



NBTC/ITU Workshop on Roadmap for Introduction of Digital Terrestrial Radio Services in Thailand

Opening Remarks

Asst. Prof. Dr. Thawatchai Jittrapanun

Commissioner, National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission

Mr. Ioane Koroivuki, Regional Director, ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Miss Orasee Seerasa, Acting Executive Director, Digital Broadcasting Bureau
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning!

It is indeed my pleasure to be here with you today for the opening of the “NBTC/ITU Workshop on Roadmap for Introduction of Digital Terrestrial Radio Services in Thailand”.

Firstly, I would like to thank the ITU, especially, its Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific for co-organising this workshop. As most of you know, the NBTC and the ITU have a long history of cooperation in a number of activities, particularly in the development of broadcasting and telecommunications policies in Thailand.

I'd also like to welcome Mr. Ioane Koroivuki who has recently joined the ITU as the Regional Director. I hope that the NBTC and the ITU will further strengthen our partnership under his leadership.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Radio has been an important media in Thailand since it was introduced here many decades ago. Despite a positive growth and an increasing adoption rate of the emerging new media such as the Internet, the majority of Thai population still listen to the radio which is currently being broadcasted using the old analogue broadcasting technology. We can say that, in Thailand, almost every household has at least one radio receiver. In the rural areas in particular, people rely on radio as a mean to listen to news, especially about the government, politics, and entertainment. Radio broadcasting is also a vital channel for communication during the times of national or regional emergencies such as during natural disasters.

As you can see, the importance and benefits of radio broadcasting in this country are strongly evidenced. The NBTC, therefore, are committed to ensure a reasonable level of not only the accessibility and quality of the radio reception, but also the quality of the contents. We also are determined to improve the radio services and connect people nationwide by introducing digital terrestrial radio broadcasting services which will not only provide better quality of sound and services, but also open up new business opportunities in the industry.

Today, a number of countries have started to roll out the digital terrestrial radio broadcasting services. For example, the UK, Germany, Ireland, Australia, the US, and our neighbouring countries such as Japan and the Philippines.

Experiences from these countries together with the understanding of Thailand's radio industry landscape, we believe that the transition from analogue to digital radio broadcasting will be a real challenging endeavour from the legal, the technical, and the economics perspectives, even more so

than that of the digital TV.

Instead of completely replacing the analogue radio broadcasting, we view the digital version as a supplemental service aimed at a niche market at least in short-term, particularly the market for high income audiences who demand quality service and have enough purchasing power to afford the digital radio receivers.

Therefore, it is unlikely that the analogue radio broadcasting will be disappeared in a near future. This has been evidenced in many countries such as the UK, where despite the introduction of digital radio for more than a decade ago, they still have not finalised the date for analogue switch off due to a number of factors such as low adoption rate, competition from others emerging technology, changes in consumer's behaviour, to name a few.

I believe that Thailand is likely to face the same challenges. All in all, we consider these complexity and complication in the roll out of digital radio as another exciting and challenging opportunity for our team at NBTC to do for our country and hopefully leave some positive legacy that everyone could be proud of.

With the help and support from a number of players in the radio industry, including many of the participants here today, I believe that the digital radio roll out in Thailand will be another achievement that everyone will be proud of.

Dear participants,

I am delighted to see many of you today from various sectors and I am grateful for your participation. I am confident that the today's workshop will give you a better view on what we all are working on now and what benefits can be offered by the new technologies.

Finally, I wish you all enjoy the presentations by the experts, have a fruitful discussion and learn some new exciting things from the event.

With that, I now declare the NBTC/ITU Workshop on Roadmap for Introduction of Digital Terrestrial Radio Services in Thailand open.

Thank you.
