



Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union

'Building trust the key'



Delegates at the 2005 General Assembly listen intently as Gerd Leonhard (right) stresses a point during the question and answer session

Building trust with audiences is crucial if broadcasters are to thrive amid the huge changes in their industry, the General Assembly heard.

"The real value in broadcasting is trust. This is what people will come to you for," Swiss-based futurist Gerd Leonhard said.

Mr Leonhard and Dr Tak Jae-Taek of KBS-Korea were the keynote speakers at a Special Topic session on Broadcasting beyond 2005 – how converging technologies, new business models, new consumer demands and lifestyle factors are changing the face of the broadcasting industry.

Mr Leonhard said the broadband explosion was driving a huge change in broadcasting. Competition was becoming broader and more global. Convergence was posing big challenges to radio and television. The use of other sources of content – the Internet, mobile phones, MP3 players – was soaring.

Programmes with many viewers or listeners were being replaced by niche programmes. People were no longer willing to tune in at a certain time; they wanted things in their own time.

However, broadcasters offered unique values that they could capitalise on: trust, expertise, user loyalty and strong infrastructure.

Dr Tak said the past decade had seen constant development in communications technology. The convergence of broadcasting and telecommunications was causing broadcasters to rethink the social value of broadcasting.

Amid the change, producing high-quality programmes remained the most basic mission of broadcasters. Public broadcasters could boost their content by promoting co-production and the exchange of programmes among companies and countries.

"Increasingly, we are hearing voices critical of the role of public broadcasting. This means we are not

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We appreciate ABU, says Deputy PM

Vietnam highly appreciated the ABU's role in promoting cooperation among the broadcasters in the region, the Deputy Prime Minister, Pham Gia Khiem, told the General Assembly.

In his opening address, Mr Khiem said Radio Voice of Vietnam and Vietnam Television were active participants in ABU activities.

Many Vietnamese reporters, editors and technicians had attended training courses organised by the ABU. This had given them access to modern technology and greater professional experience.

Mr Khiem said the development of Vietnam's media had been remarkable. There were now 600 media agencies in the country. Radio and television services covered more than 90 percent of Vietnam's territory.

"The media in Vietnam has applied technical advancements, particularly information technology, thus gradually advancing to modernisation."

He said the government greatly valued the development of the media, which had contributed to improving people's knowledge and meeting the increasingly diverse demands of society.

The colourful opening ceremony included music and dancing by artistes from VOV and local performing groups.

In a welcoming speech, VOV's President, Vu Van Hien, said radio and television played a vital role in precisely reflecting world events and in helping resolve issues.

"This is a forum to discuss and make strategic decisions on how to improve the quality of broadcasting,"

he said. "It is an opportunity for delegates from different continents to exchange information and deepen mutual understanding."

The ABU President, Zainal Abidin Iberahim, praised VOV and VTV for doing an excellent job in organising the General Assembly.

"I think students in your universities must know the ABU very well by now because in the Robocon contest organised by the ABU, Vietnamese students have won twice. This is indeed an ABU record."

At the end of the opening ceremony, the Deputy Prime Minister and the ABU President cut a ribbon to launch a small exhibition of broadcasting-related services being held in conjunction with the General Assembly for the first time. □



Pham Gia Khiem (third from left) and Zainal Abidin Iberahim cutting a ribbon to launch the first-ever General Assembly exhibition

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doing enough to remind viewers of the necessity for public broadcasting."

Dr Tak said convergence presented big challenges for broadcasters but also the opportunity to make dynamic programmes. It was vital to work for the convenience of viewers.

At the same time, broadcasters must do all they could to reduce the digital divide – the information gap between people and between nations.

The presentation prompted a lively question and answer session. The former ABU Secretary-General, Hugh Leonard, said he was something of a cynic when it came to the predicted changes that convergence would bring. He was still watching TV in the same way he had years ago. He asked when the changes would happen.



Dr Tak Jae-Taek

Dr Tak said innovation happened all the time. Mr Leonard said changes were already happening. People would continue to listen to radio and watch TV but a new programme-on-demand market would sit on top of the old system.

An RTHK participant said he too was sceptical. What traditional broadcasters were best at was producing good content. In human nature there was



Gerd Leonhard explaining to delegates how content storage devices like the iPod are becoming increasingly popular

always a desire for sharing and a sense of togetherness, and broadcasters met this need.

Mr Leonhard said the Internet too had been born out of people wanting to get together. A digital network was also a community place. The more distribution channels there were, the more important the trust between a broadcaster and its audience.

Asia-Pacific Broadcasting magazine asked about the regulatory framework that would be needed. If telcos were becoming broadcasters, should they operate under the same regulations as traditional broadcasters?

