

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR CHINESE PROGRAMMES REPORT
(2006/2008)**

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INTRODUCTION

a) Background

1 The Advisory Committee on Chinese Programmes (ACCESS) [华文节目咨询委员会] was set up in 1994 to advise and feedback on the range and quality of Chinese programmes that are provided on Free-to-air Chinese TV channels and radio stations so as to enhance the broadcasters' role to entertain, inform and educate the viewers. The Committee also gives counsel on Subscription TV Chinese programmes.

2 This report by ACCESS covers the period July 2006 to June 2008. The current Committee was appointed by the Minister for Information, Communication and the Arts (MICA) for a two-year term with effect from July 2006. The list of Committee members can be found in **Annex A**.

b) The Committee's Work

3 The Committee undertook the following:

- a. Reviewed and gave feedback on Chinese programming on Channels 8 and U, and the Chinese radio stations;
- b. Reviewed and provided recommendations on the range and quality of Chinese programmes;
- c. Reviewed and provided feedback on censorship issues, including those arising from public complaints; and
- d. Advised the Media Development Authority (MDA) on content guidelines.

4 Under Associate Professor Lee Cheuk Yin's chairmanship, the Committee held nine meetings between July 2006 to June 2008. In order to seek more views about local Chinese programmes from both the industry and the community, the Committee also held dialogue sessions with the Independent Production Houses, newspaper editors, social workers and students. In addition, ACCESS met with SAFRA Radio on its new bilingual (Mandarin and English) programming format which was introduced on the broadcaster's Chinese radio station, 88.3JiaFM, in 2007.

5 The Committee also reviewed various genres of Chinese programmes to provide feedback to the broadcaster. Members of ACCESS formed several interest groups to monitor and assess the different genres, such as those for the Elderly, Variety and Entertainment programmes, Dramas, Children's programmes, News and Info-Educational programmes.

6 Through email consultation, the Committee was also able to engage in timely discussions regarding programming and advertising issues which surfaced in between meetings. Beyond specific issues, the Committee provided feedback on MDA's content guidelines, including those for Radio Sponsorship and Mobile Television content matters.

7 ACCESS' views were also sought with regard to public feedback on programming breaches by the broadcasters. The Committee notes that a total of eight fines were imposed on the broadcasters for contravening MDA's Codes and guidelines during 2006 to 2008, of which three were on the Chinese channels.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE RANGE AND QUALITY OF CHINESE PROGRAMMES

8 Overall, the Committee appreciates that both Channels 8 and U have strived to provide a wide range of locally produced programmes. Programmes on food and entertainment continued to dominate the airtime. The Committee hopes to see a more balanced range of programmes made available, including Info-Educational, Children and Elderly programmes.

a) News

9 The Committee applauds the introduction of real-time open captioning of the News Bulletins as it enables the deaf to follow the daily happenings in society through the subtitles, a move which allows the deaf to be better integrated into society as they are kept updated on current affairs.

10 At the same time, the Committee is of the view that the quality of News Bulletin could be further improved. Members observed that some newscasters not only made mistakes in their delivery of news, they also did not take the initiative to correct their mistakes on the spot. For example, when a newscaster mispronounced a road name or a person's name, he/she continued to read on without rectifying the mistake immediately. ACCESS feels that this should be corrected as News Bulletins are an essential means for viewers to obtain important news and information. As such, it is pertinent that all reports that are disseminated should be as factual and accurate as possible.

