



Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union

New challenges for broadcasters

Broadcasters need to work together to address new challenges created by rapid advances in technology, the ABU President, Katsuji Ebisawa, has said.

"We broadcasters have to address new issues that we have not faced before," he told a media conference in Almaty during the ABU's annual meetings.

Rising influence

The influence of broadcasting was increasing year in and year out because of advances in digital technology and the Internet, Mr Ebisawa said.

News and other information now transcended national borders instantly. People could obtain information wherever they were, in real time.

Broadcasters could deliver content via mobile phones and even to cars.

However, digitalisation was also



The Vice Prime Minister of Kazakhstan, Byrganym Aitimova, welcomes delegates at the Opening Ceremony of the 2004 General Assembly

creating the digital divide between rich and poor countries, between the haves and the have nots.

In the face of increasing competition, the ABU needed to help minimise the information gap among its members by exchanging information and other activities.

He said that with terrorist incidents and ethnic conflicts continuing, broadcasters had a responsibility to promote dialogue between civilisations.

Mr Ebisawa expressed similar sentiments at the official opening of the three-day General Assembly.

Global sharing

He said broadcasting uniquely allowed people in different places to experience global events at the same time, and share knowledge and excitement in real time. Broadcasters needed to act globally to better serve their public.

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Entertainers at the Opening Ceremony provide a modern touch to a traditional Kazakh folk song

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"To provide credible and varied information, and to produce quality content – these, I believe, are the principal roles of broadcasters, whether journalists or stewards of culture," he said.

"I would like to work with you to fulfill these ambitions, serving as a bridge among civilisations."

Mr Ebisawa said ABU members were particularly committed to producing educational programmes.

"I would like to build on efforts to further expand the ABU, responding to suggestions for new projects that may

advance the cultural strength of broadcasting in each region."

The General Assembly and associated meetings, hosted for the first time by 'Khabar' Agency of Kazakhstan, were held from 19 to 27 September. They attracted more than 300 delegates from 94 organisations.

Growing challenges

A key focus of the General Assembly was a lively discussion on the growing challenges facing free-to-air broadcasters, and how they could meet them.

Senior broadcasters from around the region suggested ways to meet the fierce competition from satellite and cable television – in particular by relying on the quality of their content and the trust they have built up with viewers over the years.

Providing interactive content and making it available on several platforms would help attract young viewers, participants heard.

Before the General Assembly itself, technical, programme and sports delegates met separately over several days to discuss important issues.

The Technical Committee discussed a wide range of topics, from enhanced HDTV to basic issues around training

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ABU President Katsuji Ebisawa addresses the General Assembly



Delegates from MRTV-Mongolia concentrate on the President's address



Ahmed Maizan of RTVM-Maldives listens to Mr Ebisawa



Delegates visit the new Kazakhstan capital of Astana



Accompanying persons visit the *Nomads* film set

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and certification of operational and maintenance staff in member countries.

The committee decided to provide all practical assistance to members who are contemplating the introduction of digital TV services, and in particular an early introduction of high definition services.

Radio news

The Programme Committee gave its backing for the introduction by the ABU of a daily radio news exchange, with members contributing audio material for free use by others.

In addition, the ABU's daily TV news exchange, Asiavision, will soon launch a second daily satellite transmission of news material from members.

The committee also discussed progress on several co-productions including a children's drama series and a documentary series focusing on environmental issues.

The Sports Group agreed to continue to work for equitable broadcast rights fees for sporting events.

Delegates heard how sports property holders, in their quest for higher fees than ever, were abandoning market realities and marginalising small countries and small broadcasters.

'Khabar' Agency proved superb hosts, handling the meetings with efficiency and professionalism. It was the first time most participants had visited Kazakhstan.

'Khabar' organised a range of excursions for spouses and other people accompanying the delegates. And on excursion day – the day before the General Assembly began – it laid on two special flights to take participants to Astana, the new capital city of Kazakhstan. □

General Assembly:

A Presidential welcome

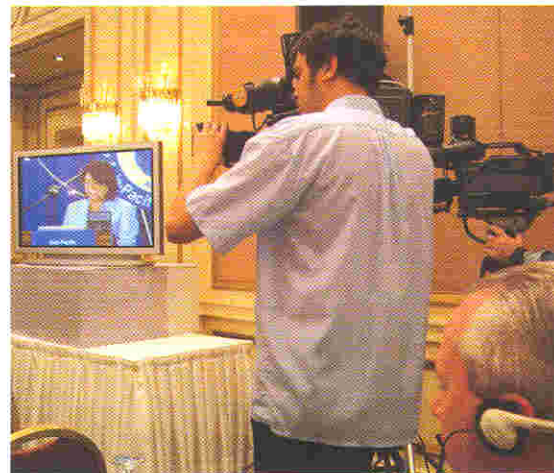
Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev issued a special message of welcome to participants in the General Assembly.

