

Q: Do you foresee the taskforce as something positive that protects the lives of the journalists? In what way?

CR: Yes, because firstly, there is now one organisation dedicated to covering these cases. Secondly, the organisation has been given money and resources by the government to do its job. Thirdly, the organisation has been tasked to work closely with media establishments to take preventive measures such as education on the safety of journalists. Finally, I must say that because of my ministerial leverage, I am in a position to put pressure on the police. So, I'm taking this as my own personal crusade.

Q: How many journalists are there in the Philippines?

CR: The National Association of Broadcasters has accredited about 4,000 broadcast journalists. There are another 1,000 or 2,000 who are practising but are not accredited because they have not satisfied the NAB's professional requirements and standards. There are another 1,000 to 2,000 print journalists.

Q: Are those targeted mostly print or broadcast journalists?

CR: Most of them are broadcast journalists because broadcasting can be more aggressive than print. Because it is on air, broadcasting – especially live shows – can be more personal. It is also more pervasive.

Q: How often do media or broadcasting organisations receive threats?

CR: There are so many threats. Anonymous phone calls and letters and sometimes packages containing bullets and stuff like that which are delivered to the office. But in my experience, when you are being threatened, you are not in danger because they really do not want to kill you. It is when the threats stop and you still continue, you are in

real danger. I have had my own share of harassments, death threats and being shot at, but I lived. All of this started during martial law in the Philippines about 20 years ago.

Q: Since the establishment of the taskforce, has there been a lull in the attacks?

CR: It is too soon to make a conclusion. Many of the attacks took place only recently so it is too soon to make a comment. But I hope the taskforce can achieve its purpose and that the solving rate of the cases will deter people from committing acts of violence (against journalists).

Q: What have unions and media organisations done to protect their members?

CR: The only ones who can give real protection are the police. If you

are enemies with the local police, you can always ask protection from another (area). We also have insurance coverage for journalists. I was also the chairman of the Freedom Fund for Filipino Journalists which was set up in response to the killings. The major media organisations banded together to form the fund in order to assist the families of the victims. We help these families to continue with their lives and pursue justice on their behalf.

Q: Have the killings dampened the spirit of journalism and press freedom in the Philippines?

CR: No. On the contrary, this has actually challenged the Filipino journalists and made them more determined in their work.

Philippines the deadliest place for journalists

Fifty-two journalists have been murdered in the Philippines over the past decade, making the country the deadliest place for journalists to work, according to a report by international media watchdog, Reporters Without Borders.

The report, which was released on the eve of World Press Freedom Day on 3 May, included a call for the United Nations to send a team to the Philippines to investigate political murders, particularly of journalists.

It said that solving the murders of these journalists will be a test for President Gloria Arroyo in the struggle against press freedom violations, corruption and organised crime.

It went on to say that the political will demonstrated recently by the Filipino government, with the setting up of the "Newsmen Task Force" within the national police force, should translate into clearing up the 42 unsolved murders of journalists.

Unlike other countries, journalists in the Philippines are free to pursue any story.

They can interview anybody, including rebel militants – which is often to the consternation of government officials.

Most of the killings occur in the conflict-ridden provinces where criminal gangs and rebel groups usually operate. □

ABU expands copyright activities

Lawyers, legal professionals and copyright executives of broadcasting organisations in the Asia Pacific met in Seoul, South Korea, and agreed to cooperate in expanding the ABU copyright activities to raise awareness on intellectual property issues in the region.

The consensus was arrived at during the Eighth ABU Copyright Committee meeting held on 20-22 April 2005.

Choi Moon Soon, Chief Executive Officer of host broadcaster MBC, stressed the importance of copyright for broadcasters in the region and expressed support for a broadcasters' treaty granting updated rights to broadcasters.

"ABU has always been a crucial organisation in providing up-to-date information on copyright matters facing broadcasters in the region," Mr Choi told the delegates while urging them to actively participate in various copyright activities of the ABU.

In her report to the meeting, Maloli Espinosa, Chairperson of the ABU

Copyright Committee, said that since its creation in 1994, the Committee has assumed new and bigger roles.



Choi Moon Soon, the CEO of host broadcaster MBC

She explained that in an effort to raise awareness on intellectual property issues, seminars on copyright have been organised by the Committee in various parts of the region.

She also stressed the active role of the Committee in representing the members at international discussions on the proposed Broadcasters' Treaty.

"One important accomplishment of the Committee is the critical role it played in the decision of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) to convene the first World Symposium on Broadcasting, New Communication Technologies and Intellectual Property held in Manila in 1997," Ms Espinosa said.