11 ACCESS notes that the different News Bulletins are branded differently, i.e. Channel 8's News Bulletin - "狮城今日" (*Singapore Today*) – shown at 6.30pm focuses on local news, while "十点新闻" (*News 8 At Ten*) contains more international news items. It, however, wishes to stress that there should be adequate coverage of both local and international news in all News Bulletins. This would enable viewers who tune into only one News Bulletin to be updated on all the relevant News happenings of the day.

b) Current Affairs, Cultural and Info-educational Programmes

12 The Committee would like to commend Channel U for its efforts in showcasing quality info-educational programmes during primetime slots. Programmes such as the locally-produced "稀游记" (*Find Me A Singaporean*), "心情工作室" (*My Life, My Profession*), "生活方程式" (*Lifewise*), and "家有喜事" (*Celebrations*) were well-researched and presented. These programmes were able to showcase interesting local personalities. "我们的大日子" (*Of Rites and Rituals*) was also able to feature different local and world cultures and traditions in a refreshing style.

13 Channel 8 was observed to have maintained its strength in producing Current Affairs programmes, such as the long-running series, "财经追击" (*Money Week*), "焦点" (*Focus*) and "前线追踪" (*Frontline*). In addition programmes like "特写: 百岁老人录" (*TR*

Report: Happy Century Old) and “*半百之后*” (*Twilight Years*) were informative and insightful. The members, however feel that there is scope for new and engaging ideas to be incorporated into programmes. For example, the morning talkshow on Channel 8, “*早安您好*” (*Good Morning Singapore*) could be revamped to be more exciting to meet viewers’ expectations.

14 Acquired documentary series such as “*再说长江*” (*Rediscovering the Yangtze River*), “*大国崛起*” (*Rise of the Great Nation*) and “*百家讲坛:易中天品三国*” (*Lecture Room:3 Kingdoms*) were excellent and rich in info-educational and historical value. Similarly, the acquired travelogue series “*世界那么大*” (*The World is so Big 3*) and “*台湾脚逛大陆*” (*Taiwan Walker*) were also well-researched and provided meaningful insights into different cultures and lifestyles across the world.

15 In particular, the Committee would like to commend the broadcaster for showing up-to-date programmes related to current events. These programmes include the Arts and Cultural programme “*什么艺思?*” (*What's Art*) which was shown in support of the Singapore Biennale, and the programme “*奥运精华游*” (*Olympic Walkers*) which was shown as a lead up to the upcoming Beijing Olympic Games 2008.

c) Programmes for the Elderly

16 As in the past, the Committee notes there continues to be a lack of programmes catering for the elderly on both Channels 8 and U. ACCESS notes that with the rapidly aging population in Singapore, there is a need for the broadcaster to look into providing more content catering for the increasing number of elderly viewers, beyond “*黄金年华*” (*Golden Age*) and the dialect operas which are offered currently. In addition, the Committee also notes that the broadcast timings of the traditional operas on Channel 8 were subject to frequent changes and might have caused much disruption to the viewing habits of the elderly viewers.

d) Dramas

17 Overall, the Committee feels that the quality of local dramas has remained consistent, covering a wide range of genres. These included thrillers, “*黄金路*” (*The Golden Path*) and “*十三鞭*” (*The Homecoming*); the romantic series “*幸福双人床*” (*Mars VS Venus*), “*幸运星*” (*Switched*) and “*情有可缘*” (*Falling in Love*) as well as wholesome family-oriented series such as “*宝贝父女兵*” (*Like Father Like Daughter*), “*爱·特别的你*” (*The Greatest Love of All*) and “*宝家卫国*” (*Honour and Passion*). Channel 8’s “*最高点*” (*The Peak*), in particular had an engaging storyline, which provided an interesting insight into the offshore, marine and maritime industry.

18 ACCESS notes that new timeslots had been introduced for locally produced dramas on Channel 8 to supplement existing slots, such as those on Mondays, 8pm to 9pm and Wednesdays, 8.30pm to 9pm. Dramas shown within these new timeslots, such as “*我们的饭店*” (*Our Rice House*) and “*飞越佛跳墙*” (*Folks Jump Over the Wall*), were well-produced and of high quality. The Committee finds these dramas heart-warming and engaging.