He described the assembly as an "important mechanism of regional cooperation", which united peoples in their common striving for peace and stability.

The only way towards the progressive development of the world, he said, was through trust and mutual understanding, the openness of national economies and the mutual enrichment of cultures.

Mr Nazarbayev said the General Assembly could not be viewed in isolation from the situation in the Asia-Pacific region, which was developing dynamically as a powerful social and economic community, geared towards scientific and high-technological development.

An important achievement in Kazakhstan, he said, was the development of advanced laws to support the mass media and create favourable economic conditions for media activities.



The President's message was read by the Vice Prime Minister

'Khabar' proud to host assembly

'Khabar' Agency was proud to host the General Assembly, the Chief of its Board of Directors, Dariga Nazarbayeva, told the opening ceremony.

She said she viewed it as a sign of the increased authority of Kazakhstan on the international scene and an acknowledgement of its efforts to promote peace, stability and intergovernmental dialogue.

"The arrival of world class TV and radio professionals... will undoubtedly influence not only the work of 'Khabar' Agency but also the development of independent journalism in our region."

Noting that 'Khabar' was also a member of the ABU's governing body, the Administrative Council, Dr Nazarbayeva said: "We express our gratitude to our colleagues for the high level of trust rendered to our young organisation."

'Khabar' regarded its membership in the ABU as an important part of its activities, and hoped the General Assembly would have very productive results.

She said one of the issues of top concern to journalists should be how to fight the evil of international terrorism and make a significant contribution to its extermination.



ABU President re-elected

The 41st General Assembly unanimously re-elected Katsuji Ebisawa of NHK-Japan as ABU President for a three-year term.

Mr Ebisawa, who is also NHK President, has headed the ABU since January 1999.

A Vice-President, Zainal Abidin Ibrahima of RTM-Malaysia, was also re-elected for a three-year term.

The other Vice-Presidents are K S Sarma of Prasar Bharati (the Broadcasting Corporation of India) and Mohammad Honardoost of IRIB-Iran.

FBCL-Fiji, IRIB-Iran and KBS-Republic of Korea were re-elected to the ABU Administrative Council.

The General Assembly also renewed the contract of the Secretary-General, David Astley, for a four-year term. Mr Astley took up the post in July 2002.

Secretary-General's report:

A vital year ahead for ABU

The ABU must complete implementing many new initiatives in the year ahead, the Secretary-General, David Astley, told the General Assembly.

"The next year is going to be what I might call a 'crunch' year for all of us at the Secretariat in terms of delivering what we have promised," he said.

Mr Astley noted that at the 2002 General Assembly in Tokyo he had presented a five-year plan that involved operating at a deficit for several years to enable the ABU to introduce new projects and activities to make its membership more attractive.

The purpose was to increase future income through contributions from new membership subscriptions, rather than increasing the membership subscription unit.

The five-year plan forecast that by 2005 the ABU should start to see increases in subscription income from new memberships, as a result of making the ABU a more relevant Union, and making it an organisation that other broadcasters see value in joining.



David Astley

"2004/05 is the year in which we must complete implementing many of these new initiatives, and the year in which we must start a concerted membership drive to raise revenues to cover the increased costs that we have incurred in launching new projects and expanding our services to members," he said.

"We have spent a lot of time during two Planning & Strategy Group meetings this year reshaping the future direction of the ABU itself. We have reviewed the mission statement, updated the objectives for the Union, and debated at great length a truly meaningful vision statement to guide us."



General Director of 'Khabar' Agency, Zhanar Abdildina (left) and some of her staff listen to the Secretary-General's report

In his annual report to members, Mr Astley outlined the key activities of the ABU's departments during the year. He also outlined some of the activities planned for the future:

- A new secondment scheme would soon be realised when an electronics engineer and a television producer from KBS-Korea would arrive to work from the ABU Secretariat in Kuala Lumpur for one year.

They would assist the ABU to expand activities in the Technical Department and the International Development Projects Department.

"We are very grateful to KBS for providing these additional resources, and we hope that their personnel will benefit from spending a year working in a more multi-cultural environment and being exposed to international broadcasting issues on a day-to-day basis."

- Early in 2005 year the ABU would launch its first ABU Study Tour, which was a new activity designed to meet the needs of its more advanced members. The 2005 tour would be hosted by KBS-Korea, and would enable chief executives, and other senior management personnel involved in the planning of business strategies, to spend three days in South Korea looking at how new broadband and mobile broadcasting services had been implemented.