Broadcasters outnumbered

Jim Thomson, Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, made a presentation on the importance of the proposed treaty. He said that regional consultations will soon be held by WIPO with the objective of adopting a resolution in favour of moving to a diplomatic conference – the final step in the treaty-making process.

"If such a resolution is adopted, the stage will be set to decide whether broadcasters will get their international treaty or not, or perhaps, as an alternative, a watered-down version which does not properly address the modern-day needs of broadcasters.

"Which alternative will prevail is essentially in the hands of those present at this meeting," Mr Thomson said while admitting that broadcasters were outnumbered by other lobbying groups attending the WIPO sessions in Geneva.

Fernand Alberto, the ABU's Legal Counsel, expressed concern that the collective efforts of Asian broadcasters in persuading their governments leave much to be desired.

He told the delegates that in the treaty sessions of the WIPO Standing Committee, representatives of broadcasting companies do not have the financial resources that other lobbying groups have.

He then urged the members to take an active role in the lobbying process



Participants of the recent ABU Copyright Committee Meeting in Seoul, Korea

and to continue persuading their governments to support the treaty.

Upon the invitation of the Committee, Carole Croella, who is Counsellor of WIPO's Copyright Division, explained the plans of the organisation with regards to the treaty discussions and that WIPO will be conducting regional consultations on the treaty in Asia.



WIPO's Carol Croella addressing participants of the ABU Copyright Committee Meeting

An intense discussion then followed whereby members shared their views on an effective strategy and action plan for the proposed treaty.

During the session on copyright developments in the Asia-Pacific region,



NHK-Japan's Atsushi Iizuka is re-elected as Committee Secretary

the participants shared information on changes in legislations and recent court decisions on copyright.

Emerging issues

Sally McCausland, a lawyer with SBS-Australia, spoke on "Ephemeral Copying and Music Rights". She said that broadcasters should be able to make temporary or ephemeral copies of music with their own facilities for their own broadcasts without consent.

"The special position of broadcasters should be reflected in copyright law

exceptions and broadcasters should lobby proactively to protect and expand ephemeral copying rights without waiting for a test case," Ms McCausland said.

She also told the meeting that this special exemption recognises broadcasters' public policy role as suppliers of local content.

Meanwhile, Kim Jung-Gon, Officer of the Copyright Division of KBS-Korea, discussed the copyright issues that his organisation had encountered while licensing their programmes internationally.

For the first time, the Committee meeting was also attended by many radio broadcasters from the ABU, indicating an increased interest on copyright issues among radio broadcasters in the region.

Business Development Manager of Radio New Zealand, George Bignell, gave an insightful presentation on the regulatory and copyright issues relevant to a radio broadcaster.

Before the end of the meeting, the members of the Committee re-elected Atsushi Iizuka, Principal Programme Director of NHK-Japan, as the Committee Secretary. He will serve his second term for a period of two years. □



The eighth ABU Copyright Committee meeting gets underway in Seoul

Asian broadcasters make impact at MIPTV

ABU members were well represented at this year's MIPTV held in Cannes, France, from 11 to 15 April.

The Korean members – KBS, MBC, SBS and EBS – joined forces with the Korean Broadcasting Commission to participate in a Korea Day on 12 April to promote Korean content and technology.

A morning session was titled "Korean Wave: What makes Korean Drama so hot?" Delegates were told that Korean drama was no longer a cultural phenomenon because they had successfully achieved a balance between universality and diversity.



KBS-Korea had the largest billboard at this year's MIPTV promoting its "Emperor of the Sea" drama series

In the afternoon, there were presentations from representatives of telecommunications companies showing examples of convergence products and how digital technology is being used to achieve 'ubiquity' in everyday life in Korea.

The Korea Day was followed by a DMB showcase on 14 April with executives from Korean companies presenting the business models for the terrestrial and satellite digital mobile broadcasting services currently being launched in Korea.

Higher sales

The Japanese broadcasters were also out in force at MIPTV with NHK, TBS, Fuji TV and TV Asahi all doing brisk business at their stands.

Most broadcasters reported higher sales than in previous years, and an increasing interest in Asian product.

One Korean broadcaster reported a threefold increase in sales over 2004.

China International TV Corporation (CITVC), the international arm of China Central Television (CCTV), signed a deal with Sony Television International for the 21-part HDTV production "Story of the Han Dynasty".

"It is one of the largest deals we have ever done with a US studio player," Cheng Chunli, marketing director general and manager of international sales for CITVC told the MIPTV Daily News bulletin.

