

General Assembly – Programme Committee

New song contests proposed

Proposals for three different international song contests were amongst the subjects discussed by the Programme Committee at its annual meeting in Bali.

The ABU Secretary-General, David Astley, outlined the three proposals in his opening address to the committee on 20 to 21 November. The meeting attracted more than 100 participants.

Mr Astley said the ABU had been approached to lend its support to the three contests and was holding discussions with the organisers of all three events.

“There is no reason why the ABU could not support more than one song contest,” he said.

Vietnam’s public radio, VOV, staged the ASEAN Golden Melodies Festival 2008 in October, and had suggested that it could be expanded into an ABU song contest in future years. IMG Media, a large events management group, was planning a region-wide contest called ‘Asia Pacific Sings!’.



Chairperson Han HeeJoo



Some of the speakers at the Programme Committee meeting

A private company, Asiavision Pte Ltd, had bought the format rights to the ‘Eurovision Song Contest’ and was planning an Asian version, which it intended to call the ‘Asiavision Song Contest’. Members of the ABU’s daily news exchange, Asiavision, had objected to the use of the name ‘Asiavision’ for a song contest. The ABU and Asiavision Pte Ltd were trying to resolve this issue.

Quality content

Tatsuya Nakamura, Director of the Programme Department, gave an overview of the activities for the past year and his department’s role in the coming years. He emphasised that pursuing quality content for both radio and TV programming would be the most important task.

By providing more suitable content for members, ABU should raise its profile. At the same time, he said, more attention should be paid to the use of new technologies when it came to production and exchange of content among the ABU members.

He said once the IP-based Content Exchange Network (CEN) started, TV items for children could easily be exchanged at any time. He also said the co-production of content for mobile broadcasting would be “an interesting challenge” and would be a future project of the Programme Department.

Vijay Sadhu, Senior Executive Radio, together with Jun Ogawa from TBS-Japan, promised to promote the ‘Lights off Campaign’ which was realised for the first time on 21 June 2008 (Summer Solstice Day) as a special event among the ABU’s radio members. The Programme Department will continue this campaign next year. It wishes to enhance the campaign to involve TV stations as well to promote energy saving awareness among audiences in the Asia-Pacific region.

Hanizah Hamzah, Senior Executive TV, summarised the TV activities over the year, including the ‘Children’s TV Programme Item Exchange’, ‘Children’s Drama Co-production’, ‘ABU Robocon 2008’ and ‘TV Documentary Exchange’.



Jun Ogawa

She said the production skills of members who participated in events such as the 'Children's Drama Co-production' were improving year by year. The 'TV Documentary Exchange' had returned after years of being inactive, she added. Next year, this event will take place from 16 to 18 June in Seoul with KBS as the host.

Record entries

The ABU senior executives briefed the meeting on the ABU Prizes for 2008. The number of entries received was 224, a record high figure. This year, 'judging by correspondence' was introduced for the first time. This method allowed juries to replay and judge the entry programmes many times, and at any time. Judging by



Hanizah Hamzah making her presentation

correspondence also reduces the cost of the pre-selection process.

The two senior executives visited five member countries: China, Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand, to conduct the 'ABU Prizes In-country Workshop' where the award-winning programmes of the ABU Prizes last year were presented. The workshops were welcomed by local producers who wanted to improve their production skills and win an ABU Prize in the future.

During the Programme Committee meeting, two 'Professional Discussion'

sessions were conducted, one for radio and another for TV. The radio session featured four speakers from Radio Australia, BBS-Bhutan, Radio Nepal and the BBC World Service, all of whom talked about the role in radio in promoting good governance, particularly during an election period.

They discussed how public radio could help pave the way for free elections by educating people and bringing them into the political process.

The TV session was titled 'HDTV is just around the corner', with speakers from CCTV-China, NHK-Japan, RTB-Brunei and MediaCorp-Singapore. They described how their stations were enhancing HDTV services in conjunction with the digitalisation process. The session was moderated by an independent TV producer based in Singapore.

At the end of the two day meeting, an election was held for a new Chairperson and two Vice Chairpersons of the Programme Committee. Clara Choi of RTHK-Hong Kong was elected Chairperson and Rajendra Sharma of Radio Nepal-Nepal and Niken Widiastuti of RRI-Indonesia Vice Chairpersons. Their two-year term of office will start on 1 January 2009. □



Delegates listening to the presentations

General Assembly – Radio Working Party

'Green radio' lights up Radio Working Party

Raising awareness of climate change and environmental issues emerged as a new challenge at the Radio Working Party meeting held on 20 November.

Green radio, as radio programming on environmental awareness has been called, was the focus of discussions at the meeting where over 25 radio member organisations were represented.