Mr Leonhard said an important issue was that of licences for content. As things stood, broadcasters may have a licence to play content but not to pass it on to others digitally. It was important that these licensing issues were pushed forward.

PBI-India asked whether piracy was likely to increase or whether the new technologies would make it more difficult. Mr Leonhard said that while piracy would always exist, it was important that licensing met the requirements of the new media environment. There had to be public access to content that would allow other layers of commerce to take place.

PTV-Pakistan said that traditionally, broadcasters were content producers,

but that a distinction between broadcasting and content production was now emerging. It asked how developed countries such as the United States and Australia dealt with the regulatory aspects of convergence.

Mr Leonhard said licensing was always about five years behind new technology. A new licensing environment would be needed.

An EBU participant said his consumption of some media was changing a lot. He cited the BBC website, where you could download any programme of your choice from the past seven days. His son obtained his music from the Internet, not radio. Radio and TV risked losing young people unless they changed.



Russell Balding, the Special Topic Session Chairman

CRA-Australia said if broadcasters were delivering what people wanted, new technologies would enable them to do it even better. Mr Leonhard said delivering quality content would still be a top aim of broadcasters. Once a consumer used new technology and it worked, he never went back. So broadcasters needed to create alliances with the providers of these technologies as soon as possible.

CASBAA said these new devices must be able to transmit a range of signals appropriately. Its member organisations were now trying to partner with the device manufacturers themselves.

Voicing concerns

The Motion Picture Association said the intellectual property of content needed to be protected. It asked how a broadcaster could choose which path to take in the new media environment. Mr Leonhard said broadcasters could take the mayhem and chaos out of content and put structure to it. What was important now was to enable your audience, not restrict them. If you gave them value, you would become valuable yourself.

RTR-Russia said technology existed now to block out ads. It asked how broadcasters should deal with this challenge to its revenue. Mr Leonhard said advertising was changing. People could opt to receive only ads that interested them – so called “smart ads”. He cited the ads carried by Google. This kind of advertising, he predicted, would earn far more money than other ads. You could tune the advertising to meet the needs of the recipient.

The session chairman, Russell Balding of ABC-Australia, described the discussion as timely and relevant. The changes the speakers had detailed were already happening. He said broadcasters needed to ensure that their content remained accessible to their audience at all times, regardless of the technological changes. □



Delegates applauding the presentation by Gerd Leonhard, who was speaking for the first time in Asia



Delegates exchanging views over the Special Topic session during the morning coffee break



A delegate catching up on the previous day's proceedings by reading the Daily Bulletin

General Assembly – SG's Report

SG: Big jump in membership

The past year has seen a big growth in ABU membership, the Secretary-General, David Astley, told the General Assembly.

In his annual report to members, he said 21 new members had joined the union. They comprised one Full member, three Additional Full members, four Associate members and 13 Affiliate members.

These increases were offset by the resignation of one Affiliate and the deletion from the membership of an Iraqi broadcaster which no longer existed.

Mr Astley listed a range of new initiatives on which good progress had been made over the past year. They included:

- The first ABU Study Tour, hosted by KBS-Korea in Seoul in April, to give senior executives a look at how new

mobile broadcasting and broadband technologies were being used;

- A feasibility study into a store-and-forward/bandwidth-on-demand (BoD) content distribution system;
- A four-day Digital TV Symposium, held in Kuala Lumpur in October;
- The inaugural Asia-Pacific Technical Regulators-Broadcasters' Forum, held in Kuala Lumpur in June;
- A three-day radio programming conference, RadioAsia, held in Singapore in June; and
- The launch of a trial for a daily radio news exchange with audio material.

Mr Astley said the ABU had stepped up its partnerships with international organisations on capacity building projects. It has raised nearly US\$500,000



David Astley

in additional funding this year from various multi-lateral organisations, donor agencies, foundations and other international organisations.

These projects had enabled ABU members to develop content on sustainable development issues and expand the range of programme exchanges undertaken by the ABU.

Mr Astley said the ABU's daily news exchange, Asiavision, had increased its membership by three during the year and had launched a second daily satellite news feed for the first time in its history.

It had also introduced a new fee structure under which subscriptions for smaller broadcasters had been reduced. The aim was to attract even more members to the news exchange.

The Secretary-General thanked KBS-Korea for sending two senior staff to the ABU Secretariat on year-long secondments, which would finish at the end of November. He said EBS-Korea would send someone on attachment next year, and KBS was considering sending another one or two secondees. □

New ABU President elected

The ABU's new President is Genichi Hashimoto, the President of NHK-Japan.

