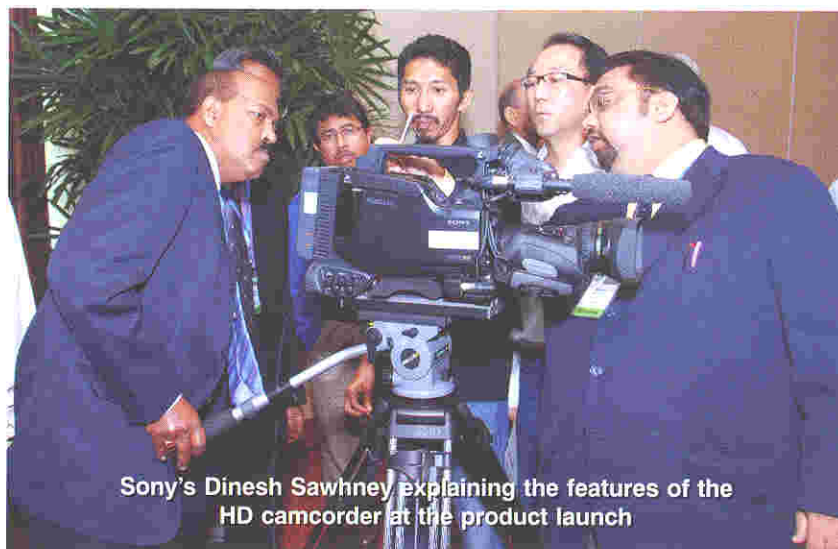
what sticks". It was important to create a shared agenda with telcos.

Joan Warner of Commercial Radio Australia, who chaired the session, said broadcasters could not afford to sit back and let telcos take over broadcasting. They needed to talk to their regulators about what they wanted to see happen.

Following a suggestion made at the symposium, the ABU Technical Committee will consider forming a technical forum on the implementation of digital mobile services in the Asia-Pacific to help broadcasters overcome teething problems.

Mooting the suggestion, Prem Seebaluck of MBC-Mauritius said that the broadcaster was inundated with consumer complaints concerning bad reception of digital transmission even though the fault lay with incompatible set-top boxes (STBs).

"There are about 20 to 30 models of STBs in the Mauritius market, but not



Sony's Dinesh Sawhney explaining the features of the HD camcorder at the product launch

all are good. However, the problem falls on the broadcaster and we have to set up a call centre to address viewer complaints. This is a very big problem."

ABU Technical Director, Sharad Sadhu, said that the forum could play a key role in helping all segments of the broadcast industry to go forward with digital services as well as setting up a best-practices system for equipment supply and purchase.

"In addition to the broadcast industry players, the national regulators should also be a part of this forum because they can play a key role in setting up a recommendation," he said.

The symposium also witnessed the presentation of a lifetime achievement award to the outgoing Chairman of Digital Radio Mondiale (DRM), Peter Senger, one month before his retirement. (see story on page 28) □

New products launched

The Digital Broadcasting Symposium 2008 marked the first time an ABU event was selected as the launch venue for new products by leading broadcast equipment manufacturers Sony and Panasonic.

Sony introduced a new range of high definition products – a camcorder, recording deck and dual-layer disc – which are the latest addition to Sony's XDCAM HD 4:2:2 Professional Disc system.

Sony describes them as ideal tools for applications such as news

gathering where speed is a key concern, as well as production for TV dramas, documentaries and mainstream entertainment programmes where a high-quality presentation is critical.

The products are the PDW-700 XDCAM HD camcorder and the PDW-HD1500 recording deck; as well as the dual-layer 50GB version of optical Professional Disc media, model PFD50DLA, that offers 50 Mbps 4:2:2 optical disc recording capabilities.

Panasonic launched what it called the "industry's first professional AVCHD

shoulder mounted camcorder". The company chose the symposium to host the Malaysian launch of the new camera.

The AG-HMC72EN is Panasonic's new low-cost high definition camcorder that can record onto memory cards to meet a wide range of image production needs.

"The tapeless SD card recording facility can improve production workflow by offering more than 50 percent timesaving at the post production stage," a Panasonic representative said. □

Central Asian broadcasters call for more independent reporting

Journalists working for state broadcasters should write more stories that are relevant to the lives of ordinary citizens, a Kyrgyz academic and broadcasting executive has told a regional conference.

Gulnara Ibrayeva, Head of Apparatus for the National TV and Radio Corporation of Kyrgyzstan, was speaking at a roundtable on 'Challenges Confronting Regional Journalists' held as part of the Eurasian Media Forum in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in April.