Lights off

As a step to raise public awareness, 17 ABU radio broadcasters joined forces urging their listeners to turn off their lights for one or two hours on 21 June 2008 (summer solstice). TBS-Japan's Director of International Relations, Jun Ogawa, who initiated the campaign, said it turned out to be very successful. It was a campaign not to save energy but to raise awareness among people in the Asia-Pacific region on environmental issues, he said.

Parni Hadi, President Director of RRI-Indonesia, proposed developing programmes on energy-saving and a new ABU slogan 'Green radio'.

The ABU Radio Working Party meeting, the fourth to date, proved to be productive with the participation of many members. But more involvement from major radio members was needed.

During the meeting, Ali Reza Noori, Manager of IRIB Radio, was appointed as the first Vice-Chairperson.

A key presentation at the meeting was a report by Vijay Sadhu, Senior Executive Radio, on radio activities



David Wood

undertaken in the past year and plans for 2009.

Content exchange

She said the opportunities offered to members for content exchange, staff training and content development.

The value of the ABU's Radio News Exchange in providing foreign news at virtually no cost, holding the RadioAsia2008 conference and ABU's role in helping organise the first International Radio Forum in Iran were outlined. The highlights included ABU Prizes Backpack workshops in Colombo, Male, Jakarta and Bangkok.

Mrs Sadhu said the role played by the ABU and its members in enhancing public awareness on climate change and helping prevent the spread of avian flu was important.

The further development of ABU radio programming activities was

discussed and several presentations made. One of the most interesting aspects of the meeting was a discussion about the positions of radio in Malaysia, Indonesia and Europe.

Local radio

On the importance of radio being local and of it reflecting local languages, Mr Hadi said that linguistic relevance was an important factor in engaging listeners. There were some 2,000 radio stations in Indonesia, with many more awaiting licensing. He highlighted the positive role of radio in promoting democracy as Indonesia prepared for elections next year, at a time of unprecedented media freedom.

Osman Borhanuddin, President of the Commercial Radio Association of Malaysia, said that Malaysia's 20 commercial stations were operating under licence conditions that govern coverage of political, religious and ethnic issues. He said the introduction of format-radio in 1997 had significantly changed the way radio was used by listeners.

He said that from 2000 to 2008, advertising revenue had increased by 207 percent.

Md Rafiqul Haque, Managing Director of Radio Today, said his organisation, an emerging broadcaster in Bangladesh, planned to expand radio coverage and facilities.

Rajendra Sharma, Deputy Executive Director of Radio Nepal, explained the

challenges faced by Radio Nepal in terms of content and revenue with an increasing number of radio channels in Nepal.

Badru Naseer, Director General of the Voice of Maldives, said that radio broadcasters needed training assistance and exposure to outside content, to add a new dimension to content creation.

Online services

Young people liked change, while the older ones didn't, David Wood of the European Broadcasting Union said. This meant there was a need to keep formats and schedules fresh.

He said this could be improved through offering of complimentary online services which included music competitions. He added that Internet radio was less successful than expected, while the prospect of surround sound on the radio via 5.1 technology was "interesting".

'Picture radio' was a good alternative to the black screen when people listened to the radio via their television sets, Jeff Cohen, Director of Development at WRN, said. 'Radio with pictures' allowed stations to display all kinds of visual content on the TV screen including web pages.

It maximised audience impact and opportunities for feedback via SMS texting. It was accessible and low cost and had the potential to reach radio audiences via set top boxes.

A proposal for the ABU to establish a social networking site to enable members to share information, seek advice and keep in touch between gatherings was endorsed. Also endorsed was the work plan on radio activities for the next year, including workshops on digital radio content and empowerment of women. □

Radio 'has key role' in democracy in Asia

Radio is a key player in the democratic process in Asia, the ABU Programme Committee heard.

Speakers in a discussion on the role of radio in promoting good governance described how public radio helped pave the way for free elections by educating people and bringing them into the political process.

BBS-Bhutan's Jaganath Sharma said radio had been a major player in events leading up to the country's first free elections in March this year.

It had informed and educated the public in the run-up to the elections, including reporting from all 47 constituencies and holding a series of live debates among the candidates.

"Radio stood its ground over time and with its advantageous reach, provided every Bhutanese with much needed information before and after the historic elections," he said.

Another speaker, Neil Curry of the BBC, said one of the greatest roles of public service radio was to help bring about people's participation in the democratic process. It could also help build transparency and accountability.

"The process of opening up the media is about opening government up to scrutiny. That's the role public radio can play." Essential for achieving this was an adherence to journalistic values and editorial guidelines, he said.

The President Director of Radio Republik Indonesia, Parni Hadi,



Rajendra Sharma

described radio as a "peacekeeper" and a watchdog against corruption and money politics.

RRI was required by law to be independent, neutral and non-commercial in nature, and to serve the public interest, he said.

