

# world electronic media forum 3

Kuala Lumpur 10-11 December 2007

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## ASIA TO HOST GLOBAL ELECTRONIC MEDIA FORUM

The third World Electronic Media Forum (WEMF3) will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 10-11 December 2007, the World Broadcasting Unions (WBU) announced today.

The meeting is expected to attract broadcast executives, policy makers, academics, journalists, visionaries and decision makers from around the world. The agenda will include the safety of journalists and preserving the world's audiovisual archives.

WEMF3's lead organiser will be the Kuala Lumpur based Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), in collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) and the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC). The event is being supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) as cooperation partners.

WEMF3 will be held at the new Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre where the GKP's third Global Knowledge Conference (GK3) on "Emerging People, Emerging Markets, Emerging Technologies" will be held on 11-13 December. Both events will benefit from synergies.

In order to ensure a strong participation from throughout the developing world, SDC will be providing financial assistance to facilitate representation by speakers and delegates at both the WEMF3 and GK3 events.

WEMF2 in Tunis in 2005 was attended by more than 300 people from 70 countries. A similar attendance is expected at WEMF3. The agenda and speakers will be announced in the coming months.

Secretary-General of the ABU, David Astley, said he was grateful for the support of the SDC and GKP to enable the third WEMF to be staged in Asia, which would benefit the many broadcasters in the developing countries of the region that did not have the opportunity to participate in the first two events in Geneva and Tunis.

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Director of the AIBD, Javad Mottaghi, said WEMF3 was a unique opportunity for the world media decision makers to exchange their views and find the way forward to address the crucial challenges that were threatening the world stability. The Asia-Pacific region had immense potential to open the door to information access and exchange on an unprecedented scale.

Secretary-General of AMIC, Dr Indrajit Banerjee, said that he was delighted to be a co-organiser of this important event. He believed that it was extremely relevant to host WEMF3 in Asia given the dynamic expansion and vibrant growth of broadcasting across Asia.

Director-General of the SDC, Walter Fust, said the key role of the media as an independent actor within the global Information Society to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) had been recognised and confirmed during the World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS) in 2003 and 2005. Recent trends in the rapid evolution of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) were enhancing this crucial role even further.

According to Mr Fust, “WEMF3 offers an important platform to link this specific debate within the media with a broader development audience and context to help further define the role of media in the development equation. It is expected that key decision-makers, policy-makers and practitioners will embrace this chance to debate, deliberate and decide on concrete steps forward on how the media can make a tangible contribution towards the MDGs.”

Head of the Information and Communication Technology for Development Division of the SDC, Dr Gerolf Weigel, said: “The media world is undergoing tremendous changes due to the interplay between technological innovation and the growing role of the audience in content production. The world’s leading broadcasters, innovators, practitioners and thinkers will discuss at WEMF3 the latest trends, lessons and perspectives. This will include reflection about the future role of media in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). After the outstanding performance at the first two WEMF events in 2003 and 2005, we expect the WEMF3 to continue this tradition and provide a unique forum for exploring the latest trends in the interface between media innovation and socio-economic development.”

### **Background information for editors**

The first and second World Electronic Media Forums were held in conjunction with the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) which was held in two phases in Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005). WEMF is fundamentally a World Broadcasting Unions (WBU) event. In association with host organisers, the World Broadcasting Unions and World Electronic Media Forum Association, the European Broadcasting Union hosted WEMF1 and the Arab States Broadcasting Union WEMF2. The ABU is serving as lead organiser of WEMF3, with partners, on behalf of its sister unions in the WBU.

The WSIS was organised by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in conjunction with the Swiss and Tunisian Governments and various UN agencies. The objective of the WSIS was to bring together Heads of State, executive heads of United Nations agencies, industry leaders, non-governmental organisations, media representatives and civil society in a single high-level event to share views on how the accelerating convergence between telecommunications,

broadcasting multimedia and information and other communication technologies (ICTs) could best be harnessed to benefit the world community.