She said that there were too many reports of "where the President travels and which ambassadors the President receives" on state broadcasting channels.



Gulnara Ibrayeva

"How is that relevant to the lives of ordinary citizens?" Ms Ibrayeva asked.

She said that important news that citizens ought to be informed about was often neglected by state broadcasters.

"For example, we had an inter-racial conflict near Bishkek, but the local media didn't report it. It was only covered by the Russian media and CNN.

"This is a legacy of the Soviet Union where mass media was viewed as an instrument of ideology," she added.



Kumar Bekbolotov makes a point whilst Natalya Bandrovskaya looks on

Other panelists from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan gave examples of how so-called 'news' reports on state TV and radio channels were based on government press releases and involved no independent reporting.

They also discussed how many private channels were reluctant to present alternative views or analysis for fear of upsetting governments and losing advertising contracts.

Natalya Bandrovskaya, Director of Kazakhstan's Rika TV, said that private channels were lucky to receive five percent of government advertising budgets because most of the money went to state channels that broadcast 'news' that was favourable to the government.

She also said that the tender process to secure government advertising was long and arduous involving submission of a lot of irrelevant documentation.

Several panelists maintained that there was more 'self-censorship' at the local level than at the national level because many local media owners had other business dealings with local government bodies that they wanted to protect.

They said they were therefore reluctant to publish anything that upset local government officials, even though they might publish news that was critical of the national government.

Direct connection

Kumar Bekbolotov, the Central Asian Programmes Director of the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) in Kyrgyzstan, told the workshop that there was a direct connection between the level of professionalism of journalists and the independence of the media in the Central Asian republics.

He said this could only be overcome through the training of journalists to promote more independent reporting.

The Eurasian Media Forum was the seventh to be held in Kazakhstan, and attracted 450 participants, of which more than 150 were foreign delegates.

The forum is organised each year in late April by a committee headed by Dr Dariga Nazarbayev, and is supported by Khabar Agency and CNN – both ABU members. □

New media raises thorny copyright issues



Participants enjoying an evening out near the Bosphorus Bridge

The proliferation of new media has changed the relationship between broadcasters and music collecting societies who are demanding more payment for the use of their resources, the 14th ABU Copyright Committee Meeting was told.

Heijo Ruijsenaars of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) warned Asian broadcasters that pressure from the major music publishers may be destroying the usual one-stop-shop collective rights clearance arrangements.

Recounting the European experience, Mr Ruijsenaars said broadcasters had to negotiate for a "simplified extension of collective agreements for music licensing

so as to include interactive online distribution of existing content".

ABU Programme Department Director Tatsuya Nakamura said: "Negotiations with music rights holders are getting more difficult because new media opens up more avenues for revenue generation for them."

The participants were also told of how the International Olympics Committee (IOC) has been changing its rights distribution policy due to media technology developments.

In a session dubbed 'Law of the Rings: Olympic Rights and Issues in Broadcasting', American lawyer Kelly Charles Crabb said as the IOC continues

to exploit new media and new sources of revenue, it will also face new challenges from piracy.

The topic was in line with a discussion on the ABU Tehran Declaration which calls on the IOC to give priority to free-to-air broadcasters in broadcast rights distribution for the Olympic Games.

Treaty discussions

Participants also discussed the various reasons behind the failure of governments to settle their differences which led to the collapse of the broadcasters' treaty negotiations last year after a decade of lobbying.

They decided to carry on lobbying their respective governments to support the formulation of a treaty protecting the rights and interests of broadcasters by stressing the negative impact signal piracy has on broadcast services.

There was also a session on television formats that broadcasters wanted to protect by law as intellectual property. Court rulings on TV show formats were examined to determine which laws could be used to protect the intellectual property of broadcasters.

The Copyright Committee Meeting was held on 16-18 April in Istanbul, Turkey, with public broadcaster TRT as the host.

Australia's CRA and SBS, RTPRC/CCTV-China, TVB-Hong Kong, Japan's NHK and TBS, Korea's KBS and MBC, RTM-Malaysia, RTR-Russia, MediaCorp-Singapore, NBT-Thailand, KBP-Philippines and VOV-Vietnam participated.

KBP's Maloli Espinosa and TVB's Tina Lee were re-elected as the chairperson and vice-chairperson respectively for another two-year term. □



(From left) TRT's Deputy Director General (Finance and Broadcast) Dr Zeynel Koç and Director General İbrahim Sahin, Tatsuya Nakamura, Maloli Espinosa, and Tina Lee