"This is not a technical tour, but one that is designed to show how new technology has been utilised to achieve organisational objectives, and how the implementation of such strategies is helping members to remain competitive in the new media environment," Mr Astley said.



One of the photographs that the Secretary-General used in his presentation to the General Assembly to illustrate the digital divide in the Asia-Pacific. He said this was a typical family that he had visited in Mongolia, watching black and white television on an old receiver powered by a car battery which was attached to a solar cell on the roof of the family's dwelling. Mr Astley said: "Whilst we talk much about the latest developments in HDTV and mobile broadcasting, it is worthwhile remembering that there are still many thousands of people that if it rains during the day, they don't get to see any television at night"

"But we need to keep our feet on the ground and remember that our members in developing countries still require very basic broadcasting development assistance, mainly in the area of training.

"We are still very focused on providing such core assistance to members in developing countries through our technical and programming advisory services."

Among the new projects in which the ABU would be involved over the next 12 months were the World Conservation Congress in Bangkok in November and a public service announcement competition for World AIDS Day in December.

The ABU was also assisting to coordinate an HIV/AIDS prevention project in South Asia that involved several UN agencies, ABU members in that region, local government and civil society agencies.

"These new projects make an important contribution towards achieving the ABU's vision of improving the quality of life in our region through broadcasting."

Mr Astley said that as the ABU expanded its activities into 2005, it hoped to find an appropriate balance between serving the needs of our more advanced members, those in developing countries, and the many members in between.

"In serving our membership we must remember how important it is to reach and serve every member in some tangible way." □

Study into new awards proposal

The General Assembly gave the go-ahead for a feasibility study into a proposed new film and television awards for the region.

The assembly ratified a decision of the Administrative Council in May 2004 in Osaka to support the study leading to a business plan for the development of an Asia-Pacific Film and Television Awards, as proposed by the Queensland Events Corporation in collaboration with the ABU.

The Chairman of the Queensland Events Corporation, Des Power, told delegates the proposal involved an annual awards-based ceremony to be televised throughout the Asia-Pacific region via member broadcasters.

The awards would commend outstanding work in film and television, taking in "the nationalities, languages and cultures of the immense region serviced by the ABU," he said.

They would bring together broadcasters and film-makers in a mutual enterprise. An independent jury would judge the entries.

"At all times, the ABU will have a major role in determining policy and conduct of the awards and the enterprise associated with them."

Answering questions from the floor, Mr Power said ABU support for the proposal was vital. The awards would not go ahead without the ABU's involvement.



Des Power

The idea was for the awards to be held in Queensland in the first two years, with other countries hosting them later, he said. □

ABU Prizes 2004:



ABU Prizes winners honoured

A colourful stage show featuring traditional and modern Kazakh performances was the backdrop to this year's ABU Prizes award presentation in Kazakhstan.

The ceremony took place at the Abai Opera and Ballet Theatre in Almaty, honoring 17 winners for excellence in several areas of broadcasting.

The awards were presented by the ABU President, Katsuji Ebisawa, and the General Director of 'Khabar' Agency, Zhanar Abdildina, to 12 radio and TV programme winners in the newly expanded contest categories.

Winners for the ABU Engineering Excellence Awards, Technical Review Prize, Dennis Anthony Memorial Award and ABU CASBAA UNICEF Child Rights Award were also honoured onstage.

This year's ABU Prize jury members screened 28 short-listed TV programmes and 60 radio entries during a two-day judging session held at 'Khabar' Agency in Almaty. Altogether 99 TV and 64 radio entries were received this year, the highest numbers in the history of the ABU Prizes contests.

The four-member radio jury was chaired by Alex Tseu of RFA-USA and included Yi Jong Man of KBS-Republic of Korea, Ginger Da Silva of RN-Netherlands, and Erol Eldem of TRT-Turkey.

For the TV categories, a pre-selection was held in Kuala Lumpur in August where 28 programmes were chosen for the final judging.

The five-member final judging jury for TV was chaired by Wong Cheong On of TDM-Macau and included Dorji

Wangchuk of BBS-Bhutan, Setsuko Koizumi of NHK-Japan, Chae-Hoon Yi of MBC-Korea, and Zohara Gany Bathusha of NTV7-Malaysia.

Judging for the External Broadcast (Radio) and Sports (TV) categories was earlier completed by jury members who judged the entries via correspondence.

Chaired by Sakuntala Gupta of MediaCorp Radio-Singapore, the External Broadcast jury included Mahmood Ahmadi of IRIB-Iran, Sitiveni Halofaki of FBCL-Fiji, Harold Essoo of MBC-Mauritius, and Pialisiri Thongprom of NBT-Thailand.

