



Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union

Avian flu – broadcasters measure the risks

The world's major broadcasters are stepping up measures to reduce the risks for their news crews who cover outbreaks of avian influenza.

The increased concern comes as the virus, known officially as H5N1, spreads to a growing number of countries in Asia and elsewhere.

Bird flu has killed people in several countries and there are fears of a pandemic if it mutates and starts spreading from human to human. There is no effective vaccine.

Among the broadcasters taking steps against the virus is CNN, which has issued its staff worldwide with guidance on how to help protect themselves while covering an outbreak.

Among other things, it urges them to assemble a home/travel health kit containing basic first aid and medical supplies, including a thermometer and alcohol-based hand gel for hygiene. It encourages frequent and careful hand-washing.

CNN's advises journalists to avoid all direct contact with poultry, including touching any sick or dead chickens, ducks or other birds, even if they look normal.



CNN Cameraman Sanjiv Talreja helps correspondent Ram Ramgopal put on his protective gear at a poultry farm in Maharashtra, India

(Photos: CNN)

The BBC has been taking the threat of bird flu seriously since last September and has created a central planning team that now meets weekly.

The planning takes in news coverage issues as well as the potential problem of maintaining operations if large numbers of BBC staff go sick. At the heart of it is ensuring that news teams covering bird flu avoid contamination.

"We don't want the BBC to be responsible for bringing bird flu to Britain," the head of newsgathering,

Fran Unsworth, told an International News Safety Institute (INSI) conference in London in January.

She said BBC precautions included alcohol rubs and other protective measures as well as keeping a safe distance from infected birds and their nesting places, and the homes of infected people.

Employers should ensure their journalists went out fully informed and prepared with risk assessments and well protected with proper equipment, Ms Unsworth said.

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She said broadcasters in Britain had begun discussions with the government and with one another on how to cope with a global pandemic.

The news agency Reuters has also issued guidelines. Its journalists reporting from the site of an outbreak must wear protective clothing, including plastic overalls, surgical gloves and face masks.

The ABU is also taking steps to offer broadcasters advice on how to protect their staff against the virus, as well as how best to convey information about it to their audiences.

It has added information on bird flu to its website, along with links to other sites related to the campaign against the virus.

Several ABU members have begun working on proposals for documentaries on bird flu. The co-productions will provide an overall picture of the spread of bird flu in the region, and look at the steps different countries are taking to fight it.



CNN correspondent Jaime Florcruz reporting on bird flu in Hubei, China

The ABU is also looking at holding training courses for journalists. The aim is to focus not only on covering bird flu accurately and responsibly, but on ensuring the safety of journalists sent to areas where the virus exists.

In addition, the ABU will work with the UN and other international agencies in compiling and distributing content for public awareness and education through television and radio broadcasting.

The INSI conference in London was told that the world – including news organisations – had an unprecedented opportunity to prepare for a global flu pandemic, and history would not judge them kindly if they failed to do anything when they had the chance.

The warning came from Richard Dawood of the Fleet Street Clinic, which provides health services for international journalists and other travellers. He said there was no sign of the bird flu epidemic being brought under control.

Several news organisations had adopted coverage guidelines for news crews, he noted. But it appeared that the precautions had not been followed carefully enough.

Some journalists had gone far too close to the type of environment that had resulted in deaths, including reporting from inside the homes of people who had died.

“Keep your distance, use a long lens, don’t go into the living room of a kid who has died,” Dr Dawood said. “Treat the story with respect.”

INSI has issued its own bird flu precautions for news staff: see <http://www.newssafety.com>



Covering bird flu in Thailand (Photo: CNN/Caleb Hellerman)

Relief appeal for quake victims

The ABU has appealed to members to lend a helping hand to the victims of last October's South Asia earthquake.

In coordination with member broadcaster PTV-Pakistan, the ABU is appealing to members to lend support to their on-going initiative 'Aid Asia - A Relief Appeal for Earthquake Victims' to help the survivors of the earthquake.

Following the earthquake and the harsh winter weather that followed, there remains a dire need for assistance to fulfil the basic needs of displaced victims and help them survive and rebuild their lives.

The Secretary-General, David Astley, has encouraged members and other broadcasters to air a special broadcast programme or possibly organise a fundraising telethon with the aim

of raising maximum funds for the earthquake victims.

To help member broadcasters do this, PTV has offered to provide a short documentary on the earthquake as well as any additional video materials required on the subject to ABU members to support their efforts. This may include a special message from the President of Pakistan and video appeals from international personalities from Pakistan if desired.

