ABU DECLARATION

IMPLEMENTATION OF
EMERGENCY WARNING BROADCASTING SYSTEMS
IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

Considering

1) that broadcasting plays an important role in disseminating information to alert the public before a disaster occurs on the reception of forecasts from national or international organisations which are capable of detecting an impending disaster;

2) that the tsunami in South-East Asia demonstrated how unprepared many countries in the region were to receive early warning of an impending disaster;

3) that with the help of Emergency Warning Broadcasting System (EWBS), a broadcasting station can issue a special control signal which is used to activate EWBS equipped radio receivers even when these are on stand-by. In this way, the emergency warning broadcasting programmes can be disseminated through such EWBS receivers in the case of emergency to analogue broadcasting (MF, SW, FM, terrestrial and satellite TV);

4) that an Emergency Warning Broadcasting System has been in operation in Japan since 1985 with MF, FM, terrestrial and satellite TV broadcasting;

5) that a set of the EWBS control signals for analogue broadcasting are recommended by the ABU Technical Committee;

6) that receiving devices, including radio sets, capable of responding to the EWBS control signals are being developed.

The ABU General Assembly Declares

1) that in order to minimise the damage and impact of disasters, ABU members support the development of EWBS systems for the Asia-Pacific region;

2) that, as a matter of urgency, ABU members consider the introduction of such EWBS systems which link with national or international organisations identified for issuing disaster forecasts;

3) that ABU members urge their national regulators to enact provisions to implement EWBS systems in the Asia-Pacific region;

4) that ABU members encourage manufacturers to produce receivers with the EWBS feature.
Explanatory Note

The Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) General Assembly has adopted a declaration to implement an Emergency Warning Broadcast System (EWBS) in ABU member countries. The declaration calls for the development of an EWBS to minimise the damage and impact of disasters in the region, and for ABU members to urge their national regulators to enact provisions to implement such a system.

In the aftermath of the Asian tsunami and the earthquakes that occurred one after another, conveying timely warning to the public before the occurrence of disasters (where practicable) has assumed high priority. To make this line of communication possible, the flow of time-critical information between governmental and international organisations and broadcasting stations, which disseminate disaster forecasts, is crucial.

The ABU has been studying various aspects of an effective EWBS. Using the EWBS, the broadcasting station issues a special control signal, which is used to activate EWBS equipped radio receivers, even when these are on stand-by. Once activated, the emergency warning broadcasting programmes can be disseminated through such EWBS receivers in the event of an emergency.

For implementing such EWBS systems in the ABU countries, some important steps have been identified during the studies. One is the development of an EWBS control signal that is applicable to the countries involved. The ABU recommends that the EWBS control signals to be used for analogue broadcasting in the ABU countries should be those developed by the International Telecommunication Union, an agency of the United Nations.

The Declaration adopted by the ABU General Assembly aims to bring the urgent need to implement an EWBS to the attention of ABU members and the relevant authorities in countries in the Asia-Pacific. The declaration also calls for ABU members to encourage manufacturers to produce receivers with the EWBS feature.

In order to minimise the damage and impact of disasters, ABU members would support the development of EWBS systems for the Asia-Pacific region in close coordination with national or international organisations identified for issuing disaster forecasts. ABU members would also urge their national regulators to enact provisions to implement EWBS systems in the Asia-Pacific region and encourage manufacturers to produce receivers with the EWBS feature.