

KEEPING THE CBA TORCH AFLAME...

BEING THE SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH BROADCASTING ASSOCIATION (CBA), ABUBAKAR BOBBOYI JIJIWA, AT THE AWARD DINNER OF THE 2010 CONFERENCE ON TUESDAY 20TH APRIL, 2010 AT THE HILTON BALLROOM, JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA.

Good evening colleagues. After a fulfilling and eventful four-year at the helms, steering the affairs of this rainbow organisation, I am greatly pleased to be provided this opportunity to say ‘thank you’ and then step aside. Awards Dinners are enjoyable occasions, but they are more than that. They enable us to enjoy and admire the work of our peers. They reward high standards and excellence. But their chief objective is to inspire us all, so that each one of us can strive to maintain and achieve high standards and ***keeping the CBA flying high and the torch aflame.***

Over the years, staff in the CBA office have seen many programmes of amazing quality that have been submitted for awards. In particular the awards always highlight the superb quality and innovation that even the smallest and poorest stations can achieve, and ***this has kept our CBA torch aflame.***

The CBA Awards are now open to all, from any part of the world and as an evidence of this eternally flaming torch. Every year, the quality of the winning programmes keeps getting higher and higher. I offer my congratulations to all whose programmes that have been short-listed, and to organisations who have nurtured the talented producers and reporters so that they are able to achieve such high standards. This excellence is at the core of **Public Service Broadcasting**, which we all present here want to encourage and develop. By each of us insisting on internationally acceptable minimum standards of professionalism, ***we are keeping the torch aflame.***

Quality is a delicate plant and it needs a good environment in which to flourish, this is where an organisation such as the CBA can help. The CBA could do this through constant capacity-building and training, through the exchange of know-how, through adoption to rapidly changing world of technology and through increased understanding of the digital world. This is why the CBA runs a programme of courses, both local and by distance-learning, and bursaries and attachments, as well as a Technical Forum on its website; a sure way of keeping the CBA torch aflame.

The CBA has a record of major successes over the past years, one of them is being accredited by *The Matrix Standard*, the UK national quality standard for any organisation that delivers information, advice and/or guidance on learning and work. The process has taken over a year and has improved the CBA’s policies and practices, leading to much more open information and ***thereby keeping our torch aflame.*** Much of this is now on our website, and we now encourage a more interactive relationship with our membership. This is also the first time we have a professionally conducted survey of our members’ views and needs. The result of this survey will be presented tomorrow morning at this conference.

The year 2009 is particularly a very good year for the CBA. **We won three Awards.** One is the **Friends of Canada Award**, which is for international leadership. It came with a grant of CN\$5000 to spend on research which we have used to conduct the research I have just talked to you about. The second award, The IABM Tom McGann Training Award 2010, came with an even bigger cash grant, this time for £20,000. The third award comes from **the AIBD in Malaysia**. It will be presented in May 2010 in Beijing and is in recognition of the CBA's role in helping with the setting up of the proposed Institute for Broadcasting Development. All these three bountiful Awards came in the last six months.

On the training front, the CBA has kept the torch aflame in even more amazingly and innovative ways. It has developed its **Distance Learning so that it is now one of the world leaders in this field**. In cooperation with the CTO, and using some technology developed by the Commonwealth of Learning in Vancouver, the CBA launched its first self directed course. This stays up on the website and can be completed at any time by the student, with the PC correcting all his or her answers. **The CBA is a pioneer in this aspect of broadcasting training**, which can train large numbers in the most cost effective way possible. **In 2009 it ran 4 Distance Learning courses and 17 In-Country courses, administered 3 MA bursaries, 6 travel bursaries, 2 bursaries to attend IBC and 2 to attend the Edinburgh International TV Festival. A new course for broadcasting regulators will be launched at this conference.**

The CBA has also launched its **first self-directed online learning modules for trainees in member stations**. The course introduces broadcasters to the concepts of change management and performance management. The aim is to meet the need for more effective staff development, accountability and good governance of Commonwealth institutions. **This 4 – module course** introduces broadcasters to some basic concepts of **change management and performance management**, relating them to real situations in the work place. Areas covered include the basics of common attitudes to change; communication techniques; performance management and appraisal systems. ***The torch is indeed aflame.***

The CBA covers **regulatory issues** and at the conference it has not only just run a Forum for Broadcasting Regulators but is also about to launch what is probably **the world's first Distance Learning course for Broadcasting Regulators**.