Please contact the ABU Secretariat via sakitsu.h@abu.org.my or vanessa@abu.org.my for the initial co-ordination in obtaining these video materials.

The ABU also encourages members to contribute, on a limited period rights-free basis, video footage or other relevant materials on the earthquake that might assist other broadcasters in their efforts toward this cause.

Members who have already conducted fundraising activities at their stations have been asked to provide details so that the Secretariat can collate the overall activity among members. □

MediaCorp Radio helps young quake survivors

Singapore's MediaCorp Radio has helped raise S\$100,000 (US\$61,000) to assist young survivors of the South Asia earthquake.

The broadcaster joined forces with aid agency Mercy Relief in January for a three-day charity drive for children affected by the earthquake.

The drive, called *PlayPacks for Pakistan*, encouraged Singaporeans to pledge a playpack priced at \$10 (US\$6) each. Each playpack comprises a reusable backpack with school essentials and recreational items to give the children a new start in school and a chance to play.

Of the money raised, S\$20,000 (about US\$12,000) was donated by MediaCorp Radio itself.

The fund-raising drive was held as part of celebrations marking the 70th anniversary of radio in Singapore.

Broadcasting began in 1936 with the launch of Radio Singapura. □

Singapore's MediaCorp starts IPTV trial

Singapore's MediaCorp TV is inviting 2,000 users to be part of the Internet Protocol TV (IPTV) trial group for its new video-on-demand service, MediaCorp Online Broadband TV.

This new Internet-delivered service allows subscribers an easy and immediate access to MediaCorp programmes on their PCs and laptops.

Scheduled to be launched in the middle of the year, this new service enables immediate digital streaming of MediaCorp TV Channel 5, Channel 8 and Channel U shows.

Chang Long Jong, Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer, MediaCorp TV, said: "Users will be able to watch their favourite shows again at any time of the day or night and in a format that is most convenient for them.

"We are also exploring the idea to let users catch shows even before they premiere on terrestrial TV," he added.

MediaCorp said that feedback from trial users will be factored in when determining the pricing packages for the new service. □

Covering the tsunami, one year on

The first anniversary of the Asian tsunami was a time for broadcasters to reflect on the tragedy and offer a progress report on how people across the region are rebuilding their lives.

The occasion was a poignant one for Asiavision members, whose countries were among those hardest hit in the disaster.

The anniversary on 26 December saw blanket coverage for the news exchange, with members contributing no fewer than 14 tsunami-related news stories on the day.

These included coverage of memorial events in Sri Lanka, India and Thailand, rebuilding and rehabilitation efforts across the region and progress reports on the introduction of early warning systems.

To provide maximum coverage for members, Asiavision mounted three news flashes during the day in addition to the footage in the two daily feeds.

The AVN members who contributed to the day's coverage were TVB-Hong Kong, DDI-India, RTM-Malaysia, SLRC-Sri Lanka, MCOT-Thailand and TRT-Turkey.

During the 10-day period from 19 to 28 December, Asiavision carried a total of 34 tsunami-related news stories, with CCTV-China and Channel NewsAsia-Singapore also among the contributors.

The exact number of people killed by the tsunami will probably never be known. A year after the disaster, BBC News reported that more than 175,000 people were known to have died and about 125,000 others were still missing.

In the worst-hit area, Indonesia's Aceh province, 60,000 survivors were still living in tents on the first anniversary. □



Pakistan's PM calls for restructuring of PTV, PBC

Pakistan's Prime Minister, Shaukat Aziz, has called for the complete restructuring and modernisation of state-run Pakistan Television (PTV) and Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC).

In a meeting with officials of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in February, he said the state-run broadcasters needed to improve professionally and technically to meet the challenges of globalisation and the competition from private broadcasters.

Local press reports said Mr Aziz asked the ministry to take steps to reinvigorate PTV and PBC, and transform them into vibrant organisations.

The emphasis should be on upgrading the technology, bringing in new, well qualified staff and redesigning the programme content, he said.

At the same time, the Prime Minister said the ministry had so far "done a credible job despite its limited resources and the difficult circumstances facing it".

The media today played a powerful role in setting trends, creating images, forming perceptions and changing attitudes, Mr Aziz said.

The Prime Minister also asked the ministry to expedite the setting up of Media City in Islamabad and said his government was ready to provide the necessary resources for it.

