

# Weather related disaster key focus of production workshop



Photo by Eric Sales, ADB

Crop yields are affected by climate change

Weather-related disasters and their relationship to climate change was a key focus of a production workshop on climate change solutions reporting held in Kuala Lumpur on 17-19 November.

As a result of these and other impacts, the effects on people's lives could be devastating, with the poor expected to fare the worst. Experts from ADB looked at how increasing preparedness can help prevent loss of life and livelihoods.

## ABU Prize winners

The two TV winners of the ABU Prize 2009 for Climate Change Reporting shared their award-winning packages and experiences producing the pieces.

Produced by Emani Krishna Rao, Senior News Correspondent at Doordarshan-India, 'Seeds of Change' aims to inform local farmers and the public of the need to go for alternative crops at a time of climate change.

Extreme climate events, such as typhoons, floods and droughts, are happening more frequently and are becoming more destructive, according to the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Rising temperatures and extreme weather events would reduce crop yields by 2.5 to 10 percent by 2020, putting 132 million people at risk of extreme hunger by 2050, the bank said. Fresh water would decrease in Central, East, South and Southeast Asia, affecting more than 1 billion people by 2050.



Participants at the climate change workshop



**Emani Krishna Rao of DDI and Wang Er Quan of CCTV**



**Abdul Rasheed, Atma Prakash Misra and Saida Nurova**

Mr Rao said climate change was a universal phenomenon and there was an urgent need to change our cultivation methods and crop patterns, while maintaining an ecological balance.


Another winning programme 'Eco Solutions: China's Challenge', looked at changing habits while seeking green benefits. Produced by Constance Cheng of CNN International, the package looked at what's on the horizon for China as it turns a corner, to try and make life better for its people and the environment.

The programme's crew travelled to the industrial heartland of southern China and had a closer look at some promising initiatives. The feature listened to experts on what was driving China's new efforts and from the country's new generation of environmentalists.

Other workshop participants included

producers from DDI-India, EMTV-PNG, Metro TV-Indonesia, Kazhar Agency-Kazakhstan, PTV-Pakistan, BTv-Bangladesh and Channel NewsAsia. The workshop was the last in a series of seven production workshops that form part of the ABU-ADB Climate Change Initiative.

The 18-month project entailed a series of capacity-building activities for ABU member broadcasters in Asia and the Pacific and the creation and distribution of broadcast and electronic media items on the issue of climate change, its manifestations and solutions for the region. Funding for the project is provided by the ADB.

For more information on the Initiative, please contact Francine Harrigan, ABU Development Projects Department, at [francine@abu.org.my](mailto:francine@abu.org.my). 

### **What's your role at this climate change workshop?**

My role is to serve as an environment and climate resource, in other words, a technical expert to furnish the journalists with the basic climate change issues and policies.

### **Do you agree that broadcasters should work more closely with scientists in order to better report on climate change?**

That's a question that journalists face not just with climate change but with any scientific issues. There's a gap between the science materials produced for the academic community, policy makers and the public. Media are one line of interpreting that, but often media themselves need help in interpreting that. That is filled by NGOs. Research institutes that are concerned with social science and environmental issues also take the hard science and translate it into materials for public consumption in an understandable manner.

When a journalist has a very technical story, it helps to bring on experts to fact-check. Although some of that can be done by good research.

ADB itself is a regional organisation that does a lot of knowledge management and knowledge production. We have our research and knowledge departments that manage specific projects related to different topics in climate change. Our external relations team act as journalists and produce stories that are for public consumption.



**Lauren Sorkin**  
Climate Change Specialist, ADB



**Jason Rush**  
Video and Multimedia Team  
Manager, Media Relations,  
Southeast Asia, ADB

### **What are the challenges facing broadcast journalists in developing nations in the Asia-Pacific?**

A problem that is facing journalists worldwide is funding. With the current economic crisis, there isn't a lot of funding for journalists to go on reporting on climate change. Secondly, climate change is a complicated subject. The challenge here is how journalists can present it in an interesting and understandable way for viewers.

Our job is to work with journalists, help them understand the issue, explore ideas on programming and discuss how they can communicate that to their viewers.



# Vibrant future for digital radio

Amid rapid changes in technology, radio broadcasters should continue to focus on content creation, says the Chairman of the Digital Radio Mondiale (DRM) Consortium, Ruxandra Obreja.

**Q. What is your involvement in RadioAsia, and in particular RadioAsia2010?**

As Chairman of the DRM Consortium and full-time employee of the BBC World Service I am very happy to be involved with an event at which we can promote this new technology but also meet some of the BBC's contacts and long standing partners. We are therefore delighted to be the primary sponsor of the coming RadioAsia.

**Q. What are you hoping to see out of the coming RadioAsia 2010?**

RadioAsia 2010 will be one event to share knowledge and to promote media and its platforms. This is nowadays just about promoting radio, important as it is for this part of the world - perhaps it should be renamed as 'MediaAsia'.

I hope to see top level participation, top level interactivity through an exchange of ideas, proposals on new initiatives, and also people taking risks and doing new things - these would re-energise the conference. In any event, there should be a 'take away' (a follow up plan), an evaluation, otherwise it'd just be another conference without any 'long tail' which we would want RadioAsia to be.

**“ Radio is a reborn through digital radio and other digital devices...that are audio content related therefore there's going to be a very vibrant industry ”**

Bear in mind that with the economic downturn, people would find it more difficult in getting sponsorships, travel allowances, and even time spent in conferences. I think RadioAsia will suffer in the future if it does not have the right level of participation, it is not well-organised and it doesn't provide results. But the signs are very good and I am very excited about this February event.