Judging for Sports programmes was conducted by Yumiko Nakagawa (Chairperson), Ken Shipp of SBS-Australia, and Mohd Taha Hj Metahir of RTB-Brunei.

Apart from the inclusion of new contest categories for both radio and TV, a special highlight this year was the presentation of the Special Jury Prizes for radio and TV, initiated as part of the ABU Prizes reforms.

From among all the entries, one entry each for radio and TV was awarded to recognise the work of producers from developing countries whose entries are creative and innovative despite limited resources.

Dr Dariga Nazarbayeva, Chairperson of the 41st ABU General Assembly Organizing Committee, presented the winners with their awards.

The ABU CASBAA UNICEF Child Rights Award was presented to the best television programming on children's rights produced in the Asia-Pacific region. Juan Aguilar, a representative of UNICEF Area Office for the Central Asian Republics and Kazakhstan was on hand to present the award.



Special Jury Prize winner Aitykeev Asankodjo of NTRC-Kyrgyzstan

An initiative started by UNICEF in 2001 with the partnership of the ABU and CASBAA (the Cable & Satellite Broadcasting Association of Asia), the contest is organised annually on a rotational basis between the ABU and CASBAA. □

Phoebe Chan accepts the Child Rights Award on behalf of RTHK

ABU PRIZES 2004 WINNERS

RADIO

Category	Programme title	Organisation
Drama	"The First Teacher"	NHK-Japan
Infotainment	"A Chindon Band Descends to Earth – Grandmothers from a Mythological Village"	NAB (Miyazaki Broadcasting Co., Ltd)-Japan
Children & Youth	"Blow Blow Thou Serene Air"	AIR-India
News & Documentary	"Typhoon Maemi's Rebellion"	SBS-Republic of Korea
External Broadcasts	"Sweet Sorrow: Indentured Indian Labour in Fiji"	SBS-Australia
Special Jury Prize	"Old People's Home – A Fijian Dilemma"	FBC-Fiji

TELEVISION

Category	Programme title	Organisation
Drama	"Bunshiro and Fuku, Episode 2: Partings"	NHK-Japan
Entertainment	"The Fountain of Trivia"	Fuji TV-Japan
Children & Youth	"The Apple Tree Scholarship"	MBC-Republic of Korea
News & Documentary	"The Man Who Fought Against SARS"	NHK-Japan
Sports Programme	"Vertical Ascent"	NHK-Japan
Special Jury Prize	"And Blind Said..."	NTRC-Kyrgyzstan

ABU Prizes 2004:

What the winners had to say...

Drama (Radio)
"The First Teacher" – NHK-Japan
Tsutomu Yoshida, Director

I'm extremely grateful for the ABU's high evaluation of this show. Since this series is set in a foreign land, we worked hard to convey the way of life and historical background of the people in the story. We also strove to enable listeners to identify with the characters.


Drama (TV)
"Bunshori and Fuku Episode 2: Partings" – NHK-Japan
Takayuki Sugano, Executive Producer

Winning an ABU Prize has been the greatest possible encouragement for the actors, actresses, and production people who worked on 'Bunshori and Fuku'. This recognition of our work is a great motivation for us to start planning our next great TV love story.


Infotainment (Radio)
"A Chindon Band Descends to Earth – Grandmothers from a Mythological Village" – NAB (Miyazaki Broadcasting Co., Ltd)-Japan
Kazunori Yuasa, Producer

I wanted to suggest ways by which the aged could live, though this tale of women who experienced hard knocks in their past but are now actively involved in local activities. I am very pleased to learn the story of these seven grandmothers forming "The God's Plain Woman Chindon Band" has also been accepted overseas.


Entertainment (TV)
"The Fountain of Trivia" – Fuji TV-Japan
Jiro Miyauchi, Producer

Fuji Television is extremely honoured to receive this prestigious award. We are very pleased to know that our show has received support from people outside Japan. "The Fountain of Trivia" will be devoted to provide enjoyment for the entire family, and to spark up hot conversations at school or at home.


Children and Youth (Radio)
"Blow Blow Thou Serene Air" – AIR-India
Padmalochan Das, Programme Executive

I was thrilled that the panel of international jury had honoured this programme. Despite many limitations we achieved international standards both in programme software and hardware, through the hard work of our three-member team. (Mr Das won the award in 1998 and a commendation in 1987)


Children & Youth (TV)
"The Apple Tree Scholarship" – MBC-Republic of Korea
Kwan Moon-Hyuk, Producer

This award is not only a great honour for myself, but also for MBC and Korea. I'm overjoyed that the story transcended country boundaries and warmed the hearts of the international jury members. I'd like to think of this award as a big encouragement for the kids featured in "The Apple Tree Scholarship".