The government first announced plans for Media City in 2004, saying it would have facilities for production and uplinking by satellite. □

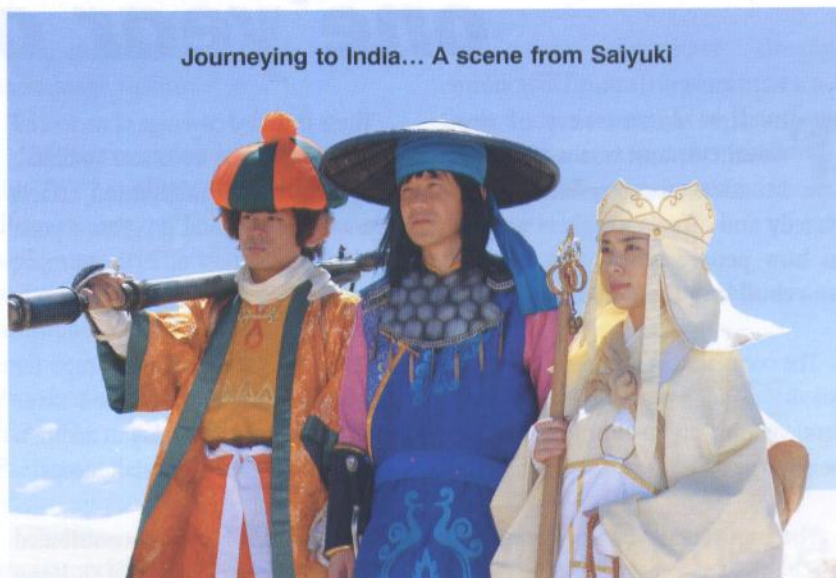
Monkey magic casts spell in Asia

Saiyuki (Monkey), a highly-successful Japanese television drama based on a Chinese folk story, is causing a stir across Asia, BBC News has reported.

The new version of the 1978 drama broke ratings records last month with one in three Japanese viewers tuning in.

Companies in South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Malaysia and Philippines have secured rights and makers Fuji TV have had inquiries from Thailand, China and Indonesia.

It is based on a 16th Century Chinese myth following hero Monkey's journey to India to obtain Buddhist scriptures. The fantasy drama, first broadcast by Japan's Nippon TV Network, was a mix of lavish special effects, witty performances and martial arts.



Journeying to India... A scene from Saiyuki

The remake has remained faithful to many of the original elements – the fighting stick that shrinks to fit inside the human ear and the magical cloud that Monkey uses to travel great distances.

Fuji Television's most significant decision was to cast Shingo Katori as the show's hero. Mr Katori is one of five members of SMAP – one of Japan's most popular boy bands. □

VOV-Vietnam launches German programme

Radio the Voice of Viet Nam (VOV) has introduced a programme in the German language. The half-hour programme, launched on 1 March, includes information on politics, the economy, culture, sports and entertainment, and aims to help its audiences understand Viet Nam better.

Listeners in Europe can hear the programme on channel VOV6 on 7280 Khz and 9730 Khz at 15:30, 18:00 and 21:30hrs GMT. Listeners in Vietnam can hear it on channel VOV5 on 05.5 Mhz in Hanoi and on 105.7 Mhz in Ho Chi Minh City and Quang Ninh province from 7:00am.

VOV now broadcasts in 11 foreign languages. □

Safety of journalists a topic for Geneva meeting

The safety of journalists reporting from hazardous areas will be among the issues discussed at a meeting of broadcasters in Geneva in May.

The World Broadcasting Unions' International Satellite Operations Group (WBU-ISOG) will meet on 17-18 May at the headquarters of the European Broadcasting Union.

The group brings together broadcasters, satellite operators and other service providers to discuss issues of common interest. All ABU members are welcome to take part.

Broadcasters from the ABU and its sister broadcasting unions will share their ideas for ensuring the safety of

journalists in the field – not only in war zones but in areas hit by avian flu and other deadly diseases.

The meeting will also discuss the importance of archiving historical television footage. Broadcasters recognise that the old footage in their vaults is becoming an increasingly valuable asset.

Other topics include the latest developments in IP-based content delivery systems and continuing efforts to reduce satellite interference, a problem affecting many broadcasters.

If you are interested in attending the meeting or would like more information, please contact Alan Williams, Managing Editor, Asiavision, at alan.w@asiavision.org □

Broadcasters seek regulators' support for additional spectrum

Shortwave broadcasters have made a strong case for more channel frequencies and asked national spectrum regulators all over the world to support their cause.