He was elected to succeed Zainal Abidin Ibrahima of RTM-Malaysia, who has been acting ABU President since Katsuji Ebisawa resigned from the post early in 2004.

Mr Hashimoto will serve a three-year term, starting on 1 January. An engineer by training, he joined NHK in 1968 and was General Managing Director/Executive Director-General for Engineering before becoming president.

Chu Pui Hing, RTHK-Hong Kong's Director of Broadcasting, was elected a Vice-President, also for three years. He succeeds KS Sarma of PBI/DDI-India, who did not seek re-election. The other Vice-Presidents are Mr Zainal and Mohammad Honardoost of IRIB-Iran. □



Genichi Hashimoto

Senior broadcast engineers recognised



ABU President Zainal Abidin Ibrahim (centre) with Engineering Award winners (from left) Valod Stepanian and Dr Takehiko Yoshino

Two senior broadcast engineers were conferred ABU Engineering Excellence Awards at the General Assembly to recognise their contributions to the broadcasting sector in the Asia-Pacific region.

The ABU Broadcast Engineering Award 2005 was presented to IRIB-Iran's Valod Stepanian. Mr Stepanian, who recently retired from IRIB, is now a special advisor to the Iranian public broadcaster.

He had served as a past chairman of the ABU Technical Committee for two consecutive terms.

Apart from his contributions to IRIB's technical operations, Mr Stepanian had also introduced numerous new technologies to IRIB, which have resulted in major improvements in technical quality in production and transmission.

The ABU Engineering Industry Excellence Award 2005 went to Dr Takehiko Yoshino. Dr Yoshino, who is President of NHK Integrated Technology Inc, was formerly the

Executive Director-General for Engineer at the Japanese public broadcaster.

The Award recognises the most outstanding engineering contribution made by an individual to the broadcasting industry in the Asia-Pacific region.

Dr Yoshino developed the Pulse Code Modulation (PCM) audio transmission system for satellite broadcasting as well as a transmission system for multichannel PCM high-quality audio broadcasting.

"Mr Stepanian and Dr Yoshino have made significant contributions to ABU Technical activities, so we were delighted that the judges recognised their outstanding contributions to the broadcasting industry as a whole," said ABU Secretary-General, David Astley.

Meanwhile, Hidefumi Yasuda, Syunji Miyazawa and Yasubumi Honma of TBS-Japan was conferred the Technical Review magazine's "Best Article Award".

The two "Commended Articles Prizes" were awarded to R Vidyar Sagar and Sanjeev Chawla of AIR-India, and Toshihiro Muta of NHK-Japan. □

Katsuji Ebisawa honoured



A former President of the ABU, Katsuji Ebisawa, has been elected an Honorary Councillor of the union.

The honour is a tribute to his close involvement with the ABU over the years, particularly his five years as President from 1999 to 2004.

Mr Ebisawa was also President of NHK-Japan from 1997 until January this year. As ABU President, he led the union through a period of dramatic change for broadcasters.

Among the key issues he focused on were high-definition television, the huge cost of digitalisation, the convergence of broadcasting and communications technology, and the soaring costs of sports rights.

Mr Ebisawa also spoke out regularly on the responsibility of broadcasters to deliver high-quality programmes, improve people's lives and fulfil their role as a bridge among civilisations. □

ABU Prizes 2005

Shows on global issues awarded ABU Prizes



ABU Prizes winners being applauded by General Assembly delegates

Productions focusing on global issues and current affairs such as the Indian Ocean tsunami, HIV/AIDS and euthanasia were recognised at the ABU Prizes awards ceremony in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Held in conjunction with the 42nd ABU General Assembly welcome dinner, the event saw two ABU members from the tsunami-affected countries walk away with awards for their coverage of the natural disaster.

TVRI-Indonesia won the Special Jury Prize for TV for "Banda Aceh on the Day", a programme depicting the death and devastation caused by the massive earthquake and resulting tsunami in Banda Aceh, the worst-hit region.

The Special Jury Prize for Radio went to MBC-Sri Lanka for its programme, "A Nation Across the Sea". The drama is about a middle-class Tamil family which was first affected by war, and later torn apart by the tsunami.

The Radio Jury also gave a Special Commendation prize to "Hong Kong Superman" by RTHK-Hong Kong, which raised the issue of euthanasia through a dramatisation of the real life story of a young man paralysed by spinal cord injury.

NHK-Japan won the Best Radio Drama category for "The Sorrow of the War", a drama based on a Vietnamese novel by Bao Ninh. It is a love story that illustrates the devastation and pain caused by war and the long-term impact on the people.

The Japanese public broadcaster also bagged the Best Children & Youth Programme Award for its television show, "Quintet".

