



**Caribbean Broadcasting Union
48th Annual General Assembly
August 21-24, 2017
Nassau, The Bahamas**

CARIBBEAN BROADCASTING UNION 48th ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEWS RELEASE



Nassau, Bahamas. August 23, 2017. Leading regional electronic media houses are taking a strong position on the need for clear policy and regulatory approaches to ensuring the financial viability of the indigenous broadcast sector.

This was one of the key resolutions passed as the Caribbean Broadcasting Union (CBU) wrapped up its 48th Annual General Assembly in Nassau, the Bahamas on Wednesday.

Digital Developments in Media

This year's meeting, under the theme, ***Digital Developments in Caribbean Media*** considered the transition to digital radio, the need for a workable business model for indigenous media in the shadow of looming transition to digital television and the need to preserve the intellectual property rights of broadcasters' content subject to "must carry" rules.

High on the agenda was concern about the un-paid use being made of broadcasters' channels on subscription services, under various forms of must-carry rules in the region. It was noted that some pay services were pirating and re-packaging local news and entertainment programming, which was extremely popular with their subscribers, but had no agreements to pay the broadcasters for their programming.

In the members' plenary on Wednesday, it was also noted that regulators around the region have paid little attention to the benefits and challenges of introducing digital radio. The members had been informed earlier in the conference on the topic by representatives of World DAB and of Digital Radio Mondiale (DRM). The CBU will be convening a task force of members to investigate the issues affecting regional radio broadcasters and will formulate proposals for the most relevant ways of introducing the technology in Caribbean countries.

The CBU also resolved to re-invigorate the current programme sharing initiative, ***CBU Media Share***, with commitments by individual members to a minimum amount of content to be circulated among participating radio and TV services. ***CBU Media Share*** is an on-line portal which allows CBU members in good standing to receive and distribute radio and TV programmes made available for free or being sold to members and other stakeholders.

Transformation of the Bahamian state television and radio into a public service broadcaster

The commitment by the host broadcaster for the event, the Broadcasting Corporation of the Bahamas, to increase the amount of local programming made available to domestic audiences and throughout the region was a key talking point.

On Monday August 21, during the Assembly's opening ceremony, the Prime Minister of the Bahamas, the Hon. Dr. Hubert Minnis signaled a new direction for the state broadcaster, known by its call letters, ZNS.

He noted that such a transformation was "*imperative if the Corporation is to fulfill its mandate to: Educate, Entertain and Inform as a public broadcasting entity free of political interference and control.*"

Broadcasters Urged to Focus on Content in the Digital Age

The keynote speaker for the main conference day was Minister of Public Telecommunications of Guyana, Cathy Hughes. She urged the media managers and owners present to focus on content, despite the centrality of technology to media operations. She noted, "*The glaring omission however, is a purposeful approach to consistently produce quality local content that sets out purposefully to inform, to educate, and yes to entertain.*"

She noted that Caribbean broadcasters could take advantage of particular features of digital technology, emphasizing that it "*substantially removes what were previously formidable barriers to entry into the businesses of broadcasting and its associated content production*"

Opportunities for Collaboration with African Broadcasters

The CBU was honoured to welcome to the event, the Director General of the African Union of Broadcasters, Mr. Gregoire Ndjaka. He thanked the CBU for the opportunity to learn about the progress it had made on issues very similar to those being faced by the AUB, including digital transition and content sharing.

In discussion with the CBU membership he indicated the strong possibilities for African-Caribbean collaboration on media issues.



Gregoire Ndjaka – Director-General African Union of Broadcasters speaking at the 48th CBU AGA *Credit: KCN Photography*

Induction of 2017 Hall of Fame Awardee

The sixteenth inductee into the Broadcasting Hall of Fame is Mr Victor Torres Crespo, Creative Director of Television at Cuba’s national broadcaster, the Instituto Cubano de Radio y Televisión (ICRT).

The induction took place during the Opening Ceremony of the 48th Annual General Assembly at the British Colonial Hilton Hotel in Nassau, the Bahamas.

Mr Crespo, a graduate of the State Institute of Theatre, Music and Cinematography in St. Petersburg, Russia has served Cuba and the region for more than three decades through television direction, training and production. He has previously been recognised in his homeland with the ICRT Artist of Merit and the José Martí Distinction for National Cultural Service. Among his regional achievements is leading the production of the Caribbean Song Festival.

Admission of new CBU Members

Two new members were formally admitted to the forty-four (44) member body at the 2017 Annual General Assembly. Recognized as a full member was the National Television Network of Guyana (NTN), and as an associate member, Teleislas, the television service of the San Andres Islands in Colombia.

Election of CBU Board 2017-19



CBU President, Gary Allen (3rd right) and members of the 2017-19 Board, flanked by the Secretary General (far right)

Following elections on the final day of the Assembly, the complete Board is:

1. Gary Allen – RJRGLEANER Group – Jamaica – President
2. Amalia Mai - Great Belize Productions – Vice-President
3. Beulah Jonis – St. Maarten Cable Television – Director
4. Trevor Parker – Antigua and Barbuda Broadcasting Systems – Director
5. Victor Torres – Instituto Cubano de Radio y Televisión – Director
6. Anthony Shaw – Starcom Network – Barbados – Director
7. Kayleaser Deveaux-Isaacs – Broadcasting Corporation of the Bahamas – Director
8. Lennox Cornette – National Communications Network – Guyana – Director
9. Bernard Pantin – DIRECTV Caribbean – Trinidad & Tobago – Director

Next CBU Assembly – August 2018

The AGA also expressed its deep appreciation to the Government and people of the Bahamas and the local organizing committee chaired by the Acting General Manager of ZNS, Mrs Kayleaser Deveaux-Isaacs for their excellent hospitality in the organizing of the event.

The 49th CBU Assembly will be held in August 2018 in Jamaica, in partnership with the Public Media Alliance, formerly the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association.

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