The broadcasters made the appeal at the 4th Global Shortwave Coordination Conference in Hainan, China, in February. They urged national spectrum regulators to support them at the ITU's World Radiocommunication Conference 2007 (WRC-07).

Overcoming congestion

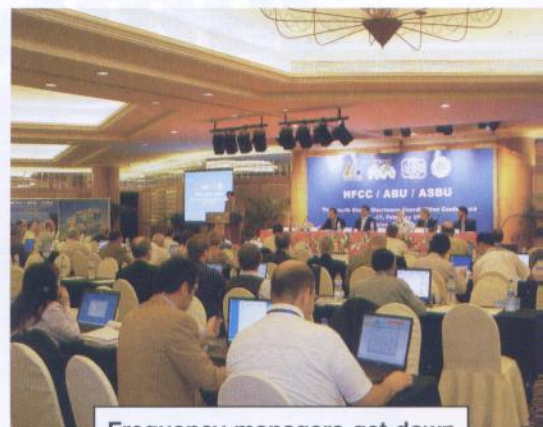
The ABU's Head of Transmission Technology and Spectrum, Sharad Sadhu, said the shortwave broadcasters had clearly demonstrated the need for additional spectrum to meet the requirements of their ongoing services and overcome current congestion in the allocated spectrum in the 4 - 10 MHz band.

Availability of additional frequency channels is one of the biggest problems faced by shortwave broadcasters as the available quota of channels is being densely used.

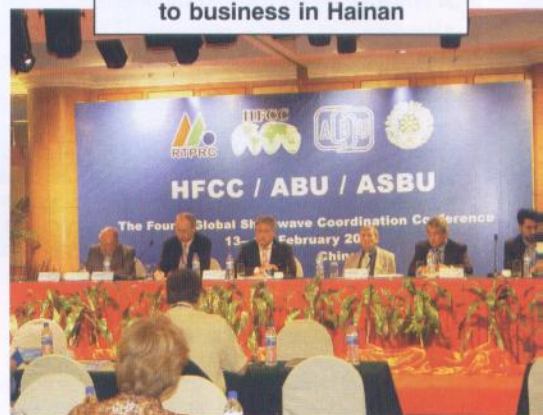
WRC-07 will look at this requirement with a view to making more channels available for shortwave broadcasting.

More than 130 frequency managers of 60 shortwave broadcasters attended the meeting in Hainan. They included more than 50 from the ABU-HFC coordination group which is operated by the ABU.

The delegates addressed frequency channels for 7,350 daily transmissions and improved 19 percent of the interfered shortwave radio service. This means that during the shortwave season starting at the end of March, reception quality on these frequency channels is expected to be significantly improved. □



Frequency managers get down to business in Hainan



Hong Kong lawmakers back broadcast freedom



Hong Kong... call for editorial independence

Hong Kong lawmakers have thrown themselves firmly behind the freedom and independence of public broadcasting, and rejected suggestions that it had a duty to promote government policies.

The *South China Morning Post* reported that the lawmakers passed a motion in February urging the government to ensure that public broadcasting in Hong Kong respected editorial independence and freedom of the press.

They also voted down an amendment by Li Kwok Ying of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, which said that the public broadcaster had "the responsibility to comprehensively introduce and promote to the public various government policies".

The motion also called on the administration to open up more public channels as soon as possible. □

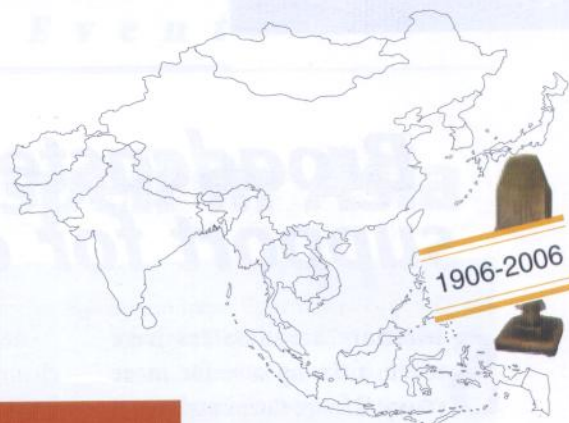
RadioAsia

2006

Celebrating 100 years of Radio

100 Years of Radio Broadcasting: The Journey Ahead

20 - 23 June 2006, Singapore Expo Foyer 1, Level 2,
1 Expo Drive, Singapore 486150



An Annual Conference

Following the successful inaugural RadioAsia 2005, the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC), the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) and Singapore Exhibition Services (SES) are pleased to announce the organisation of the RadioAsia 2006 Conference, which will commemorate the 100th anniversary of radio broadcasting. The conference will be held in conjunction with Broadcast Asia 2006.