In conjunction with the WSIS, the two-day WEMF was held to examine more closely the impact that these changes may have on ‘traditional’ ICTs such as radio and television broadcasting, and to discuss how the fundamental transformations that were taking place in the global information society may affect the role of the electronic media in knowledge dissemination, social interaction, economic and business practices, political engagement, media, education, health, leisure and entertainment.

WEMF1 in Geneva affirmed the vital importance of radio and television in the information society and produced a report that was distributed to public broadcasters around the world.

WEMF2 in Tunis built on this affirmation through focused discussions on the role of the electronic media in the digital age – for example in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, in guaranteeing cultural diversity, in preserving audiovisual archives and in promoting the safety of journalists in zones of conflict.

Although the WSIS concluded in Tunis, it was recommended that the WEMF continue to be held every two years, and it was suggested that it be held in Asia in 2007 and Latin America in 2009.

Following the success of WEMF2, the leaders of the World Broadcasting Unions decided to organise further meetings in the series independent of the WSIS. After WEMF3 in Kuala Lumpur, WEMF4 is expected to be held in Latin America in 2009.

#### **About the WBU**

The World Broadcasting Unions (WBU) is the coordinating body for broadcasting unions who represent broadcaster networks across the globe. Members include: Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), African Union of Broadcasting (AUB), Asociación Internacional de Radiodifusión (AIR), Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU), Caribbean Broadcasting Union (CBU), European Broadcasting Union (EBU), North American Broadcasters Association (NABA), and Organización de Telecomunicaciones Iberoamericanas (OTI). For more information, please see <http://www.worldbroadcastingunions.org>

#### **About the ABU**

The Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) is a non-profit, non-government, professional association of broadcasting organisations, formed in 1964 to facilitate the development of broadcasting in the Asia-Pacific region and to organise co-operative activities amongst its members. It currently has over 170 members in over 53 countries, with its broadcaster members reaching a potential audience of about 3 billion people. For more information, please visit [www.abu.org.my](http://www.abu.org.my)

#### **About the AIBD**

The Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) is a unique regional inter-governmental organisation servicing countries of the Asia and Pacific region in the field of electronic media development since 1977. It is hosted by the Government of Malaysia. The AIBD is mandated to achieve a vibrant and cohesive electronic media environment in the Asia-

Pacific region through policy and resource development. The institute has 26 full members and 53 affiliate members. More information is available at [www.aibd.org.my](http://www.aibd.org.my)

### **About AMIC**

The Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) is Asia's premier media research, publication and resource centre. For over thirty six years, AMIC has spearheaded the development of Asian media through its wide range of publications, training workshops and events. More information is available at [www.amic.org.sg](http://www.amic.org.sg)

### **About the SDC**

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is Switzerland's international cooperation agency within the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). In operating with other federal offices concerned, SDC is responsible for the overall coordination of development activities and cooperation with Eastern Europe, as well as for humanitarian aid. SDC employs a staff of around 550 people to carry out its activities in Switzerland and abroad, with an annual budget of CHF 1.3 billion (2006). The Agency undertakes direct actions, supports programmes of multilateral organisations, and helps to finance programmes run by Swiss and international aid organisations in the following areas:

- Bilateral and multilateral development cooperation
- Humanitarian aid
- Cooperation with Eastern Europe

Bilateral development cooperation concentrates on 17 priority countries and eight special programmes in Africa, Asia and Latin America. At multilateral level, SDC collaborates in particular with UN organisations, the World Bank, and the regional development banks. For more information, please visit [www.sdc.admin.ch](http://www.sdc.admin.ch)

### **About the GKP**

Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) is an international network of over 100 organisations from all sectors – public, private and civil society – bound by the two common principles of sharing knowledge and building partnerships. Members and partners work in concert through the GKP network to promote innovation and advancement in Knowledge for Development (K4D) and Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) in seven operating regions: Africa, Central & Eastern Europe, East Asia, Latin America & the Caribbean, Middle East & North Africa, Oceania and South Asia. For more information, please visit [www.globalknowledge.org](http://www.globalknowledge.org)