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An Industry in Transition. A Region in Focus.

If there is one thing that has become clear in recent months, it is this: broadcasting is no longer evolving in phases. It is evolving in real time.

Since joining the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union in February 2026, I have had the opportunity to witness firsthand the conversations shaping the future of our industry. Nowhere was this more evident than at our flagship Digital Broadcasting Symposium 2026 (DBS2026), held in Kuala Lumpur this April.

Under the theme The Rising Synthetic Era, DBS 2026 brought together members, industry leaders, innovators, and broadcasters from across the region to confront the realities of a rapidly transforming media landscape in Asia. Officiating the event, YB Datuk Fahmi Fadzil, Minister of Communications, Malaysia, emphasised the importance of responsible innovation, highlighting that as technology advances, the role of broadcasters in upholding trust, credibility, and public value becomes even more critical.

This sentiment was echoed by Veysel Binbay, who led the conference, noting that the changes we are witnessing are not temporary disruptions but a permanent shift. The industry is no longer moving towards stability, but towards a state of continuous evolution that demands adaptability, clarity, and leadership.

Public Media in Transition: Trust, Resilience, and Responsibility

By **Nargiza Numanova**

Head Secretary-General's Office,
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Across the ABU community, one theme is becoming increasingly clear: the role of media is expanding, and so too is its responsibility.

Recent initiatives and discussions across our membership highlight four interconnected priorities that are shaping the Union's direction: strengthening trust through Media and Information Literacy, building resilience in the face of climate and disaster risks, advancing diversity and inclusion, and reinforcing the role of media in promoting peace.

Trust remains the foundation of public service media. In a crowded and fast-moving information environment, Media and Information Literacy is no longer optional. It is central to how audiences engage with content and how they judge credibility.

In this context, the responsible use of emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, is becoming increasingly important. Platforms such as the [ABU AI Forum 2026](#) and the [ABU AI Hub](#) provide members with practical spaces to explore how AI can support broadcasting while upholding editorial integrity. By connecting innovation with responsibility, they guide members in adapting to technological change without compromising trust.

The growing impact of climate change and disasters across the region reinforces the need for resilient and prepared media systems. The Union's "*Media Saving Lives*" movement, together with its Media Summit on Climate Action and Disaster Prevention - [CADP2026](#), reflects a clear and practical response to this challenge. These initiatives are designed to strengthen the role of media not only as a source of information, but as a critical public service during times of crisis.

Diversity and inclusion continue to shape the credibility and relevance of media organisations. The ABU continues to support members in building more inclusive workplaces and more representative content that reflects the communities they serve.

Alongside these priorities, the role of media in promoting peace remains fundamental. In an increasingly complex and, at times, polarised information environment, responsible storytelling can help reduce tensions, foster understanding, and build bridges across communities. Initiatives such as the [ABU's T4P Media Awards -2026](#) highlight the power of content that promotes dialogue, empathy, and shared humanity. They serve as a reminder that media does not only inform, it can also contribute meaningfully to social cohesion and peaceful societies.

The common thread across all four areas is trust. Trust in information. Trust in institutions. And trust that media organisations serve all segments of society with accuracy, responsibility, and fairness.

The ABU continues to support its members through capacity building, regional cooperation, and practical tools that help translate these priorities into action. The work ahead is not about introducing entirely new concepts, but about strengthening consistency, coordination, and long-term commitment across our membership.

As the media landscape continues to evolve, our collective focus remains clear: to ensure that ABU members are not only adapting

CONTENT

MAJOR ACTIVITY

- 5 ABU Digital Broadcasting Symposium 2026

NEWS

- 9 Members' Spotlight
 - 17 Partnerships
-

ABU ACTIVITIES

■ SG'S OFFICE

- 21 Strengthening Connections Across ABU Membership
- 23 Diversity and Inclusion in Media: Progress or Still a Work in Progress?
- 24 Navigating Financial Sustainability in a Changing Broadcasting Landscape

■ ABU NEWS

- 25 One Story. Many Voices. Conversations Shaping the Future of Asia-Pacific Newsrooms
- 26 Degrees Or Deadlines. Why Journalism Education Is Being Rewritten