The conference will consist of a half-day of workshops conducted by two of the most reputed radio training institutions in the world namely the Deutsche Welle - Akademie/Radio Training Centre from Germany and the Radio Netherlands Training Centre. It will be followed by a three-day conference where leading radio experts will be delivering papers and presentations.

A History of Radio Broadcasting

Although the invention of radio is a much-disputed issue around the world, it is recognised today that Canadian inventor Reginald Fessenden was the first to broadcast voice and music over radio. Marconi had succeeded only in sending one-way Morse code signals across the Atlantic, while Fessenden achieved 2-way voice transmission by radio between Scotland and the US in 1906.

Fessenden's greatest achievement however, came in 1906 on Christmas Eve when at 9 pm wireless operators on several ships in the Atlantic picked up an unusual program transmitted over their NESCO radio sets - a recording of Handel's "Largo" on an Ediphone, Fessenden's own rendition of "Oh Holy Night" on the violin and his readings from the Bible. Fessenden wished all his listeners a Merry Christmas at the end of the program. This is today recognised as the **World's First Radio Broadcast!**

Objectives

The conference aims to provide a platform for a comprehensive discussion on cutting edge technological, political and economic developments in the radio sector. The conference will present in-depth perspectives from industry leaders as well as public service and community broadcasters in order to gauge the future evolution of the medium in a context marked by the explosion of digital technologies and convergence.

Call for Papers

Papers are invited on the following topics:

- ◆ 100 Years of Radio – Triumphs and Tribulations
- ◆ Future Scenarios of Radio – Cutting Edge Formats
- ◆ Radio at the Crossroads: Looking Around the World
- ◆ Cross Media Strategies – Radio's Place
- ◆ Public Service Radio
- ◆ Audience Research
- ◆ Community Radio – Radio Activism and Grassroots Radio
- ◆ Radio on the Worldwide Web
- ◆ Radio and Culture: Preservation of the Local in the Global Arena
- ◆ Commercial Radio: Paving the Future Today
- ◆ Radio Advertising
- ◆ Radio and New Media Technology
- ◆ Radio and Development

Authors will submit a complete paper of about 20-25 pages (double-spaced), a one page abstract as well as a cover letter which includes their name, email address, contact information and the conference topic the paper addresses. Alternatively authors can submit extended abstracts of not more than 1,000 words. Papers on alternative topics may be considered, but should be discussed with one of the conference organisers' contact persons.

Papers are to be emailed to: radioasia2006@amic.org.sg by **15 March 2006**. A committee will screen the papers and approve them for presentation. Authors of approved papers will be notified by email. Speakers will receive free conference registration, but they will be responsible for their own airfare and hotel accommodation.

As the conference programme is finalised, updates will be posted to the RadioAsia website at www.radioasia.org

Organised by:



Asian Media Information and
Communication Centre (AMIC)



Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU)



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The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) is the oldest of the German political foundations, active in international dialogue and development cooperation and committed to the principles and basic values of social democracy. The FES was established in 1925 in honour and as a political legacy of Friedrich Ebert, who served as the first president of a democratic Germany after World War I. Presently, the FES maintains its own representations in some 60 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America, and a further 33 offices in countries of Europe, the former Soviet Union, USA and Japan. For more information, please visit www.fesspore.org.



The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was founded on 16 November 1945. For this specialized United Nations agency, it is not enough to build classrooms in devastated countries or to publish scientific breakthroughs. Education, Social and Natural Science, Culture and Communication are the means to a far more ambitious goal: to build peace in the minds of men. For more information, please visit www.unesco.org.

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New benchmark for Torino Games

The Torino Winter Olympics 2006 achieved a new benchmark in coverage and transmission, the Secretary-General of the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union, David Astley, has said.

"When the figures are finally tallied in a few weeks we will have easily achieved a record in the number of countries which took the event, and the various free to air and pay-TV platforms that provided coverage," Mr Astley said.

"Our pictures were received from American Samoa in the Pacific through to Indonesia in Southeast Asia, and Mongolia in Central Asia, where ABU members provided extensive coverage of the events in Torino," he added.

Going into the Games more than 20 countries and 23 broadcasters had agreed to show a minimum of the opening and closing ceremonies and a daily highlights programme of two hours 'free to air'.