19 The Committee observes that some local dramas, such as “手足” (*Kinship*), “钻石情缘” (*An Enchanted Life*) and “大男人小男人” (*Measure of Man*), had occasionally capitalised on inappropriate themes to gain more viewership. For example, the drama serial “手足” (*Kinship*) placed much prominence on undesirable values such as teenage delinquency and extra-marital affairs. The Committee acknowledges that while the drama ended on a positive note as the undesirable characters got their just rewards, members felt that viewers who do not watch the drama in its entirety could be misled.

20 The Committee finds that the theme of violence was exploited and sensationalised within the Ch 8 drama, “破茧而出” (*Metamorphosis*). In particular, there was an episode which had contained prolonged and intense scenes of violence and brutality towards women. This was unnecessary and could also instill fear in younger viewers, especially since it was scheduled during Family Viewing Hours.

e) Variety and Entertainment Programmes

21 The Committee notes that the broadcaster had shown a more diverse range of variety and entertainment programmes on both Channel 8 and U.

22 Travelogues such as “代你看世界” (*Adventure Clicks*), “贤人指路” (*Lead Me On*), “我的导游是明星2” (*My Star Guide 2*) and “有话好好说 3” (*Say It If You Dare*), and lifestyle programmes like “Smart省钱王” (*King of Thrift*); “HDB太太2” (*HDB Tai Tai*), “简单就是美” (*So Simple 2*), “抢摊大行动” (*Buzzing Cashier*), “物物大交换II” (*Bartar Trade 2*), were not only engaging and entertaining for viewers but also contained useful nuggets of information.

23 The Committee especially would like to applaud the broadcaster for introducing a new concept in its programme “名厨上菜” (*I Cook for U*). This programme had an interesting idea where chefs were given the opportunity to express their appreciation for people they admired. In particular, the head chef of Santaro restaurant, Chef Santaro Li, cooked for Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew and his family, while the President of the Singapore Chefs Association, Chef Eric Teo, cooked for his lost-long friend of 30 years, who had helped him enormously in school.

24 Programmes such as “超越红点” (*Beyond the Red Dot*), “爱上小红点” (*Code Red*) and “全新体验” (*Wow Singapore*) were able to showcase daily Singaporean sights, sounds and interesting local personalities in a refreshing and engaging manner. In particular, “全新体验” (*Wow Singapore*) provided a unique take on Singaporean lifestyle, by engaging tourists to be part of the daily happenings in Singapore which are not commonly known to foreigners. This included visiting shops and hawker centres located at heartlands such as Toa Payoh and Bishan for an immersion into local culture.

25 Info-tainment programmes such as “赢了Law” (*Law By Law*), “正是如此 2” (*Get It Right 2*), “职场新版图” (*Career Blueprint*), “起飞” (*Taking Off*), “洁净所能, 水中乐” (*The ABCs of Water*), and “神机妙算” (*Dollar & Sense*) were found to be both entertaining and informative by ACCESS. The Committee notes that they were able to impart useful knowledge and advice on issues ranging from legal matters, proper use of languages, building entrepreneurial spirit to water conservation and financial investment guides, in an easily-comprehensible manner.

26 On areas for improvement, the Committee observes that over the past two years, there has been a significant increase in the number of programmes sponsored by various organisations such as beauty salons and slimming centres. These programmes include: “美疗专家3” (*Beauty Experts 3*), “完美大挑战2” (*Citispa Beauty Perfection*); “ADONIS 美丽论谈” (*Adonis Beauty Chatterbox*) and “魅力风采25” (*Jean Yip’s Beautiful 25*). ACCESS is of the view that such programmes were too commercialised and served as another platform for the sponsors to publicise their products and services, instead of providing objective information to viewers. ACCESS therefore advises that programmes offering information should be more objective unless they are featured as informercials aired at appropriate times.

f) Children and Youth Programmes

27 Children’s programmes continue to be lacking on Channels 8 and U. Currently, Chinese Children’s programmes are only available on weekend mornings on Channel 8, from 8am to 11am. This is severe shortfall as compared to English Children’s programmes which are available on Kids Central from 9am to 6.30pm on weekdays and from 8am to 1pm on weekends. Despite previous calls for more Chinese Children’s programmes, the Committee notes that such content is still not made available.

