

## A12 Global Conference Kuala Lumpur, January 2012 - Opening Remarks - HFCC Chair

Let me thank first of all the management of the Asia-Pacific Union for inviting the global co-ordination conference to Kuala Lumpur again. I would like to thank in particular Mr Sharad Sadhu, Director of Technology who has been so closely involved in the inception of international shortwave co-ordination and to Mr Ahmed Nadeem Head of Studio Technology. They have been both very much engaged in conference preparations.

The current adjustments to our activities are associated with the reduction of shortwave transmissions in many countries. But sometimes I am more worried over the future of international broadcasting as a whole.

Some colleagues believe that the present content is not attractive or interesting enough. Maybe this is true but at the same time the mandate of international broadcasting has not been redefined after the epoch of strong ideological competition during the decades of the twentieth century. There is a lot of debate in Europe for example about the pan-European and global dialog between cultures and nations but the potential of international radio to exchange and distribute rich media content across the frontiers for the purposes of this dialogue is almost completely ignored.

We have decided to promote a balanced system of content delivery that would prevent a hasty and sometimes irreversible demise of traditional sound radio broadcasting from terrestrial shortwave transmitters.

We should repeat over and over again that the emergence of a new media technology has never replaced an old one, and that all technologies are capable of existing side by side. The prediction that the internet would replace television for example is not happening. Audience research indicates that the TV use is actually growing - partly because of additional and background information that is being spread on the internet - including social media. Similarly, the detailed information we are capable of providing on the internet about shortwave schedules and listening should strengthen the public awareness of shortwave radio and of its specific properties.

I met an IT specialist of a company in Dubai on our flight to KL. He told me that because of the problem with internet speed his employers have instructed him to eradicate listening to radio on the company intranet. The delivery of media content through the Internet is indeed vulnerable and can be regulated and censored.

Shortwave frequency management and co-ordination remains our core activity and it is supported by the International Telecommunication Union. I am glad to report that Mr Hai Pham, Head of the Broadcasting Services Division is coming to our KL conference. Consultation between the ITU and the so called regional groups HFCC, ASBU and ABU-HFC will be on the programme of the conference on Wednesday.

It is worth noting too that the ITU will be able to provide support of the projected extension of our activities. The meeting of the SG 6 (that is broadcasting service) of the ITU late last year decided that a series of questions should be studied about broadcasting of multimedia and data applications. A completely new study has been opened on "Worldwide broadcasting roaming". This is especially significant since it should facilitate international harmonisation of broadcasting and of receivers.

During a survey conducted by the European Broadcasting Union on "digital receiver

profiles" we failed with a suggestion only a couple of years ago that future radio receivers should be capable of all available digital technologies including DRM. This idea seems to be generally accepted now and we believe that the migration to the future multi-format receivers might positively influence the acceptance of DRM technology.

We approached the management of the Engineering Department of the European Broadcasting Union recently informing them about the changes in the remit of the HFCC. We pointed out that in the present rush to cut the budgets managements have been moving funding from international radio more aggressively than from domestic broadcasters and therefore that the impact of the changes on the distribution of international broadcasting should be given priority.

We have a discussion session planned for the next Thursday morning and we can take up again some of the topics I have just mentioned in my remarks.

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