■ ABU PROGRAMMING

- 27 ABU Podcast Group Helps Strengthen Member Capacity
- 29 NHK – ABU Programme Department Online Meeting 2026
- 29 ABU DOCUMENTARY EXCHANGE - CARE Series, 13th edition
- 30 ABU CHILDREN'S DRAMA CO-PRODUCTION
- 30 Executive Producer joins drama shooting in Thailand.
- 31 Mentoring Creators Who Refuse to Accept Defeat.
- 32 Wishes – A Production Blessed by Many Genies

■ ABU TECHNOLOGY

- 34 ABU hosts A26 Global Shortwave Coordination Conference

■ ABU SPORTS

- 35 ABU Sports Secures Broadcast Rights for Milano-Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics
- 36 ABU Sports Partners with World Digital Sports Alliance to Strengthen Collaboration
- 37 Rethinking Sports Media Rights in Asia: A Conversation with ABU Sports

■ ABU MEDIA ACADEMY

- 39 Training the Future. Inside the Momentum of the ABU Media Academy
- 41 Social Media for Broadcasters and Community Building
- 42 ABU Media Academy Webinar Highlights Responsible AI Use In Radio And Audio
- 43 ABU Media Academy Webinar Focuses on ESG in Broadcasting
- 44 ABU and TRT Academy Highlight the Future of Journalism

At the same time, innovation is necessary to maintain relevance within a competitive media environment. The challenge is therefore to ensure that technological capability is developed in a way that reinforces, rather than compromises, audience trust.

This requires not only technical solutions, but also clear policies and transparent communication with audiences.

Redefining Broadcasting Within a Broader Media Ecosystem

Another key insight from DBS 2026 is that broadcasting can no longer be considered in isolation. It now operates within a broader media ecosystem that includes digital platforms, technology providers, and new forms of content creators.

For our domestic audiences, internet distribution became part of our core services last October (2025), and we launched NHK ONE, a new integrated digital service. Viewers who pay the receiving fee can watch all NHK terrestrial programs at no additional cost—either via live streaming or on-demand within one week—seamlessly across web browsers, smartphones, and connected TVs. As viewing habits continue to diversify, we will keep adapting our delivery methods so that people of all generations can easily access NHK content.

Second, in terms of our financial structure, a strong and stable financial foundation is essential for NHK to continue providing accurate, rich, and universally accessible public media services nationwide. It is vital that we preserve our current receiving fee system – which supports the core of our operations – and ensure its long-term sustainability. NHK is funded primarily through receiving fees paid by each Japanese households, which account for about 96 percent of our total revenue. In response to rising prices in recent years, NHK reduced the receiving fee in 2023 to ease the financial burden on viewers. As a result, we must reduce our operating expenses by approximately 130 billion yen. At the same time, the global rise in production costs poses an additional challenge for public service media organizations like NHK, which operate within a limited funding model.

Given this environment, stabilizing our receiving fee revenue—and halting its decline—is an urgent priority. We will mobilize the full strength of the NHK Group to achieve this goal, and I am determined to pursue it with unwavering resolve so that we can maintain the receiving fee system.

Another challenge shared by members of the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) is the urgent need to address the global spread of mis- and disinformation, including so called fake news. By working closely with broadcasters across the Asia Pacific region, we aim to strengthen fact checking capabilities and protect a trustworthy information ecosystem.

Having served three years as Vice President under my predecessor, Nobuo Inaba, I am deeply familiar with NHK's current situation and the challenges ahead. I intend to confront these issues swiftly and decisively, mobilizing the collective strength of "Team NHK."

How do you see the role of public broadcasters evolving in an increasingly digital and AI-driven environment?

What people expect from public service media is the reliable delivery of two things: accurate information that supports their daily lives, and high quality, enriching programs and content that add

information reaches everyone—regardless of language, disability, or individual circumstances.

No matter how far technology advances, the mission of public service media—to contribute to the healthy functioning of democracy—remains unchanged. By embracing new technologies while upholding enduring public values, we will continue to deliver those values to society through new and effective approaches. That, I believe, is the direction in which public service media must evolve.

What key lessons from NHK’s experience could be shared with other ABU members, particularly in navigating digital transformation, addressing the growing challenges of mis- and disinformation, and strengthening public trust in public service media?