The terms of the US\$1 million-plus deal have Sony distributing the series in South East Asia.

CITVC also signed a deal for two new titles – the TV series "Fashion Story" and the 13-episode, half-hour documentary series "China World Heritage" – with RTM in Malaysia.

ABU Secretary-General, David Astley, was in Cannes for the first three days of MIPTV to meet with members and with MIPTV's International Sales Director, Jacques Gibout.



NHK displayed many of its programmes in its HDTV format



ABC-Australia had a very prominent corner stand at MIPTV



The TBS-Japan stand was always busy with buyer meetings

“With the increasing interest in Asian product, we felt it was time to start talking to MIPTV about the possibility of having an umbrella stand for those countries in our region who are not currently exhibiting, but who want a presence at MIPTV.

“This is a similar concept to the European umbrella stands that you see at many of the trade shows,” he said.

He added that there were many broadcasters in Asia, outside of those that exhibit in their own right at MIPTV, which have marketable content but perhaps not enough to justify the cost of a stand of their own.

“If sufficient ABU members show interest in sharing the cost of an umbrella stand, the ABU Secretariat can manage the stand with perhaps just one representative from each of the countries participating to undertake the negotiations with programme buyers.

“This would enable those countries to have a very cost-effective presence at MIPTV,” Mr Astley explained.

Other ABU members from the Asia-Pacific region that had stands at MIPTV this year were ABC and SBS-Australia, ERTU-Egypt, MediaCorp and MDA-Singapore, and TRT-Turkey. □



TRT-Turkey promoted its documentary series “Witness of Time”



SBS was one of the broadcasters that comprised the Korea stand



An MBC-Korea news crew conducts an interview at MIPTV



Fuji TV-Japan had many of its top rating programmes on offer



CITVC signed a million-dollar deal for its series “Story of the Han Dynasty”

Cultural diversity communicated via children's emotions

The emotions and expressions of children will be used as the common "language" to explain the diverse cultures of Asia-Pacific countries through a drama series initiated by the ABU Programme Department.

This is the challenge facing producers of the 15-minute drama serials – to come up with content using very little dialogue and plenty of creative expression so that the series can be understood by children in various countries across the region.

New participants

The Children's Drama Series co-production will bring together 10 ABU members from various countries with the aim of creating a serial for seven- to nine-year-olds to help them better understand the cultural backgrounds of their peers from different countries.

Following the success of the first series last year which had six



The first meeting of the Children's Drama Series gets underway in Tokyo

participants from RTPRC/CCTV-China, RTHK-Hong Kong, NHK-Japan, EBS-Korea, RTM-Malaysia and MRTV-Mongolia, the project has expanded to include BBS-Bhutan, DDI-India, IRIB-Iran and KA-Kazakhstan this year.

The six pioneering members of the project had taken about one year to complete the series which featured

six episodes with a wide variety of themes. Last year's project was strongly supported by UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC).

For this year, the producers will work on the theme, "Mental growth of children". There will also be three sub-themes – family/friendship ties,



Participants of the Children's Drama Series in Tokyo

discoveries, and challenges – to enhance the focus of the project.

Each 15-minute segment will go into a content pool which is to be shared among participating broadcasters. The series will eventually be extended to other ABU members as well as broadcast outside the region.

The first meeting of the new series was hosted by NHK-Japan in Tokyo from 25 to 27 April. The Hosokawa Foundation of Japan is supporting this year's endeavour.

NHK's Director of Drama Programmes, Yoshiaki Nishimura, said drama was the best common tool to teach children about the various backgrounds and cultures of the Asia-Pacific region.

The Japanese public broadcaster is also providing two executive producers for the project. They are Koji Kanazawa, Executive Producer of the Drama Programmes Department, and Hiroko Sakaure who is Senior Producer of Youth & Children's Programming.

On his new role, Mr Kanazawa said: "Over the past 30 years, I have produced more than a thousand 15-minute drama pieces of various types. From my experience, 15 minutes is a very suitable time scale for making a simple and concise drama."

Good storylines

At the meeting, each participant took turns presenting their storylines for the drama. The former and current executive producers of the series were on hand to provide opinions and advice on improving the storylines.

One storyline which stood out was presented by Kamarudin Ambak of RTM-Malaysia. It was about Harris, a village boy, who had borrowed a dozen comic books from his friend. While cycling, he had an accident and the

Australian TV piracy on the rise

A large number of Australians were found downloading TV shows from the Internet immediately after the shows were broadcast in the United States or the United Kingdom, *The Courier-Mail* has reported.