News and Documentary (Radio)
"Typhoon Maemi's Rebellion" – SBS-Rep. of Korea
Kim, Young Woo, Producer

As climate changes around the world, we have to prepare for damages and loss of lives from natural disasters. I hope this show will enhance public awareness on disaster prevention and promote better assistance for disaster victims. I'd like to express my sincere thanks to the ABU and to colleagues who supported my team during the production.


News & Documentary (TV)
"The Man Who Fought Against SARS" – NHK-Japan
Tadashi Mimura, Director

In this programme we tried to address, through the work and death of Dr Carlo Urbani, how to deal with mysterious new viruses. The award is a welcome encouragement for the researchers and other NHK personnel who studied his battle to identify the SARS virus and bring it to public attention. In a sense, it's also a tribute to Dr Urbani himself.


External Broadcasts (Radio)
"Sweet Sorrow: Indentured Indian Labour in Fiji" – SBS-Australia
Kumud Merani, Executive Producer

This documentary speaks of inter-race relations which is of great relevance today. I'm glad that SBS magnified those voices that came from the heart of the human enigma. I'd like to thank all who helped in making this show, in particular the technical producer Stephane Albert and Siobhan McHugh for her guidance.


Sports Programme (TV)
"Vertical Ascent" – NHK-Japan
Katsumasa Takahashi, Cameraman

Making "Vertical Ascent" was a huge challenge in every way. When the team got back down to the ground after four weeks of climbing, I felt a huge sense of relief and accomplishment. And now, winning an international prize from the ABU has made the effort even more worthwhile.


Special Jury Prize (Radio)
"Old People's Home – A Fijian Dilemma" – FBCL-Fiji
Solomone Lewanavanua, Producer

As the first Fijian radio show to win a prestigious international award, it's an honour for me and FBCL. The ABU contests can be a forum to promote the realities of small island states such as Fiji. My thanks to the ABU and CRA-Australia, and my appreciation to FBCL's CEO and Director Fijian Programmes for their continuing support.


Special Jury Prize (TV)
"And Blind Said..." – NTRC-Kyrgyzstan
Aitykeev Asankogo, Director

Winning the ABU Prize was a great event in my creative life. This success inspired me and I am going to continue my creative work. I have a lot of new projects but I have not enough means, but now I am encouraged to realise my projects and present it for the audience.



Engineering awards honour industry contributors

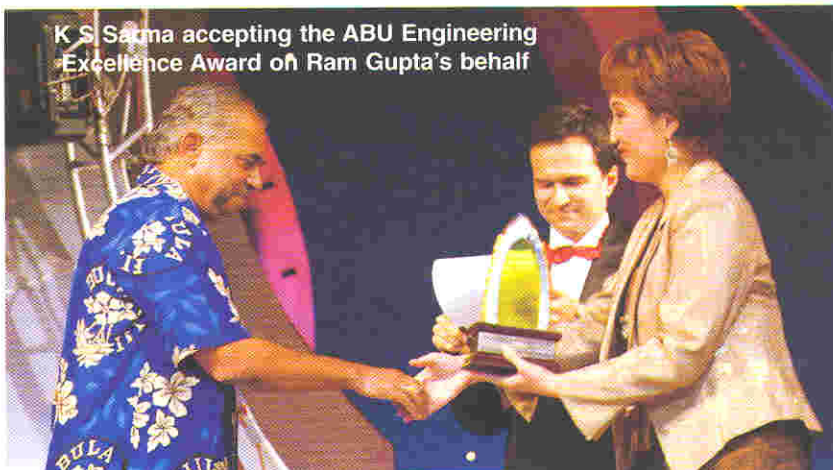
The ABU's two prestigious engineering awards, the ABU Engineering Excellence Award and the ABU Engineering Industry Award, were presented at the ABU Awards ceremony in Almaty.

The ABU Engineering Industry Award went to Richard Barton, former Director of Engineering with FACTS (now Free TV Australia) in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the broadcasting industry in standardisation and spectrum regulation.

Dick Barton, as he is usually known, was active in the ABU Technical Committee, chairing the satellite and terrestrial transmission Working Party. Capping a 20-year association with the International Telecommunication Union



Award recipients Mark Krivocheev (left) and Richard Barton



K S Sarma accepting the ABU Engineering Excellence Award on Ram Gupta's behalf

(ITU), he chaired the 1999 Conference Preparatory Meeting for the 2000 World Radiocommunication Conference.