Another double winner was KBS-Korea, which won in the Children & Youth category for Radio with the programme, "We Are Friends! We Are Hope!", as well as the Best Entertainment TV Show award for "Vitamin".

Ginger da Silva, the Chairperson of the ABU Prizes 2005 for radio programming, said: "The Jury extends its compliments to all the finalists. Each entry had qualities worthy of recognition."

The ABU Prizes aims to promote the production of radio and TV programmes

of a high standard to strengthen international understanding among ABU member countries and regions, as well as promote excellence in broadcasting.

This year, the number of radio entries increased by nearly 20 percent and the number of television entries almost doubled from 74 in 2003 to 125. In total, there were 201 entries this year against 113 in 2003 and 163 in 2004.

The awards presentation ceremony, which was organised and produced by Vietnam Television, showcased the prestige of the annual ABU Prizes awards and the culture and beauty of Vietnam. The colourful event was also telecast live on the broadcaster's VTV1 channel. □



Delegates watching a Vietnamese cultural performance

ABU PRIZES 2005 WINNERS

RADIO

Category	Programme Title	Organisation
Drama	"The Sorrow of War"	NHK-Japan
Special Commendation for Drama	"Hong Kong Superman"	RTHK-Hong Kong
Infotainment	"Mubarak"	IRIB-Iran
Children & Youth	"We Are Friends! We Are Hope!"	KBS-Korea
News & Documentary	"My Father's Legacy"	MBC-Korea
Special Commendation for News & Documentary	"Pitcairn: A Broken Dream"	RNZ-New Zealand
External Broadcasts	"Adrift in Sri Lanka"	RN-Netherlands
Special Jury Prize	"A Nation Across the Sea"	MBC Networks-Sri Lanka
Special Commendation for Special Jury Prize	"Water Life – A Tale of Flood Affected People"	Bangladesh Betar

TELEVISION

Category	Programme Title	Organisation
Drama	"Out of Sorrow... Courage"	Mainichi Broadcasting System (NAB-Japan)
Entertainment	"Vitamin"	KBS-Korea
Children & Youth	"Quintet"	NHK-Japan
Special Commendation for Children & Youth	"High School Hip Hop Kid... Dirty, Dusty And Hooked on Sumo"	Hokkaido Broadcasting Company (NAB-Japan)
News & Documentary	"20 Days Without TV"	EBS-Korea
Sports Programmes	"2004 UCI Track Cycling World Championships"	SBS-Australia
Special Jury Prize	"Banda Aceh on the Day"	TVRI-Indonesia

General Assembly – ABU FES Seminar

Finding new sources of content

Public service broadcasters in the Asia-Pacific region have been urged to work with outside content providers to help meet fierce competition from broadcasters in Europe and North America.

The head of Radio Australia, Jean-Gabriel Manguy, made the call at a day-long seminar in Hanoi organised jointly by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) and the ABU.

The seminar on public service broadcasting featured eight speakers and produced lively discussion on a range of issues.

Mr Manguy called for a serious rethink both on the meaning of public service and on what broadcasting was all about.

He said public broadcasters in the region should work together to produce programmes and should also find new partners within their countries with whom to produce content, including community groups.



Dagmar Skopalik



Jean-Gabriel Manguy

He suggested a model that focused not just on funding and budgets – vital though these were – but on “securing production, skills and distribution resources through collaborative and mutually beneficial arrangements”.

The more public broadcasters involved the public in what they did, the more difficult it would be for politicians to undermine their work, he said.

Funding issues

The seminar comprised four sessions. The first, chaired by Mingbo Dukpa of BBS-Bhutan, looked at models of public service broadcasting – funding and structural issues.

Andrew Taussig of the International Institute of Communications said the characteristics of public service broadcasting varied from country to country but many believed there were core values in common.

These broadcasters needed secure funding but it was not easy to find a government that would provide funding

without trying to exercise control, he said.

Dagmar Skopalik of ZDF-Germany described the German model of public service broadcasting. It was made for the public, funded by the public and controlled by the public, she said.

Ms Skopalik added that public service broadcasting was indispensable in a democratic society. It was not a minority service and should serve the whole society.

The second session looked at regulatory models for public service broadcasting. The moderator was Greg Kintz of RTTL-Timor Leste.

Fernand Alberto of the ABU said regulatory models for public service broadcasters ranged from self-regulation to state regulation.

Mr Alberto said that regulation was country-specific and there was no single model. Laws and regulations were always trying to catch up with new technologies.

General Assembly – ABU FES Seminar

Andrew Taussig

Public service broadcasters should remain free to perform their functions effectively. They should be empowered to challenge any state action that threatened freedom of expression.