**Q. What are the topics you'll be speaking about?**

It'll be on digital radio, digitalisation and content. Digital radio is more than radio, it gives you the business opportunity to grow, and you need to know its capabilities to exploit it further. With DRM, you'd have data and audio on the digital radio device, which means broadcasters could create their own content. It's a new kind of broadcasting all by itself.

**Q. What about the different audience segmentations, does digital radio work for all?**

Digital radio is a solution to all kinds of radio, it provides new opportunities to commercial radio and new openings for public broadcasting; it might totally revitalise and expand community radio. Digital radio is also just another way of making radio, we shouldn't confuse it with just presenting the same content in a digital format. It is so much more, allowing for interaction, for extra data to supplement what needs to remain an excellent audio offer.

In fact, the content has to be richer and more sophisticated because the content will influence the distribution, meanwhile distribution leads the content. They go hand in hand.



Ruxandra Obreja

**“ It's more difficult to go digital in radio than TV ”**

**Q. Do you think the take up of digital radio will be much slower in developing countries?**

In the past, people said that mobile phone would take a long time to become popular, but it boomed in developing countries, like in Bangladesh, India and countries in Africa. I don't think new media or digital radio has done that in developing countries.

If people think that digital radio is useful to obtain practical information, it satisfies their needs, they will get it no matter what. If you ask me how long most Bangladeshis, other Asians or Africans would need to acquire a sophisticated digital radio, it may take a long time; but if it was about a simple digital radio, my hope is that it will happen in a short time.

## “ It’s a lot about digitalisation, the internet, mobile, the influence from other platforms, there is more of a discussion about than just radio ”

**Q. What were the major challenges discussed during the past years at RadioAsia?**

The conference had a modest start. It began as a very radio focused conference, a lot of content related issues were being discussed and they are still very important, of course.

Now it’s a lot about digitalisation, the Internet, mobile, the influence from other platforms, there is more of a discussion about than just radio. The conference has addressed and reflected most of the major issues the industry has been facing and I hope that this extremely positive thing about it will continue and be strengthened.

However, over the last few editions people have become more daring by looking beyond radio. Commercialisation, advertising, convergence, content production for different platforms...all the big issues, have been tackled by RadioAsia. Has

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anything changed? Yes, four to five years ago we were talking about the great experience of having an online site, people were saying that radio stations should have an online website but that has changed a lot as well because now everyone has an online site, it’s nothing new.

**Q. How are the broadcasters coping with the technology change?**

Technology is a big issue because it’s changing fast and it’s expensive. It’s different to train staff quickly and well to use that technology, than to use it to its full capacity. At times, people get absolutely mesmerised by anything that’s new technologically. I see a danger in being too technological driven because content is still what satisfies people. The audiences do not care how content is made available to them, they merely want to consume something that’s good in quality and in content.

Nowadays, consumers are spoiled by a variety of media devices. They want information quick and they want it when they want it.

**Q. From your dealings with broadcasters in the region, what are their biggest concerns in the take up of digital radio?**

Financial issues are a problem, and trends in technology. But the bigger challenge is how to use digital radio fully by training people and having them accept it. The younger staff would learn it quickly but the senior staff are more resistant; but with new technologies you’d need both the young creative and the experienced people to work together. The managerial challenges and the management of change are even more difficult than deciding which system to buy but we do not speak as often about these challenges.

**Q. Is the market trend of digital radio any different in Asia than in Europe and America?**

I don’t know enough to answer that question, but a lot of the technological advances come from Asia. I have the impression that Asian broadcasters are quite open to new technology but are still trying hard to train good journalists in that journey.

**Q. Where will radio be in five years?**

There are two schools of thought: one says that radio is a poor relative of TV and that it is dying; another says it is a reborn through digital radio and other digital devices, such as MP3, podcasts and applications that are audio content related, therefore there’s going to be a very vibrant industry. I’d say it’s difficult to tell as a lot of this depends on the economy as well. However, portability of radio – the fact that it’s not demanding and it’s user-friendly – make it such an extraordinary and unique property that I am absolutely sure radio will not die. Digital radio is here and will change the future of radio.

It will be a big challenge to digitalise radio and this will remain the biggest challenge in the next five years, simply because it’s more difficult to go digital in radio than TV. But when all media will be digital, radio cannot remain analogue and I can foresee a good future for it with lots of opportunity for all those who will take the risk. The benefit will be that of the listeners who will have more choice and better content and audio quality.

**Q. How much has digital radio progressed since its inception?**

People want to see digitalisation completed in a year, but it takes time. Everything takes time. Take up of new technology is like fashion; there’s some take up at first, then nothing happens, and then it becomes a mass thing. It’s a complex and long journey, and not all technologies will survive.

The difference with TV is that TV had to become digital, and nowadays it seems everyone wants digital TV. Digital radio, on the other hand, needs to have its benefits presented in a much clearer way before people will switch from FM analogue to digital. My belief is that the benefits are such that they will.

## “ We shouldn’t confuse digital radio with just presenting the same content in a digital format ”

**Q. What will be the next big thing? Cyber radio?**

It’s possible. Nowadays everyone wants one solution for all countries and all time. We’re living in a globalised but fragmented world and unfortunately there isn’t one solution for everyone. We are used to operating many devices, accessing content on different platforms and enjoying a multitude of sources of information. There’s no one killer application, I believe. So far the mobile phone seems to be the most ubiquitous. But radio is there and audio is everywhere. Maybe we need a multitude of platforms, systems and devices to get the audio to the people. There is no way people in Asia or any other part of the world can live without the benefits of radio. ●