The award was received on Mr Barton's behalf by Bruce Robertson of Nine Network, Australia.

Ram Kumar Gupta, Engineer-In-Chief of DDI-India, received the ABU Engineering Excellence Award recognising his contribution to the development of digital TV and DTH satellite services in India.

Mr Gupta has been with DDI and AIR for over 35 years and rose to the top technical position in 2002. He has

played a key role in the introduction of new digital technologies in DDI, leading to a landmark improvement in production and transmission quality. He oversaw the launch of DDI's free-to-air DTH satellite services. Mr Gupta was Vice-Chairman of the ABU Technical Committee and has represented India in international conferences. The award was accepted on his behalf by K S Sarma of Prasar Bharati.

Distinguished service

The Technical Committee also conferred a Distinguished Service Award, the first of its kind, on Mark Krivocheev of Russia. This special award recognises his lifetime dedication to the development of television spectrum and service applications, benefiting broadcasters in the Asia-Pacific and other regions.

Professor Krivocheev, 82, has been a long-standing Chairman of the ITU Study Group on television broadcasting and has contributed to building TV standards, both analogue and digital. He has been an inspirational leader in spectrum development. Recently Professor Krivocheev was awarded the ITU Gold medal.

Guennady Kachalov of the Russian State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company accepted the award on his behalf at the Technical Committee meeting. □

IRIB wins for quake coverage

IRIB-Iran has won the Dennis Anthony Memorial Award for its coverage of the earthquake that hit the city of Bam in December 2003.

The award, presented by CNN, has been given annually since 1997 for the best Asiasat news coverage of the year.

The Bam earthquake killed more than 20,000 people and destroyed more than half the homes in the historic city, about 1,000 km southeast of Tehran.

IRIB's contributions to AVN covered all aspects of the disaster, including the extended rescue and relief operations.

This is the third time that IRIB has won the award. Last year it shared it with BTV-Bangladesh – both chosen for the overall excellence of their coverage for the news exchange.

The award is named after a former ABU Senior Officer, News, who died in 1996. □

Special Topic Discussion:

Success built on trust

Free-to-air broadcasters can help meet fierce competition from satellite and cable television by relying on the quality of their content and the trust they have built up with viewers over the years, the General Assembly heard.

Other ways to maintain their edge include offering their material on a wide range of platforms, providing fast, accurate news and making good use of their archival material, senior broadcasters said.

They were addressing a special topic discussion on the subject *The changing role of free-to-air broadcasters in the new media environment*.

Stephen Chan of TVB-Hong Kong chaired the session, which featured four speakers.

Nam Sun-Hyoon, Managing Director of the Global Affairs Division of KBS-Republic of Korea, said that in the face of growing competition, public broadcasters needed to put the audience first and protect the public interest.

At the same time, KBS was pushing ahead with digitalisation and streamlining its organisation to stimulate progress.

Mr Nam said Koreans were crazy about new products, and the Internet, cable and new media all posed real challenges to public broadcasters.

Interactive content

Colin Knowles, Director of Technology and Distribution, ABC-Australia, said television was becoming a secondary activity, and young people were switching rapidly to new, interactive technologies.

The ABC was working actively on the development of digital and interactive



Nam Sun-Hyoon

content, as well as delivering them across various platforms, including broadband, mobile devices and digital radio.

One key strategy in the successful development of the content, he said, was collaborative work with other industry partners and institutions.

Responding to change

The third speaker was Toshiyuki Sato, Director-General, International Planning and Broadcasting Department, NHK-Japan.

He said that after years of little competition for broadcasters, the scene began to change in the 1980s with the introduction of cable and satellite broadcasting.

Now one could subscribe to more than 100 channels. Viewers' behaviour was changing towards zapping and two-way interaction. NHK had responded to these changes by introducing satellite broadcasting (BS), high definition TV and data broadcasting.

A number of new channels were packaged into the BS service, he said. At the same time, NHK had repositioned its free-to-air services through fast and accurate news items, reliable disaster

information, quality programming and advanced technology.

The fourth speaker, K S Sarma, CEO of India's Prasar Bharati, described the trust of the audience as a valuable asset for free-to-air broadcasters.

He said the strategies adopted by Indian state television, DDI, included drawing on this trust, increasing advertising revenue through strong marketing, making more archive material available, and launching free direct-to-home TV services.



Toshiyuki Sato

Also important, he said, was improving the quality of the content and having complete autonomy on programming matters, with no interference from the government.

A lively question and answer session followed. It covered such issues as the cost of introducing new media services, the regulatory framework involved, and how to ensure major sporting events remained on terrestrial channels.