28 However, with regard to Children’s programmes available on Channel 8’s weekend children belt, the Committee feels that “旧式...不一样” (*Mindy’s Lost and Found*), “果实中的童话” (*City Fables*), and “超级便当” (*My Yummy Lunchbox*) and “贝贝的零用钱” (*Money Meg*) contained good info-educational content for children.

29 On Youth programmes, ACCESS finds “青春游走” (*Youth Decode*), to be engaging and interesting in profiling youths and their aspirations.

30 In addition, the Committee is pleased with the commissioning of a new youth programme series, “华文智多星” (*Chinese Language Challenge*). As a result of ACCESS’ facilitation, the Chinese Language & Culture Fund (中华语言文化基金), together with MDA, commissioned the programme to enable secondary school students compete on their knowledge of Chinese language, idioms and culture. The 13-episode challenge was poised to be a mix between the English programmes, “*The Arena*” and “*Singapore’s Brainiest Kids*”. The Committee commends host Guo Liang (郭亮) for his professionalism in guiding and encouraging the students during the programme. The Committee hopes that such programmes which cater to the youths and promote Chinese culture will continue to be a staple on the Chinese channels at prime time.

DIALOGUE WITH INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION HOUSES, SOCIAL WORKERS, NEWSPAPER EDITORS AND STUDENTS.

31 The key findings and recommendations arising from ACCESS’ dialogue sessions with representatives from the local independent production houses and newspaper editors, social workers and students in 2007 are as follows:

a) Industry Perspective: Dialogue with Independent Production Houses

32 For the first time, besides the views from the broadcaster, the Committee also gained additional insights about the local Chinese media scene from its players. Representatives from several production houses informed that while they had wanted to venture into new or niche programme genres such as Children's programmes or those for the Elderly, they have been limited by financial and manpower constraints. ACCESS feels that if more programmes could be outsourced to the independent production houses, there would be more creative ideas, leading to greater variety of programmes for local broadcasting.

33 The representatives from the independent production houses concurred with ACCESS that there was a lack of Chinese Children's programmes and that the current timeslot allocated for Children's programmes on Channel 8 is not optimal. In addition, they said that programmes catered for a niche audience, such as Children's, Elderly or Info-Educational programmes were usually not given prime timeslots or promoted adequately.

34 The Committee also learnt that filming with children is challenging as the production schedule has to take into account the children's school curriculum time. In addition, ACCESS found out that there is a shortage of local media talents, including child actors, producers and scriptwriters entering into Chinese productions as many young Singaporeans' grasp of the language is not strong. As such, the Committee feels that it would be useful if training classes are conducted to build up the pool of local media talents proficient in Mandarin.

b) Community Perspective: Dialogue with Newspaper Editors, Social Workers and Students

35 Public insights into News Bulletins, Current Affairs & Info-Educational, Children's, Variety and Entertainment programmes were obtained during the dialogue with the community representatives, comprising students and members from social and self-help groups held in June 07.

36 The community representatives noted that the various News Bulletins on both Channels 8 and U appear to be repeats of one another as they shared the same presentation style and format. They also found it unprofessional that entertainment news and programme trailers for upcoming programmes especially those belonging to the broadcaster, were often incorporated and promoted within the News.

37 For Variety and Entertainment programmes, the community representatives shared ACCESS' views that there were too many sponsored and commercialised programmes, especially those for beauty salons and slimming centers. They also found variety programmes such as "*Stars, Beat it!*" (王牌对王牌) and "*Makeover Pte Ltd*" (请你来变装) to be uncreative..