I hand it on to my successor in good heart and spirit, and plead that it should be nurtured, developed and supported by all of us here, so that it can flourish and continue to make its exceptional contributions to broadcasting throughout the world.

In the forefront of keeping our CBA torch aflame is the Department of International Development – DFID. The CBA – as you will have heard in the presentation by the Deputy Secretary-General, Sally-Ann Wilson – is also launching **WorldView**. This project which has grown out of the CBA-DFID Broadcast Media Scheme, recently received a substantial 3 ½ year funding package supported by Ukaid from the DFID in the UK. It means **CBA is able to support programme making in the developing world**, both by UK TV producers, and as a new development, by producers from the developing world as well.

As part of its keeping our torch aflame in the regions, **the CBA is complimenting the regional broadcasting unions.** Its special role is to bring a dimension from across the continents, **to act as a ‘bridge’ between radically different cultures.** This enables the exchange of know-how between organisations that are at totally different stages of development. This happens not only at its conferences and workshops, but also throughout the year through its Travel and Attachment bursaries, and its major programme of training.

CBA publications have also made a fantastic contribution over the years, covering ***Editorial Guidelines, Election Guidelines, Guidelines for Broadcasting Regulation,*** the best ways of handling user-generated content, and many other topics. I remember that the Editorial Guidelines were quickly consulted when the Fijian Army occupied the buildings of Fiji TV during their most recent coup and attention was paid to its advice. The CBA torch is therefore aflame even in crisis situations.

In November the CBA published a pamphlet based on original research called **Guidelines for Broadcasters on promoting User-Generated Content and Media Information Literacy.** This was suggested by UNESCO which supported the study. The author is Martin Scott, a Lecturer at the University of East Anglia, who pulls together how broadcasters round the world are **now using material sent in by the public**, and how best to handle such materials.

The CBA magazine, *Commonwealth Broadcaster*, continued to **keep our CBA’s torch aflame** as it has become a verifiable source of information for broadcasters round the world about developments in the industry. The monthly radio programme *Pick of the Commonwealth*, and the CD of the 26 winning *Commonwealth Short Stories*, continued a tradition of high quality output for broadcast and **has kept the CBA torch flaming.**

While we accept and resolve that our torch must remain aflame, we must acknowledge that these are tough times for organisations like the CBA. As I look back over the past four years in office as CBA President, I am struck by the way CBA has managed to survive and develop, as funding becomes harder to access, and the economic downturn adversely affects its member organisations. Membership has grown and the staffing has remained stable, though with one post closure to help the CBA to survive the current difficult times. I am however happy to report that membership stayed relatively stable, despite the economic downturn, with members at the 102 at the beginning of this year and on the financial side, the CBA ended its policy of drawing on its reserves to fund new projects and finished 2009 with a modest surplus on the activities for the year. It continues to hold a useful reserve. Our prudent financial management, if sustained, **will surely keep our CBA torch aflame.**

It is commendable that the CBA is now trying very hard to launch its **News Exchange** and I commend this enterprise to my successor in office, it is worth sustaining because more than anything, the CBA is a forum for broadcasters to develop international links, contacts and friendships to oil the wheels of international cooperation. The News Exchange programme will definitely give us the extra mileage to keep our torch permanently aflame.

We all share one world and broadcasters everywhere face similar problems from the transition to digital technology to the struggle for PSBs to survive in multi-channel worlds, and indeed so many other ethical dilemmas we face every day. In all these the CBA can provide answers and solutions, and inspire us to aim high, even in very tough times. That was why the CBA used its Disaster Fund to give a modest grant to **Samoa Quality Broadcasting Corporation**, which suffered some damage from the earthquake and tsunami. It is being used to help restore a decoder and transmitter located at Lepa, as these were washed away.

While we beat our chest to celebrate our permanently smouldering torch, the CBA cannot achieve this feet without the tremendous support and assistance from its members and from various partners. The partners include DFID, AusAid, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Foundation, UNESCO, the BBC World Service Trust, the AIBD, and British High Commissions. Without their help, many CBA projects could not have been carried out.

At this juncture, I thank the management of the CBA office led by the gentle, motherly, friendly amiable and above all, agile Elizabeth Smith, our Secretary General, for ensuring a rewarding time in office. I also thank very much other CBA staff such as Sally An-Wilson, Adam Weatherhead, Jasmine Dhariwal, Mandy Turner etc for your support and pray for more fruitful years ahead for our organisation.

As I happily and willingly step aside tomorrow from CBA Presidency, I wish the incoming President and the Committee success and rapid progress under the guidance of Almighty God.

Thank you all and God bless.