The rapporteur for the Special Topic session was Pengiran Ismail Mohamed, Director of RTB-Brunei. □

ABU FES Seminar:

Reporting in changing societies

The challenges of news reporting in countries in transition was among the issues addressed at a day-long seminar in Almaty.

Organised jointly by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) of Germany and the ABU, the seminar covered such topics as the safety of journalists, their professional ethics, newsroom training and working with international organisations.



Sayyora Ruzikulova

The first session, moderated by Chu Pui Iing of RTHK-Hong Kong, looked at the difficulties facing journalists in countries in transition, such as those in Central Asia.

A broadcast journalist from Uzbekistan, Sayyora Ruzikulova, said that in the post-Soviet era, the number of media outlets in Central Asia had grown, but the increase had not resulted in quality.

There was too little coverage of issues such as human rights and the protection of children. State censorship prevented the news from being timely or objective.

Even many non-state media outlets were scared to speak out, and there was no adequate legal framework for the media to operate under. Many people did not trust what they saw on TV or heard on radio.

A Philippine journalist, Cecilia Lim Lazaro, said her country's press freedom had contributed to the fall of power of President Joseph Estrada, by covering the impeachment proceedings against him extensively.

However, problems still affecting the Philippine news media included a blurring of the line between news and entertainment, and the strong influence of public relations people.

Daniel Kaufman of the World Bank Institute said freedom of expression was too often viewed as a single issue independent of others, instead of an integral component of transparency and good governance.

The media had a vital role in keeping governments accountable and disseminating data. Access to information was essential when it came to public sector reforms.

Zainal Abidin Ibrahim of RTM-Malaysia moderated the second session, which dealt with professional ethics and codes of conduct in broadcasting news.

Gopal Gurugain of the Nepalese Radio Network outlined the hazards facing journalists covering Nepal's Maoist insurgency, including killings, kidnapping, harassment, death threats and looting of equipment.

Other challenges included lack of skilled human resources and the absence of an independent body to regulate or monitor broadcast news and programmes.

On the positive side, journalists had developed courage and greater skill in coping with the work, the military had learned to deal better with the media, and there was a greater recognition of the need for an independent media.

The BBC's correspondent in Kazakhstan, Ian MacWilliam, said television was perhaps the single most influential cultural phenomenon around the world. It was important that there be rules of behaviour to guide journalists towards best practices.

DDI-India asked whether the independence of the BBC was being put ahead of the interests of the country. Mr MacWilliam said this was not so; the BBC saw its job as being to report developments accurately and inform the public about what was happening.

The third session, on developing and sustaining training in the newsroom, featured Karl Lippe and Wilfried Solbach of the AIBD, Johari Achee of RTB-Brunei



Cecilia Lim Lazaro

and Alan Williams of the ABU. Luu Tuong Quang of SBA Radio, Australia, moderated the session.

The final session focused on working with the international community, moderated by Artine Utomo of TPI-Indonesia.

It featured presentations by Tim Carlsgaard of the UN Office on Drugs and Crimes, Steven Griffiths of the Asian Development Bank, Elvira Pak of FES in Kazakhstan and Matthew White of National Geographic Television. □

Programme Committee:

Project action plans approved

Action plans for a new educational documentary co-production series, *Voyage to the Future*, were approved at the Programme Committee meeting in Almaty.

The Executive Producer of the project, Takashi Harada of NHK-Japan, told delegates that the first study site would be on the island of Borneo in East Malaysia in the middle of 2005.

"Participants will visit the region to study the environment, and the whole study process will be recorded on video to be made available to the ABU members participating in the event," Mr Harada said.

Learning opportunities

The event aims to provide young people with opportunities to learn what should be done for sustainable development while protecting the rich nature of the Asia-Pacific region.

It also seeks to promote the advancement of broadcasting culture and education in the region and foster the spirit of collaboration in the joint production of related educational TV programmes.

Mr Harada noted that the United Nations had designated 2005-2014 for Education for Sustainable Development.

"Emphasising that environmental education is an indispensable element for achieving sustainable development, through this series ABU members can take the initiative to make people aware of the importance of environmental protection and preservation," Mr Harada said.

After the success of Robocon Seoul 2004, the ABU is gearing up for next year's event to be held in Beijing.

The Deputy Director of the Children and Youth Programme Centre of CCTV, Zang Xiaojun, outlined the plans for the event and expressed hope that the contest would attract even more active participation by countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

"This contest has become a focus of attention of Chinese universities. I believe this will be a celebration of science and technology in a city known for its ancient civilisation and modern beauty. We are going all out to make this contest a new starting point," Mr Zang told the delegates.