According to a survey by web-tracking firm Envisional, the country has quickly gained a bad reputation with research finding that Australians are the second-worst offenders for illegal TV downloads.

The study found Britons accounted for 18 percent of the world's illegal TV downloads, followed by Australian with 16 percent. Americans ranked third with seven percent.

The study also found the downloading of TV shows had risen

150 percent in the space of a year and 70 percent of the downloads were made using BitTorrent websites.

The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) last week filed lawsuits against six BitTorrent websites, in an attempt to shut down the practice.

MPAA President Dan Glickman said the illegal practice threatened the jobs of "thousands of people in the entertainment industry who are working to develop, produce and promote television shows".

"Internet thievery of all creative materials is unacceptable and these thieves need to realise they're not anonymous," he said.

More than 90 percent of the websites that the MPAA sued so far have been shut down completely.

books fell into a river and drifted away. When the boy raises enough money to buy new books to replace the ones he had lost, he realises that the books had been sold out. But in the end, his friend decides to forgive him.

On the final day of the meeting, the members discussed and fine-tuned the closing title sequence and tape requirements, as well as copyright and contractual issues.

The participants had also agreed to meet in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 1 to 3 July 2005 for a second meeting which will be held to finalise the scripts before they go into production.

From now until then, the members will work very closely with the executive

producers via e-mail to develop their storylines into synopses and then into proper scripts.

The project is expected to be completed by December this year when every participating member will receive the other nine members' drama segments. The series will be broadcast by the individual stations early next year.

Meanwhile, participants of last year's project are expected to finish airing the first series by July, after which it will be made available to other broadcasters.

For further information, please contact ABU Programme Department Senior Executive, Francis Kok, at 603-2282 2480 or francis@abu.org.my.

Search hots up for Robocon reps



The national-level competitions of the Fourth Asia-Pacific Robot Contest – or ABU Robocon – is underway, with several countries already finalising the teams which would represent them in the grand final in Beijing, China, later this year.

At least 21 Asia-Pacific countries have agreed to take part in ABU Robocon 2005. Among them is newcomer Bangladesh Television, with Kazakhstan's Khabar Agency making a comeback after a two-year absence.

Other participating broadcasters are RTB-Brunei, ERTV-Egypt, Fiji TV-Fiji, RTHK-Hong Kong, DDI-India, TRI-Indonesia, IRIB-Iran, NHK-Japan, KBS-Korea, TDM-Macau, RTM-Malaysia, MRTV-Mongolia, NTV-Nepal, PTV-Pakistan, ITN-Sri Lanka, TPT-Thailand, TRT-Turkey and VTV-Vietnam.

So far, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Egypt, Mongolia and Indonesia have held domestic contests to decide their respective national representatives for the final on 27 August. RTPRC-China is the host broadcaster for this year's event.

The Malaysian final was an exciting and colourful experience as the host organiser RTM had put in a bigger

budget to rent a massive hall to stage the event on 22 and 23 April. There were also performances by local artistes and five cheer-leading teams from various secondary schools to add to the festive mood.

Reigning champions University Technology Malaysia (UTM) made it a one-two finish, having sent in two teams. The heat of the competition was so intense that a rematch was held for the semi-final between the Malaysian Multimedia University (MMU) and UTM's Team A. However, Team A was beaten to the title by Team B.



The Indonesian champions

Despite the 26 December earthquake and resulting tsunami which killed more than 200,000 people in Aceh and Northern Sumatra, interest in the Indonesian leg of ABU Robocon 2005 kept pouring in.

The Indonesian Robocon organising committee received 168 applications to participate in the elimination stages, and another 152 proposals for the Indonesian Intelligent Robot Contest (IIRC) – a new contest for small-sized robots which was introduced by the committee last year.

Both contests were staged at the auditorium of the Balairung University of Indonesia on 14 and 15 May. In front

of a 12,000-strong audience, Electronic Engineering Polytechnic Institute of Surabaya beat out the competition to grab the ticket to the final in Beijing.



Mongolian competitors with their robot inventions

In Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, reigning champion URAN GAN, from the School of Mechanics and Engineering at Mongolian University of Science and Technology, edged its rivals by 34 points to emerge the Mongolian representative to Beijing.

The Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology (BUET) will be participating in its maiden Robocon competition this year. It secured the support of public broadcaster BTB which will air the university's robot-making progress for local audiences in August.