Broadcast personnel wait for security clearance outside the International Broadcast Centre (IBC)

Mr. Astley said this was especially pleasing as most countries in the region did not have a Winter Olympic sports programme.

"But this did not prevent us from developing a programme and distribution platform which appealed to so many of our members.

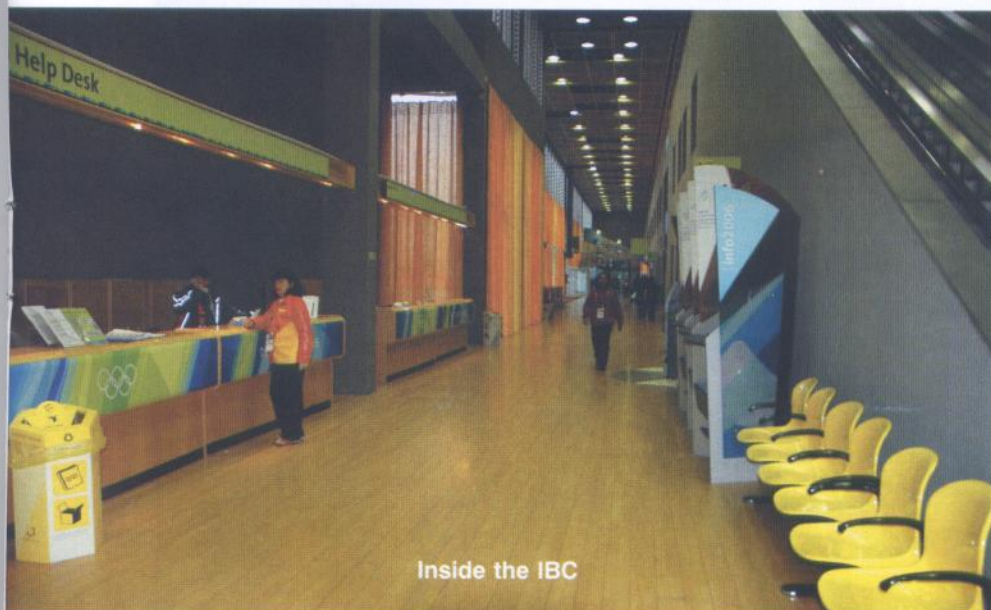
"It underscores the value that comes from being a member of the ABU. We are able to provide coverage for the smaller and medium-sized countries free of charge.

"For that we also have to thank our larger members, such as CCTV-China and TVNZ-New Zealand, whose financial commitments enabled us to offer a coverage of great scope, quality and affordability," the Secretary-General said.

In Salt Lake City in 2002, the ABU's broadcast partnership had involved five broadcasters in three countries and a total of only 17 hours of programming.

He praised the contribution made by TVNZ which had once again shown members how important their multi-channel had become since it was first produced for the ABU at the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

"TVNZ has pioneered a concept in the production and distribution of a multi sport event which perfectly suits a diverse




Inside the IBC

membership such as ours, where the capacity to pay unilateral costs is limited," Mr. Astley said.

TVNZ produced four channels and 600 hours of Torino events, most of them live.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) said the result was "very impressive" and they congratulated the ABU on being able to grow the event in Asia given the natural obstacles.

The IOC's Director of Marketing and Media, Timo Lumme, said the ABU had shown that countries were willing to support the principles of Olympism in Asia.

"I am also very pleased to note the substantial increase in free to air coverage throughout the Asia-Pacific region provided by ABU members," he added. 



Accreditation facilities outside the IBC

Doordarshan, Sahara One win cricket rights

India's Sahara One and state broadcaster Doordarshan (DDI) both won the rights to telecast the India-England cricket test series that began on March 1.

The Indian Cricket Board's media rights partner, Nimbus Communications, granted DDI the terrestrial rights and Sahara One the satellite rights. Sky Sports secured the England territory rights.



DDI's headquarters in New Delhi

Sahara One and DDI are both free-to-air broadcasters with a wide reach across India.

The series features three tests and seven one-day internationals. Both broadcasters said they would show all 10 matches live.

Cricket is such a popular sport in India that DDI chose to drop plans for live coverage of a visit by US President George W Bush to an agriculture university in Hyderabad so that its coverage of the first cricket test in Nagpur could go ahead smoothly.

The news website *Sify* said that when an outside broadcast van at the cricket ground broke down, DDI quickly brought in one that was to have been used for live coverage of the Bush visit.

A DDI official said the President's visit was instead recorded and aired later. DDI was the only channel cleared by US security agencies to cover his visit to the Hyderabad university. 