38 The community representatives felt that the proliferation of talent search programmes such as "*绝对SuperStar*" (*Project Superstar*) and "*校园SuperStar*" (*Campus Superstar*) should take care not to fuel unrealistic expectations among youth about becoming celebrities. Noting that such talent search programmes received much

publicity and exposure, the community representatives expressed hope that quality and well-researched programmes such as “*大国崛起*” (*Rise of the Great Nation*) could also be promoted as extensively.

c) Dialogue with SAFRA Radio Regarding its Bilingual Radio Format on 88.3JIA FM

39 During its term, ACCESS also met up with SAFRA Radio regarding its new bilingual programming format on its Chinese radio station, 88.3JiaFM, which was launched in June 2007. This includes a daily bilingual morning talkshow on weekdays and two English songs per hour on the station.

40 ACCESS holds the view that the standard of both Mandarin and English should be maintained within the bilingual talkshow. As 88.3JiaFM is predominantly a Chinese radio station, the Committee feels that while the entertainment and lifestyle information could be reported in English, important information such as News Bulletins, weather reports and traffic updates should only be aired in Mandarin. This would ensure that important messages are effectively conveyed to all listeners, especially those who are not conversant in English.

41 Noting the interest in bilingual programmes, the Committee feels that it would be interesting to feature foreigners who are learning Mandarin within TV and radio programmes. Such a programme could act as an alternative learning platform for people who are also learning Mandarin, and at the same time, inject more diversity and creativity into the local broadcasting scene.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

42 From the observations about various genres of Chinese programmes, the following are ACCESS’ recommendation for local broadcasters:

a) News Bulletins

43 The Committee takes the position that mistakes made during delivery of news should be corrected immediately to ensure that information imparted is factual and accurate. To help improve the standard of news delivery, the Committee also recommends that the news editors responsible for scripting the reports improve on their language and writing skills as well.

44 In order to encourage more viewers to watch tune into News Bulletins on TV and also to improve the quality of the Bulletins, ACCESS recommends that greater depth and analysis of news items could be provided within the News Bulletins, such as through interviews with various experts or persons related to the news items. ACCESS reiterates that all News Bulletins should have adequate coverage of both local and international news.

45 ACCESS is of the view that entertainment news and trailers for up-coming programmes need not be part of the regular News Bulletins as such information could be provided in other entertainment or lifestyle programmes. Instead, the focus should be on

more coverage of local and international developments, including more in-depth reporting.

b) Current Affairs, Cultural and Info-Educational Programmes

46 While the broadcaster has shown effort in providing more Current Affairs, Cultural and Info-Educational programmes on TV, ACCESS feels that there is still room for improvement for more of such programmes to be shown. The Committee hopes that these programmes will be featured on a more regular basis on Channels 8 and U, and that they will be better scheduled and promoted so that more viewers would be aware of them.

47 To increase the range and choice of Chinese Info-Educational programmes available, ACCESS encourages MediaCorp TV to continue showing quality acquired Current Affairs, Cultural and Info-Educational programmes. The Committee also encourages MediaCorp to look into and emulate good programmes from other broadcasters and TV channels such as Radio Television Hong Kong, STAR TV's Phoenix Chinese Channel and PBS in America.

c) Programmes for the Elderly

48 With the changes to the broadcast timing of “*黄金年华*” (*Golden Age*) to 1.30pm - 2.30pm on Saturdays, ACCESS feels strongly that more efforts should be put into providing programmes for the elderly on weekdays. Such programmes could include info-tainment content such as those on healthy eating habits; sports for elderly (e.g. *Tai Chi*); cooking programmes; and lifestyle content such as those on hobbies or handicraft. In addition, the Committee is also of the view that sufficient notice should be given to viewers when changes are made to the programming lineup so that viewers are kept informed. This is especially important for Elderly viewers as programmes catering to them are already limited. Sudden changes to the programme schedule will affect their viewing habits.

d) Dramas

49 ACCESS recommends that drama serials should not exploit undesirable values, themes or scenes in order to gain more viewership. The continual presence of such negative themes, especially for long-form dramas which span a long broadcast period, will have an impact on viewers, especially when scheduled during Family Viewing Hours.