The CEO of Radio Australia, Hanh Tran, said most media organisations in the Asia-Pacific region were controlled by their government to some extent but still had a duty to report fairly.

He said the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, of which Radio Australia is part, was not anti-government but was accused by successive governments of being biased because it focused on the business of government.

Rajendra Sharma of Radio Nepal, said radio had played an important role in covering the tumultuous events leading to the recent abolition of Nepal's monarchy and the holding of free elections.

It talked openly about corruption and had survived government attempts to stop it broadcasting the news. "Governments come and go but radio goes on forever," he said. □

ABU Prizes 2008

China and Japan are big winners in ABU Prizes 2008



ABU Prizes winners receiving their awards

Chinese and Japanese broadcasters were among the big winners when the ABU Prizes 2008 were presented on the first evening of the General Assembly.

RTPRC/CCTV China won a radio prize and a TV prize, RTHK-Hong Kong two radio prizes and HKCTV-Hong Kong a radio prize. NHK-Japan also won a radio and a TV prize, while NAB/MBS-Japan took a TV prize.

Other winners in the radio category were KBS-Korea, RRI-Indonesia, the BBC and MNB-Mongolia. Other TV winners included EBS-Korea and Metro TV-Indonesia.

Special Commendations went to NHK (two), AIR-India, RTPRC/CNR, RTPRC/CRI, BB-Bangladesh and KBP/ABS-CBN-Philippines

Prizes night is always a highlight of the General Assembly and this year was no exception. The ceremony, featuring colourful cultural dances, was hosted and televised by Metro TV.

ABU Programme Director Tatsuya Nakamura said a total of 224 entries were received this year, an increase of 25 on last year. Of these, 149 were in the TV category and 75 in the radio category. □

Indonesian cultural dances were performed throughout the awards presentation





Yoshihiro Hongo of NAB/MBS-Japan receiving his award



Dewi Suspaningrum of Metro TV-Indonesia receiving her award

ABU Prizes 2008 Winners

RADIO

- **Drama**
"Legacy Disposal Squad" by NHK-Japan
- **Infotainment**
"Smile, Joy and Wonderful #1 – Flip The Expectation" by KBS-Korea
- **Children and Youth**
"A Handless City: Viruses and Hands, Which is More Lethal to Children?" by RTHK-Hong Kong
- **News**
"Repeated Abortions" by RTHK-Hong Kong
- **Documentary**
"Two Year Journey of Hot Lapindo Mudflow" by RRI-Indonesia
- **External Broadcasts**
"Let's Go To School" by BBC-United Kingdom
- **Special Jury Prize**
"The Rising of New Generation of Chenggis Khan" by MNB-Mongolia

SPECIAL COMMENDATION

- **Children and Youth**
"Our Home, The Planet Earth" by AIR-India
- **Documentary**
"I want To Live! : A Hospital Diary on a Mobile Phone" by NHK-Japan
- **Drama**
"A new edition to the story: The Hare and the Tortoise" by RTPRC-China
- **External Broadcast**
"2:28pm: When the Story Begins" by RTPRC-China
- **Special Jury Prize**
"The Sand Castle: A Tale of A Hapless Damsel" by BB-Bangladesh

TELEVISION

- **Drama**
"Chuang Guandong" by RTPRC/CCTV-China
- **Entertainment**
"Kinkakuji Soundstage" by NAB/MBS-Japan
- **Children**
"On The Road" by RTPRC/CCTV-China
- **Youth**
"Jungle Fish" by KBS-Korea
- **News**
"Tofu Construction" by HKCTV-Hong Kong
- **Documentary**
"East and West" by EBS-Korea
- **Sports**
"Japan Swimming Championships: Beijing Olympics Trial" by NHK-Japan
- **Special Jury Prize**
"My School Master, the Scavenger" by Metro TV-Indonesia

SPECIAL COMMENDATION

- **Children**
"Hawkeye" by KBP-ABS-CBN
- **News**
"Surging Cities-Dhaka: The Miracle of Microcredit" by NHK-Japan
- **HIV/AIDS Reporting**
Dewi Suspaningrum of Metro TV-Indonesia
- **Child Rights Award**
Jay Taruc of GMA Network-Philippines



Yoshihiro Hongo of NAB/MBS-Japan receiving his award



Dewi Suspaningrum of Metro TV-Indonesia receiving her award

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General Assembly – Technical Committee

New industry forum to help digital implementation

The ABU's new Asia-Pacific Broadcast Industry Forum (AP BIF) met for the first time in Bali.

The ABU set up the forum to exchange information among its members and other industry stakeholders including manufacturers, system integrators, suppliers, national spectrum regulators and consumer groups. It also helps provide recommendations for possible challenges faced by the members in future digital implementation.