As I mentioned earlier, in an online environment where mis

technology, digital services, or international operations. What is required is an organization in which all parts work organically together, driven by overall, organization wide optimization.

Under the banner of “Team NHK,” I am working to move beyond precedent driven thinking and inward looking logic, and to create structures that directly connect the wisdom of those on the front lines with management strategy. The decision to appoint a Vice President with deep experience in both editorial operations and management reflects this approach—it is intended to ensure that strategy is translated into concrete actions and executed with a strong sense of speed.

Second, I place great importance on accountability-driven management.

Because NHK is supported by public funding through receiving fees, our decision-making processes must be transparent. Even when decisions involve risk, we make it a priority to explain carefully to viewers and employees why those decisions are necessary and what public value they serve, and to seek their understanding and consent. This commitment to accountability forms the very foundation of trust in public service media.

Third—and most importantly—is a leadership approach that places people first.

Ultimately, the value of NHK is created by people. In recent years, issues such as harassment and excessive workloads have become major social concerns in Japan. Upon assuming office, I issued a declaration committing to the prevention and eradication of harassment, and I have made it my highest priority to foster a healthy working environment in which employees, staff, and contributors can perform at their best with peace of mind.

I firmly believe that listening to diverse perspectives and ensuring psychological safety are indispensable conditions for building an organization that remains resilient in times of crisis. This people centered approach is fundamental to sustaining trust in public service media and to fulfilling our responsibilities to society.

Grounded in these principles, I am determined to confront even the most difficult challenges head on and, working together with our people, to identify and pursue the best possible solutions—without hesitation or avoidance.

Younger audiences are consuming content very differently today. How can public broadcasters stay relevant and meaningful to the next generation?

Patterns of content consumption are continuing to change not only among younger audiences, but across all generations. As digital consumption increases, accessing

What strategic areas should ABU focus on to better support its members in addressing emerging challenges such as misinformation, audience fragmentation, and sustainability?

Countries across the Asia Pacific region are highly diverse, with significant differences in stages of economic development, and the challenges faced by broadcasters vary widely from one country to another. However, as noted earlier, amid the blurring boundaries between broadcasting and telecommunications, the question of how to respond to intensified competition in the digital environment is a challenge shared not only within this region, but by media companies around the world. It goes without saying that, as the ABU, we must strengthen our collective efforts to address this challenge.

More specifically, I believe it is important to leverage forums and events organized by the ABU to share new initiatives and successful case studies among broadcasters, both in terms of technology and content. In addition, supporting



ABU Secretariat Receives Courtesy Visit From Deputy Director General Of RTA-Afghanistan

The Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) Secretariat received a courtesy visit on 23 January 2026 from the Deputy Director General of Radio Television Afghanistan (RTA), Hedayatullah Hedayat, as part of efforts to strengthen cooperation between the ABU and RTA.

MEDIA & INFORMATION LITERACY

EDUCATE • EMPOWER • INFORM • FACT-CHECK



Strengthening Media and Information Literacy Across ABU Members

In today's crowded and fast-moving information space, Media and Information Liter

Building Resilient Media: ABU–UNESCO Collaboration on Disaster Risk Reduction

The increasing frequency and intensity of disasters across Asia have reinforced the need for strong, prepared, and responsive media systems. The UN's World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) reported that 2015–2025 is the warmest decade on record, with 2025 among the top three hottest years, with rising ocean temperatures and sea levels pointing clearly to a growing climate emergency. In this environment, the role of media is no longer limited to reporting events. It is about saving lives.

When disasters strike, timely and accurate information can mean the difference between safety and loss. Media organisations are often the first point of contact for the public, providing warnings, guidance, and updates in rapidly changing situations. But this responsibility also extends beyond

225 MEMBERS
IN 66 COUNTRIES

Covering eight regions: the Pacific, Asia (South-East, North, South, Central), Middle East, Europe, North Africa, and North America.

50 Full Members
in 39 countries

61 Additional
Full Members
in 32 countries

38 Associate
Members
in 24 countries

in 2025, supported by a brief presentation highlighting major milestones, and outlined priority initiatives and collaborative projects planned for 2026, including strengthened engagement with Members and international partners. The visit reaffirmed Ms Zhou's continued leadership and support in advancing the Union's mission and collective goals.