50 The Committee encourages the broadcaster to continuously provide a diverse range of drama serials on both Channels 8 and U, especially with the introduction of the new timeslots for drama serials on Channel 8. In addition, ACCESS would also like to urge the use of proper Mandarin within the dramas by minimizing the use of Singlish, as well as excessive colloquial and adulterated Mandarin.

e) Variety and Entertainment Programmes

51 The Committee would like sponsored and commercialised variety programmes to be limited so that viewers would not be inundated with excessive advertising and sales messages.

52 ACCESS would also like to urge the broadcaster to exercise greater caution and discretion in the selection of visuals and clothing items used in locally produced variety programmes. For example, clothing with words which could offend the sensitivities of viewers should be avoided.

f) Children's and Youth Programmes

53 The Committee would like to reiterate its recommendation for the broadcaster to introduce more Children and Youth programmes. In particular, ACCESS urges Channels 8 and U to have a daily timebelt for Children and Youth programmes, which could be from 5pm to 6pm.

54 ACCESS also recommends that besides English Children's programmes, Children's programmes in other languages should be also shown on Kid's Central. In addition, Children's programmes shown on Channel 8's children belt could also be cross promoted on Kids Central so that the programmes could reach out to more young viewers.

55 In order to provide more programme choices for Children, ACCESS recommends that the broadcaster take a cue from successful Children's programmes such as the highly popular "Hi 5" from Australia and adapts them into a Mandarin version for local context.

56 For Youth programmes, ACCESS recommends that TV coverage be given for school events such as the National Secondary Schools Chinese Debate (新加坡中学华语辩论会). In doing so, the broadcaster can tap into existing events rather than to spend additional resources to create new programmes. Such programmes would also be able to act as a platform for students to identify with and build up their sense of belonging to their schools.

57 The Committee is of the view that Youth programmes which are positioned as a platform for an exchange of views between youths and adults, such as "小孩不笨, 谁才笨" (*I Not Stupid Forum*), should be presented appropriately in order to convey the correct values to impressionable youths especially when featuring sensitive topics such as sex. ACCESS suggests that professionals and counselors be always featured prominently to provide professional advice for youths.

g) Better Scheduling of Programmes

58 The Committee recommends strongly that all programmes shown during Family Viewing Hours be suitable for a general audience. Some examples of content unsuitable for broadcast during Family Viewing Hours, i.e. before 10pm, which were brought to the attention of the Committee include:

- (i) A music video – "你给的" by local singer, Chew Sin Huey (石欣垒) – showing romanticised and glamourised images of suicide;
- (ii) Channel U's "都是大发现" (*On the Beat 2*) showing sensual and lap-top dancing techniques designed to improve the relationship between a couple; and

- (iii) Ch 8's drama “破茧而出” (*Metamorphosis*), containing graphic scenes of violence and brutality.

59 Where certain episodes of programmes contain images and scenes potentially disturbing for young children, ACCESS recommends that the broadcaster make use of viewing disclaimers to keep the viewers informed. It is, however the broadcaster's responsibility to ensure that programmes during Family Viewing Hour remain suitable for a general audience.

h) Recommendations for Radio Programmes

60 Generally, for radio programmes, ACCESS recommends that all radio DJs should attend professional vocal and language training classes to build up their language expertise and professionalism so as to avoid mistakes in their delivery. For example, the Committee found that the standard of Mandarin on the Chinese music and infotainment radio stations needs to be improved, as some DJs have made mistakes in their delivery of the News Bulletins. ACCESS also observed that dialect and Singlish were sometimes used across the various radio stations.