The inaugural AP BIF meeting took place during the Technical Committee meeting with the appointment of its interim office-bearers. One of the issues discussed during this meeting was MPEG-4 AVC licensing. The committee members had the opportunity to convey their concerns to the licensing delegate from MPEG LA present at the meeting.

The ABU Digital Radio Forum (DRF) and the Developing Broadcasters Forum (DBF) also met as part of the annual meetings.



Marakazu Iwaki making a point

The ABU Secretary-General, David Astley opened the committee meetings on 20 November. In his opening remarks, he said the success of the ABU's annual Digital Broadcasting Symposium had seen it become one of the top events in the industry.

Sunarya Ruslan of RRI-Indonesia welcomed the participants to Bali.

The committee reviewed progress made on activities discussed in the last annual meetings, as well as several

interactive sessions for members to raise problems faced. The Director of the Technical Department, Sharad Sadhu, highlighted the key events and their achievements in the past year and support received from industry partners in serving ABU members. He said there was considerable interest in the region in providing HDTV and higher quality digital radio services.

"Many broadcasters from developing countries are considering implementing these services earlier," he said.

The committee endorsed three decisions and a recommendation. Among them were a request for radio receiver manufacturers to include 18KHz bandwidth in the medium wave band; and an appeal for members to implement an Emergency Warning Broadcasting System in the region.

Two awards, the ABU Broadcast Engineering Excellence Award and the ABU Engineering Industry Excellence Award, were announced in the meeting. The winners, Takao Shimizu of TBS-



A large turnout at the Technical Committee meeting

Japan and Dongsu Ahn of KBS-Korea were complimented on their outstanding contributions in production technologies and digital TV broadcasting respectively.

The Technical Committee also studied topics on production, transmission, training and services and spectrum, as well as reporting on its work over the past year. Some of the subjects being researched were a desirable peak digital audio level, development of metadata schemes, progress in ultra high definition technology, digital television coverage planning and questions related to the ITU's 2011 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-11).

The symposium saw five industry experts update delegates on developments in digital technology. Featured topics included efficient ways of using metadata, operating digital transmission networks, enhanced digital radio broadcasting technologies and the development of radio with pictures.

As part of the meetings, RRI explained at the Special Topic Session how it employed the most modern technology to take broadcasting to different locations

on the Indonesian archipelago. It described how technology was being adapted to meet specific needs on the ground, and the expertise RRI had developed in this area.

Dr Keiichi Kubota, Director-General of NHK Science and Technical Laboratories, discussed technologies for future broadcasting, highlighting the research work carried out in its laboratories. He also showed HDTV video footage of the moon, shot by a camera mounted in an orbiting satellite.

DVB upgrade

Developments in the field of DVB-T2 and its advantages over its predecessor DVB-T were presented by John Bigeni of DVB Asia, highlighting the advanced technology and the possibility of multi-channel HDTV services. Also featured were presentations on receiver profiles for digital radio and MPEG4 AVC licensing by David Wood of EBU and Alan Harkness of MPEG LA respectively.

The Chairman of the Technical Committee, Kazuyoshi Shogen of NHK-Japan, was re-elected to the post for a

further two-year term. The three Vice-Chairmen and 12 members of the Technical Bureau were also re-elected. Few members joined the bureau: MNB-Mongolia, RRI-Indonesia and SAB/SAR-Saudi Arabia.

Dr Shogen said broadcasters were facing a difficult time with many challenges to overcome and described the committee meetings as a "very good conversation" among ABU members.

"We have many issues to overcome. As broadcasters we are facing a very difficult period, migrating from analogue to digital. We have lots of things to implement, from studio issues to transmitter issues," he said.

Planned activities include an ABU-ITU Workshop on the needs of developing broadcasters for digital services implementation 'Technology Implementation Trials on HD-Radio Showcase' in MW and FM Bands' in Hanoi; a DW-ABU regional training workshop on planning TV studio production facilities, the ABU Digital Broadcasting Symposium 2009 and in-country visits to members in Central Asia. □

Digitalisation 'biggest challenge' for broadcasters

Going digital is the biggest challenge facing ABU broadcasters, the union's new President, Yoshinori Imai, told a press conference in Bali.

Mr Imai, Executive Vice President of NHK-Japan, was speaking only minutes after being elected ABU President at the General Assembly.

He said his own country faced difficulties in switching from

analogue to digital broadcasting because it was a mountainous nation with many remote villages. Other countries faced their own problems – terrestrial, technical and financial.

Helping members overcome these challenges was "one of the most important services" the ABU could provide on the technical side.

He said broadcasters in the region would have to strive hard to hold the

trust of their audiences and the ABU's task was to help make this happen.

"The important thing is what we deliver: good programmes, trusted news," he said.

A career journalist, Mr Imai has spent 40 years with NHK. He is a former United States correspondent, European bureau chief and chief commentator. He took up the post of Executive Vice President at NHK in January 2008. □