On 23 January 2026, the ABU Secretariat received a courtesy visit from Mr. Hedayatullah Hedayat, Deputy Director General of Radio Television Afghanistan (RTA). The visit reflected a shared commitment to strengthening cooperation between ABU and RTA. During his meeting with ABU Secretary-General Mr. Ahmed Nadeem and the Secretariat team, discussions centred on the current broadcasting landscape in Afghanistan and the ABU's continued support through training, experience sharing, and content exchange. Both sides also expressed interest in exploring future initiatives, including capacity-building programmes, technical assistance, and collaborative projects to enhance media capabilities and regional cooperation.

Further reinforcing Member engagement, the ABU Secretariat welcomed a delegation from the National Broadcasting Services of Thailand (NBT) on 17 March 2026. Led by Ms Sudruetai Lertkasem, Director General of the Government Public Relations Department, the visit provided a valuable platform to exchange views on ongoing collaboration and explore new partnership opportunities. Key discussions focused on news exchange, professional development, and participation in ABU flagship activities. The delegation also engaged with ABU teams on critical areas such as crisis and disaster reporting, digital transformation, and content innovation—reflecting the changing landscape of broadcasting in the region. The visit underscored ABU's continued commitment to ensuring its services remain relevant and responsive to Member needs.

ABU also takes pride in recognizing the achievements and leadership within its

Membership. In this regard, ABU extended its congratulations to Mr Ashwad Ismail on his appointment as Director General of Radio Television Malaysia (RTM). With nearly two decades of experience in the media industry, his leadership is expected to further strengthen one of the region's key public broadcasters. Such milestones highlight the depth of expertise and leadership across the ABU Membership.

In addition to visits and recognitions, ABU continues to facilitate meaningful knowledge exchange among its Members. A recent example includes the study visit of a Nepali delegation to Prasar Bharati in New Delhi, supported by the ABU Secretariat. The initiative, conducted in collaboration with BBC Media Action Nepal, focused on enhancing disaster coverage capabilities among public service broadcasters. The delegation engaged with teams from Akashvani and Doordarshan News, gaining valuable

Diversity and Inclusion in Media: Progress or Still a Work in Progress?

Across the media industry, diversity and inclusion are often presented as priorities. Policies are introduced, campaigns are launched, and commitments are made. But a more direct question remains: have we actually achieved meaningful progress?