Tai Keen-Man of RTHK spoke on the regulation of public service broadcasting in Hong Kong. He said there could never be editorial autonomy without responsibility or freedom without restraint.

Mr Tai said public service broadcasters should strive for better standards within the industry, and provide a platform for the free and unfettered expression of views, in order to win the trust of the public.

David Wood of the BBC World Service Trust chaired the third session, which focused on programme and advertising standards.

Keith Dalton of Australia's Special Broadcasting Service, SBS, described how the organisation functioned. He described it as the world's only multicultural and multilingual public broadcaster, with television and radio broadcasts in more than 60 languages.

Under its charter, SBS was required to be both a specialist and a generalist

broadcaster. Its programming was a fine balance between meeting special needs and, ultimately, providing something for everyone.

Hans Peter Vogt, ARD-Germany's Liaison Officer to RTA-Afghanistan, detailed the difficulties facing RTA, the country's public service broadcaster. He said salaries were low and had not increased since the days of the former Taliban regime.

Afghanistan's proposed new media law had been drafted, as had a proposed Public Service Broadcasting Act, but neither had yet been enacted into law.


Tai Keen-Man

The result was that RTA had no legal basis for its operations, except the old regulations of the former regime.

Mr Vogt said RTA and its new Director-General were deeply worried about the legal vacuum of the public service. But regular programming had to go on, to help people understand the mechanics of democracy, civil society and the rule of law.

Without help from outside the country, RTA's contributions to nation building would simply vanish.

Future direction

The fourth session, on the future direction of public service broadcasting, was chaired by Mike Zafiroopoulos of SBS-Australia.

Apart from Mr Manguy, the session featured Heinz-Günter Pianka of Deutsche Welle-Germany, who said public broadcasting needed to fulfil a number of requirements.

It should guarantee information and the free access to it, reflect the plurality of society and allow access to all groups, promote the creation of a common identity, participate in the development of culture and education, and create audio-visual innovation. □


From left: Hans Peter Vogt, David Wood and Keith Dalton

General Assembly – Programme Committee

Programme Department projects reviewed

The Programme Committee met in Hanoi to review the progress of its projects for 2005. Reports presented at the meeting gave an account of the various programmes conducted throughout the year.

They include the ABU Voyage to the Future, ABU Robocon Beijing 2005 and preparations for the Kuala Lumpur 2006 and Hanoi 2007 events, and the ABU Children's Drama Co-production.

Yin Yongbin, the Chief Director of the Youth and Children's Programming Centre, shared his experiences in planning and designing Robocon 2005.

The biggest challenge, he said, was how to present the characteristics of the robots and the contest via modern TV technology.

By using TV as a powerful mass media, he hoped the status of the Robocon competition would be elevated from a TV programme to an international

science campaign – disseminating scientific knowledge while discovering and fostering new talents.

The ABU Voyage to the Future project was conducted from 23 July to 1 August. Twenty-three children aged between 12 and 16 years from Bhutan, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand and Uzbekistan embarked on a journey to the rainforests in Sabah, Malaysia, for 10 days.

Project outcome

The report stated that the outcome of the project saw the importance of nature etched onto the participants' hearts and minds. The excursion, which was filmed by RTM-Malaysia and NHK-Japan, was edited and compiled into a 90-minute programme and made available to the participating organisations for broadcast.

Koji Kanazawa, the Executive Producer of the 2nd ABU Children's Drama Co-production, gave an update on this year's project. The co-production

kicked off in April and involved nine broadcasting organisations from as many countries and regions.

Each member, he said, will produce a 15-minute episode by the end of the year.

According to Mr Kanazawa, the first series by six participating members last year was very well received, interesting and full of cultural diversity. The series is now available for other ABU members rights-free, and to non-ABU members who will be charged a small licensing fee.

Meanwhile, the Department's projects in relation to last year's 26 December Indian Ocean tsunami also came under the spotlight.

Since the disaster, the Department had initiated projects to aid and support ABU members in the tsunami-hit countries. These include:

- Programme exchange on the tsunami disaster, whereby documentaries on tsunamis were offered on a rights-free basis;
- ABU Asian tsunami archive, whereby the archived footage will be produced into a 30-minute documentary; and
- The documentary co-production "Tsunami Aftermath: The Road to Recovery", whereby broadcasters from four tsunami-hit countries produced documentaries on the aftermath of the tragedy.

Haruo Sakitsu, the ABU Programme Department Director, called on all members to broadcast the documentaries on or by the first anniversary of the Indian Ocean tsunami. □



The Programme Committee meeting in progress