Bangladeshi undergraduates building their robot



University Technology Malaysia is in the grand final once again

EIDF to highlight global political and social injustice

Korea's EBS International Documentary Festival (EIDF) is celebrating its second anniversary this year, and this time, it hopes to promote a culture of peace and life by casting the spotlight on political and social injustice around the world.

Founded by the EBS – Korea's representative public television – EIDF aims to re-examine the role of public television by unearthing stories not covered in the mainstream media and by bringing diverse issues of political and social injustice to light.

This year's theme is "Peace and Life in Asia" – which aims to discuss a common path that people should follow in order to live in a more harmonised world where dreams are aspired and fulfilled.

A total of 150 documentaries from around the globe will be broadcast through the EBS-TV channel, covering issues of human rights, social justices, civil liberties, and freedom of expression.

Through the festival's programmes, forums, conferences, and question-and-answer sessions with filmmakers and scholars, EIDF 2005 will engage the audience in active discussion on the content of films and challenging issues facing documentary-makers today.

EIDF 2005, which will be held in Seoul from 29 August to 4 September, provides a unique opportunity for documentary producers to communicate a world of ideas and cultures while enhancing the appreciation of documentary films.

Approximately 15 films will be selected from the entries to the main



competition section, and a total amount of US\$40,000 will be awarded through four prize categories.

Director Paul Kim and programmers Kevin and Minah Jeong will oversee the selection process.

"Documentaries have tremendous power to reveal the truth and can have profound effects on societies and lives," said Mr Kim. "It will be a

pleasure to introduce these projects to local and international audiences through EIDF 2005."

Further information, registration forms, eligibility requirements can be accessed online at www.eidf.org. Completed films must be submitted by 10 July 2005.

More information can be obtained by e-mailing the festival organisers at eidf@ebs.co.kr, by calling 82-2-526-2122-3, or via post at EBS International Documentary Festival, 463 Dogok2-Dong, Gangnam-Gu, Seoul, South Korea 135-854. □

Thai community radio interfering with air traffic

The Thai Government has ordered a crackdown on community radio stations that are interfering with aviation frequencies, the *Bangkok Post* has reported.

The Minister to the Prime Minister's Officer, Suranand Vejjajiva, said that whilst the government supported community radio services to promote local activities, it would not tolerate operators that disturbed the work of aviation and security agencies.

The Minister was speaking at a seminar on the impact of community radio. Seminar participants were told that Thailand's air traffic agency had complained about community radio broadcasts interfering with communications between pilots and air traffic controllers.

The Director-General of the Government's Public Relations Department, Dussadee Sinchirmsiri, told the seminar that all community radio stations in Thailand were currently in violation of the technical standards which limited transmission power to 30 watts, antenna height to 30 metres and signal reach to 15 kilometers.

A spokesman for the National Telecommunication Commission said that some of the equipment being used by community radio operators was sub-standard.

Other problems raised at the seminar included inappropriate content being broadcast by community radio stations, and interference with radio frequencies used by security authorities in border regions. □

AVN launches second daily feed



AVN centre staff coordinate the first day of AVN-2

The ABU's news exchange, Asiavision, has launched a second daily satellite feed of news stories from its member TV broadcasters.

The 15-minute feed, at 1215 GMT, is in addition to the existing 30-minute feed nearly four hours earlier. It was launched on 16 May.

It is the first time in its 21-year history that Asiavision has had two daily feeds. The second feed, known as AVN-2, will continue for a year, during which members will decide whether to make it permanent.

One of the main aims is to provide more same-day coverage of breaking

events in Asia. This goal was realised from day one, when all eight news items in the feed consisted of same-day footage.

They included the latest on a ferry disaster in Bangladesh, a meeting of tsunami aid donors in Sri Lanka and a review by India's ruling coalition of its first year in power.

Because of its timing, the second feed should prove of particular value to Asiavision's westernmost members, including those in South Asia. The material will arrive well in time for their main evening news bulletins.

The ABU News Group, which sets policy for Asiavision, decided to launch

the feed at its annual meeting in Kathmandu in July 2004. The group had discussed the issue a number of times in the past and felt the time was now right.

The AVN centre in Kuala Lumpur has taken on an additional journalist to help handle the workload, but members' monthly subscriptions remain unchanged.

Apart from the two daily feeds, Asiavision provides news flashes for important, breaking stories, and will continue to treat this as a top priority.

Asiavision's members are the national broadcasters of 13 countries: Bangladesh, Brunei, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Singapore, Thailand and Sri Lanka. □



Coverage from CCTV-China



DDI covers India's leaders for the new feed



Ferry disaster coverage from BTV-Bangladesh