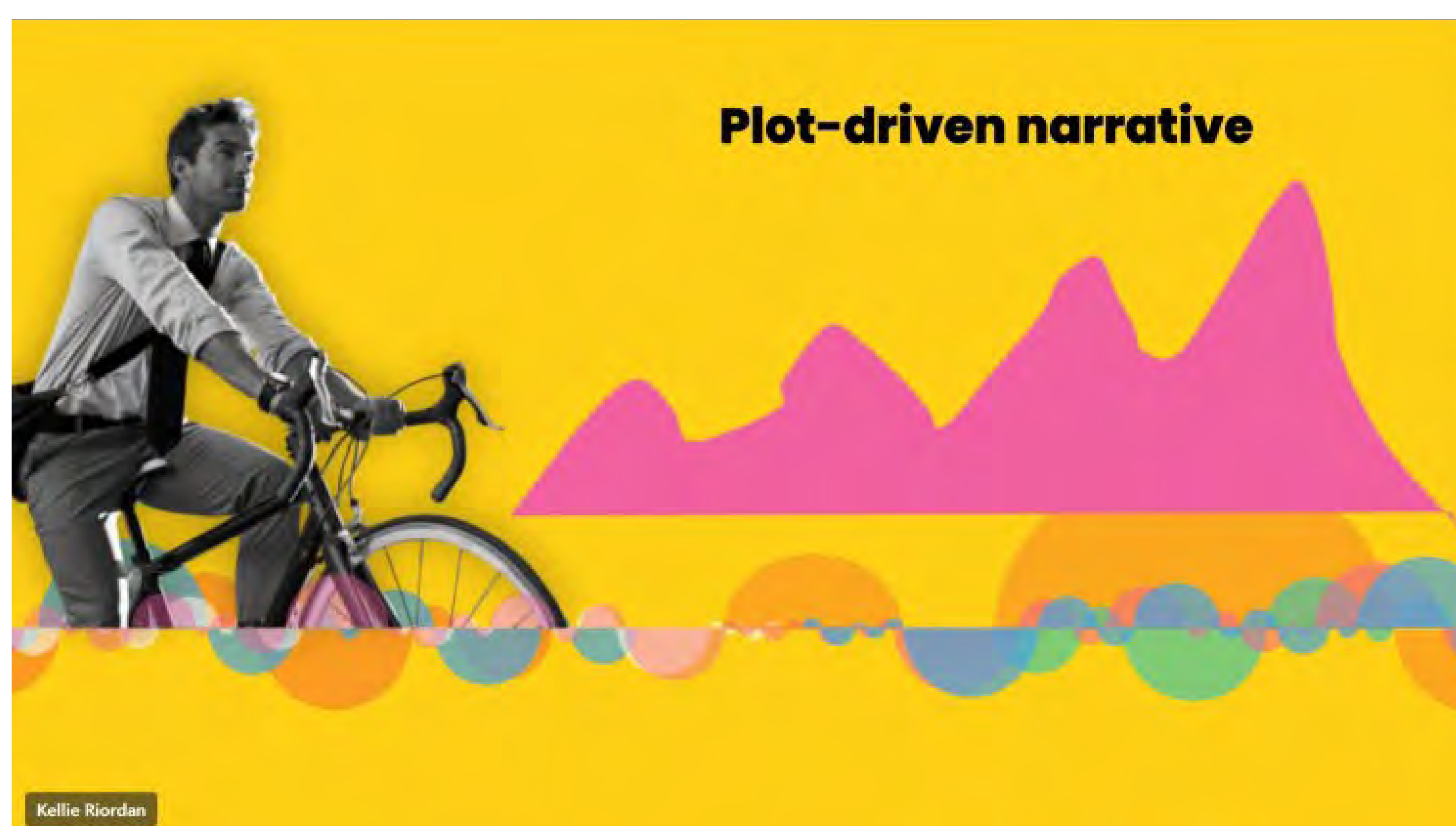
Within the ABU community, the conversation has clearly shifted. There is stronger awareness of the need to reflect the full diversity of society, both in content and within media organisations themselves. Broadcasters are paying closer attention to whose stories are told, whose voices are heard, and how different communities are represented.

Yet the gaps are still visible.

ABU Podcast Group Helps Strengthen Member Capacity



The future of audio isn't on the airwaves—it's in your ears, on demand, and deeply personal. As podcasting continues to surge among younger audiences, broadcasters are rethinking not just how they produce content, but how they connect, engage, and stay heard in a crowded digital space.



NHK – ABU Programme Department Online Meeting 2026

NHK

On 23 January 2026, an online coordination meeting was held at the proposal of NHK to discuss matters relating to the NHK-led Children's Drama Series. The meeting was attended by Ms. Yuki Yoshida, Senior Manager, International Relations, Global Strategy Division, NHK WORLD Department, and Ms. Yukiko Unno, Head of International Relations, Global Strategy Division, NHK WORLD Department.

The ABU was represented by Mr. Aoki Kazunori, Director of Programming; Ms. Fathimath Leeza, Head of Television; and Ms. Hanizah Hamzah, Consultant, ABU Programming Department.

The discussion focused on the Children's Drama Series, including the formal handover of project responsibilities from Ms. Hanizah Hamzah, former Head of Television, to Ms. Fathimath Leeza, the current Head of Television.

Further discussions covered possible venues and the proposed agenda for the Children's Drama Series screening and coordination forum scheduled to take place in April 2026 in Tokyo, Japan. Amendments to the participation form were also discussed, with emphasis on the inclusion of additional information required to better assess overall participation levels and activity planning, as well as the proposed application deadline.



ABU DOCUMENTARY EXCHANGE - CARE Series, 13th edition



Focusing on celebrating local responses to adversity and pathways to recovery, with particular emphasis on collective well-being, and creative storytelling rooted in regional contexts, this year's theme

ABU CHILDREN'S DRAMA CO- PRODUCTION



A

Q: What is driving this shift in the market?