61 In addition, the Committee recommends that training classes for presenters include a briefing on media ethics so that radio professionals are familiar with MDA's programming guidelines and avoid topics which may offend listeners.

i) Penalty Framework

62 ACCESS notes that the Penalty Framework was introduced in 1998 and has remained unchanged for the past 10 years. It recommends that the quantum of fines be increased to remain an effective deterrent against breaches to MDA's guidelines.

CONCLUSION

63 During its term, ACCESS has been encouraged by the feedback provided by both the Committee members and members of the public. Specifically, the Committee feels that the feedback provided gives the broadcasters a good sensing of community standards.

64 Acknowledging the impact and importance of the mass media to the community, ACCESS urges all broadcasters to constantly review and raise the quality of its content to stay relevant to changing expectations of the audiences. This is even more pertinent as audiences' expectations will be heightened with increased exposure to more foreign content across the different media platforms.

65 In particular, the Committee holds the view that the Free-To-Air TV channels should not neglect the interests of the Elderly viewers and the promotion of Chinese culture and language among its young viewers, especially during prime timeslots.

66 ACCESS hopes that all broadcasters will take the recommendations into consideration in improving their offerings. This will lead to a more diversified and creative Chinese broadcast scene in Singapore.

67 Responses from the broadcasters to the Report can be found in Annex B.

Annex A

Chairman:

Associate Professor Lee Cheuk Yin (李焯然博士)
Associate Professor
Dept of Chinese Studies
National University of Singapore

Members:

Mr Chan Chee Pong (陈志邦先生)
Director
Pace Strategic Business Consultancy

Mdm Claire Chiang (张齐娥女士)
Managing Director
Banyan Tree Gallery (S) Pte Ltd

Mr Chia Ti Yu (谢智友先生)
Manager
Finance & Purchasing,
ITE College East

Mr Chia Wei Wen (谢伟文先生)
Country Officer (PRC)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Dr Chou Mei Ling (周美伶博士)
Consultant Psychologist
Centre for Effective Living Pte Ltd
Camden Medical Centre

Mr Gui Kai Chong (魏凯仲先生)
Auditor
Shangyew Public Accounting Corporation

Associate Professor Hao Xiaoming (郝晓鸣副教授)
Associate Chair (Academic),
Head of Department, Electronic & Broadcast Media
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Mr Hee Theng Fong (许廷芳律师)
Lawyer
Hee Theng Fong & Co

Mrs Hwang-Lee Poh See (李宝丝女士)
Chief Executive Officer/Principal
Patson's Learning Centre

Mr Leng Chin Fai (凌展辉先生)

Executive Director
Fei Yue Community Service

Ms Pang Cheng Lian (冯清莲女士)

First Vice President & Special Assistant to the Chairman
United Overseas Bank

Ms Peggie Chua (蔡翠娥女士)

President
The Teochew Drama Association
and Event Project Director, PR Consultant

Prof Phua Kok Khoo (潘国驹教授)

Chairman & Editor-in-Chief
World Scientific Publishing Co Pte Ltd

Mrs Tan-Huang Shuo Mei (黄鑠媚女士)

Director
Communications & Service Quality,
Singapore General Hospital

Ms Tan Miao Ling (陈妙玲女士)

Principal
Guangyang Secondary School

Ms Toh Shi Ling, Shirleen (卓诗翎小姐)

Teacher
Tanjong Katong Secondary School

Mr Wan Shung Ming (尹崇明先生)

Executive Director
Tin Sing Goldsmiths Pte Ltd

Mr Wong Lin Tam (王连三先生)

Principal Consultant
Wang Media Consulting Pte Ltd

Ms Xie Hui Qun (谢惠群小姐)

Marketing Executive
SPBI (Asia-Pacific) Pte. Ltd.

