



**Connect Asia Pacific Summit  
High Level Panel Session  
18 Nov 2013, Bangkok, Thailand**

**Statement made by Dr. Javad Mottaghi, ABU Secretary- General**

I would like to begin by congratulating Dr. Touré and the ITU for initiating the “Connect Asia – Pacific Summit 2013”. This summit will create a movement mobilising member countries to move towards maximum connectivity in their societies. I should also thank the esteemed Government of Thailand for kindly hosting this Summit in Bangkok and for their outstanding arrangements and hospitality.

The Asia – Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) is the biggest broadcasting union in the world with 260 members in 64 countries and potential to reach over 3.5 billion people through its network.

Like the region the ABU enjoys diversity: Diversity in population, economy, culture, policy, size, language and technology. Within the ABU membership there are developed countries with over 95% Internet Connectivity and some with 1% Internet penetration. There are countries which have already switched off the analogue and are operating on UHDTV, while there are countries which are still operating on analogue with rather old technologies. However, we believe that diversity is not a threat for the region but an opportunity for growth. The ABU is doing its best to utilize the capacity of its members to address several important areas including the following:

**Role of Broadcasters in Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction:**

Broadcasters play a key role in social and economic development of all nations by improving access to information and communication technologies. This role is even more important in disaster situations where timely and understandable emergency messages and communication can save lives. With the warnings of many scientists that the frequency and ferocity of natural hazards will increase in the future, the role of broadcasters to warn and guide to safety affected communities will be even more important. ABU is working with many partners on issues related to climate change and mitigation by initiating series of in-country and regional projects raising awareness how to use broadcasting networks and develop Early Warning Broadcasting System. What has unfortunately happened recently to the Philippines due to the destruction of Typhoon Haiyan may happen to other countries in this region as had happened in the past. The ABU has taken a lead in awareness building among the public through its membership network by running series of workshops, seminars and co-productions. The ABU is also emphasizing on the role of Community

Radio before, during and after disaster. The Union has also produced a “Radio – in- a box”, which is a FM Station which can be deployed fast when all other means of communications are destroyed. ABU aims to continue its efforts in partnership with UN-ESCAP and ITU in saving lives. ABU has successfully set-up *Emergency Warning Broadcasting Systems (EWBS)* with several members to mitigate and manage risk due to disasters and ultimately save lives.

### **Access to ICT and Digital Divide:**

Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union has a diverse membership that can collectively act in mitigating digital divide between countries and help all members of the society to have access to modern ICT and benefit from the digital revolution to make a good impact on our efforts. While some of the nations and members have made good progress in digital migrations, we observe that number of others needs assistance and guidance. In collaboration with ITU, ABU has been carrying out many activities to enable smooth transition to digital for every nation. In this respect, the Union has introduced its vision, mission and objectives in 2020 under the ABU @ 2020. The ABU has prepared and implements series of projects in this respect through ABU short – term Action Plan; mid- term Action Plan and long – term Action Plan. We are confident that ABU helps to reduce the huge digital gap that currently exists in this region.

ABU is also helping members to overcome the challenges of converged technologies and use the new platforms they offer to serve their audiences better. We are also committed to promote the best practices and green technologies. The ABU has been working on this issue for number of years. Through our networks and associations with other forums, technological innovations have been fostered to develop more affordable and environmental friendly technologies.

As a professional association of broadcasters and broadcast industry players the ABU has recognized its mandate to lead in securing equal access to new technologies and to media of all groups in the society. We have focused our work to serve the most vulnerable groups – girls, women, people with disabilities and elderly, as we observe growing elderly population in our region. The Union has also series of programmes related to health, education, radio and TV Coproduction using the ICT. We have been working closely with potential partners like UNESCO, ITU, Asian Paralympics Committee (APC) and also with International Paralympics Committee (IPC).

Partnership is a special word in our vocabulary. We believe that in our complex, interconnected world ABU can serve its members better if we work together with partners who are pulling in the same direction like us. That is why *Connect Asia – Pacific Summit 2013* is so timely and important. It connects the partners to work together and make real difference in advancing connectivity in the region.