"There is an old Chinese saying that you are not truly a strong man until you have climbed to the top of the Great Wall," Mr Zang said. He explained that the aim of the contest would be to climb the Great Wall and feed fuel balls into five torches and four bonfires by manual and automatic machines.

The ABU Robocon is an international co-production that is both educational and entertaining. It provides a platform for students to showcase their creative and unique ideas in robotics. It is an event where the ABU members work together



New team... (from left): Dorji Wangchuk, BBS-Bhutan; Han Hee Joo, KBS-Korea; and Setsuko Koizumi, NHK-Japan

He said the event would give countries in the ABU region a chance to exhibit their latest technological products and to exchange information and experiences.

"This is a significant event for the students, as well as a boost for science and technology development. Producers and directors can exchange ideas and experience through cooperation."

Mr Zang announced that the theme for the Robocon Beijing 2005 would be "Climb the Great Wall and Light the Holy Fire".

to produce programmes with the aim of promoting the advancement of the region's broadcasting culture and fostering the spirit of collaboration in joint production.

It has been a year since the ABU General Assembly approved the creation of a working party to reform the ABU Prizes.

The working party, chaired by Kim Kyung Hee of KBS-Republic of Korea, reported to the meeting the steps that the group had taken for the reform of the ABU Prizes.

Participants expressed appreciation on the positive changes, specifically the expansion of the award categories and the new Special Jury Prize.

The working party said they would endeavour to take further steps to reform the ABU Prizes.

Delegates had the opportunity to hear the experiences of some ABU members who have taken leading roles for the Programme Department's projects in the past year.

Chung Hyun Sook, Head of Children's Programme Department of EBS-Republic of Korea, shared her experiences in serving as Executive Producer of the ABU Co-production of Children's Drama Series. She showed excerpts of the programmes and expressed confidence that there would be more participants for next year.

Meanwhile, KBS, through producer Nah Young, shared its experience in hosting the Robocon Seoul 2004. Mr Nah showed video clips of the contests and described how members had held domestic robot competitions and produced Robocon related programmes.

New projects

The meeting also heard reports from the ABU's partners in several projects. Presentations on new activities were made by UNESCO (Asia Pacific Bureau for Communication and Information), Hoso Bunka Foundation (HBF-Japan), Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD), Prix Jeunesse Asia, Japan Prize, and UNICEF (Area Office for the Central Asian Republics and Kazakhstan).

The Programme Committee elected its officers for 2005-2006.

KBS-Republic of Korea was elected Chairperson of the Programme Committee, while BBS-Bhutan was elected as Vice-Chairperson. Both organisations will hold their respective positions on

the Committee for the first time. NHK-Japan was re-elected as the other Vice-Chairperson. The officers will serve their two-year terms beginning January 1, 2005.

Two discussion sessions were held on the topics *Do you know your listeners/viewers?* and *Copyright Exceptions : A Green Light?*



Joan Warner

The CEO of CRA-Australia, Joan Warner, spoke on Marketing Research on Digital Radio and shared consumer research results on awareness, interest and demand of listeners that had been conducted by Digital Radio Broadcasting Australia.

"There are many stakeholders in the digital debate and it is only through research that we can possibly hope to define a consumer proposition which will adequately meet all their needs. If we fail to do this, we will replicate what has happened to digital television in Australia," Ms Warner said.

She explained that digital TV in Australia had stalled because it offered viewers, advertisers and broadcasters no compelling reason to convert their analogue receivers.

"We have created a multi-layered market research programme that aims to track awareness and interest in digital radio across a broad sample of the community," she said, adding that people still spent most time with radio.

Yuji Suzuki, Senior Researcher at NHK's Broadcasting Culture Research Institute, talked about Viewer Preference Studies for TV Programming. He explained how broadcasters can develop more appealing programmes that meet viewers' demands and discussed viewer preference studies conducted by NHK.

Delegates also heard a presentation by Nah Young of KBS on the phenomenal success of the Korean drama "Winter Sonata" in Asia. The drama series has a huge following in Asia and is expected to achieve the same popularity in the Middle East.

Copyright issues

Lawyers from different organisations engaged in a lively panel discussion on the limitations and exceptions of copyright.

WIPO Counsellor Carole Croella made a presentation on copyright exceptions based on the UK-derived concept of "fair dealing," while Fernand Alberto, ABU Legal Officer, talked about limitations based on the US-derived concept of "fair use".



Yuji Suzuki

A panel discussion followed, with lawyers from SBS-Australia, TVB-Hong Kong and TVNZ-New Zealand joining the speakers in a debate on the various copyright exceptions relevant to broadcasting. □