A major factor is the way media rights are now being sold and distributed. Traditionally, rights were often managed through a single entity or “gatekeeper.” Today, however, rights are increasingly segmented and sold across multiple platforms.

This shift has contributed to a sharp increase in rights costs. In some cases, prices have risen by as much as 40 percent, or even doubled over the past decade. Digital platforms entering the market have further intensified competition, often driving up prices as they seek to secure premium content.

Q: How is this impacting broadcasters and media organisations?

The impact is being felt



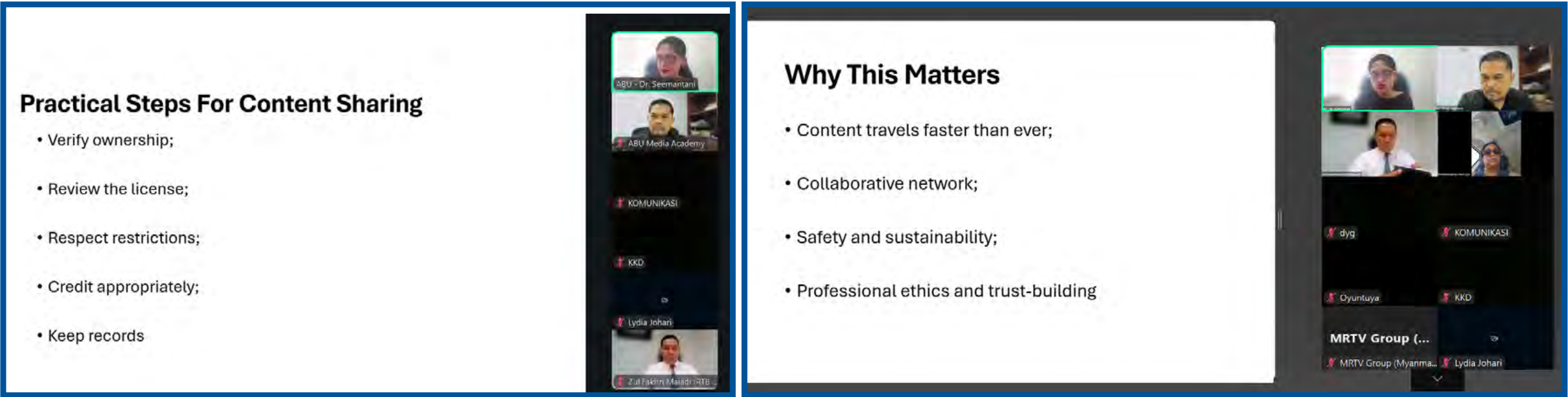
Training the Future. Inside the Momentum of the ABU Media Academy

By **Aswandi Amin**

Social Media for Broadcasters and Community Building

In today's digital environment, broadcasters are no longer defined solely by what goes on air. Audience relationships are now built through continuous interaction, personal screens, and conversations that extend far beyond scheduled programming. Social media has transformed from a promotional add-on into a strategic space where trust, identity, and community are formed. For broadcasters across the Asia-Pacific, mastering this space is no longer about visibility alone, but about relevance, connection, and long-term loyalty.

The first ABU Media Academy webinar of 2026 opened on 15 January 2026 at 2:00 PM (KL Time) with a warm welcome to 125 participants from across the Asia-Pacific, marking a new year of learning and professional exchange. The host introduced



arrangements, and regional exchange networks, where broadcasters may act simultaneously as creators, users, contributors, and facilitators. In this collaborative environment, rights management can no longer be treated as a purely legal compliance exercise.

the evolving business of sports content across multiple markets.

At the same time, initiatives such as the [ABU T4P Media Awards](#) continue to reinforce the role of media in driving meaningful change, recognising storytelling that contributes to planet, people, and peace.

Where Content Takes Centre Stage

A standout in ABU's 2026 calendar is [CON-FEST](#), the Union's flagship content festival that brings together creators, producers, and storytellers from across the Asia-Pacific. Designed as a dynamic platform for the creative community, CON-FEST goes beyond traditional conferences. It is where ideas are tested, formats are challenged, and new approaches to storytelling are explored. Bringing together video, audio, and digital content creators, the festival combines talks, discussions, and hands-on workshops