Mr Yong Yiam Woon, Steven (熊念文先生)

Senior System Analyst
Urban Redevelopment Authority

ANNEX B

The following are the responses from the broadcasters to ACCESS' feedback and recommendations:

a) MEDIACORP'S RESPONSE**Observation of Chinese Programmes**News

MediaCorp fully understands and notes the Committee's concern about the quality of the News Bulletins and the newscasters' delivery, and would be more mindful henceforth.

The broadcaster would like to assure the Committee that important news - local or international - would be adequately covered in all news belts regardless of the belts' focus. In segregating the news belts, we are ensuring that repetition is minimized such that viewers are not made to sit through the same stories. The focus of the belt is planned with the audience's availability in mind.

Current Affairs, Cultural and Info-educational Programmes

MediaCorp would like to thank the Committee for the commendation on Channel 8's "家有喜事" (*Celebration*) and "我们的大日子" (*Of Rites and Rituals*) and Channel U's "心情工作室" (*My Life, My Profession*).

Likewise for "早安您好" (*Good Morning, Singapore*), MediaCorp would like to point out that a revamp had been effected in March 2008. The newly added segments are 法律信箱 (which keeps viewers informed about their legal rights), 巴刹传真 (which tells viewers what the prices of the produce) and 早安书坊 (which is our very own Chinese book club). We have also strengthened 新闻热点, which is now more updated and analytical (for instance, the team had linked up to Sichuan following the earthquake and to US for the Obama-Hillary race). The 校园开讲 has also been enhanced, with link between location and studio to allow real-time interaction.

Programmes for the Elderly

The programmes on Channels 8 and U cater to the mass audiences. Nonetheless, to cater to the specific group of elderly viewers who are more niche in their preferences and adopting the Committee's previous suggestions, MediaCorp attempted to shift dialect operas to a more accessible time-belt on Saturday afternoons. The response was not encouraging and, as such, the opera time-belt was reverted back to Fridays (the same as Golden Age, which is targeted at senior citizens).

"黄金年华" (*Golden Age*) will be split into 2 programmes, come October 2008. The Golden Stage, a favourite of the elderly viewers where they can see their peers perform,

will be extended to 1 hour. The information-providing bit would be extended into a half-hour magazine programme.

Dramas

MediaCorp notes the Committee's feedback about the excessive violence in Channel 8's "破茧而出" (*Metamorphosis*). The broadcaster would like to assure the Committee that it is mindful of the messages borne by its serials, which is why all of its serials bear very positive messages. The word "drama" entails vivid, emotional and dramatic elements the devoid of which, would fizzle interest. MediaCorp very much appreciates the Committee's acknowledgment that our serials are ultimately of good morals and would further appreciate understanding that unlike single-episode dramas, serials' plots would unravel over its length.

Variety Programmes

MediaCorp has taken note on the Committee's concern on the influx of variety and info-ed programmes commissioned by beauty and slimming clients, and would be mindful of their execution.

Children and Youth Programmes

Strictly speaking, there is no provision for children's programming on Channel U, which is targeted at viewers 15 years and above. Chinese programmes for children are consolidated on Channel 8 and MediaCorp has dedicated time-belts for kids' programmes on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

Unlike Central, which is focused on specific pockets of audiences, Channel 8 caters to all Chinese-speaking audiences, across all age-groups and from all walks of life. Catering to the needs of all our audiences makes it difficult for the channel to devote more time for kids' programmes.

Key Recommendations

News Bulletins

News bulletins are brief accounts of news events featured prominently, meant to keep the viewers abreast about the goings-on. MediaCorp's news bulletins do provide some analysis, in the form of the segment "新闻大解剖".

In response to ACCESS' call for more depth and analysis within news bulletins, the broadcaster explained that the in-depth analysis and reports of news events are covered by Current Affairs programmes such as "焦点" (*Focus*), "前线追踪" (*Frontline*) and "财经追击" (*Money Week*), as we explore the events and their effects on Singaporeans.

Current Affairs, Cultural and Info-educational Programmes

MediaCorp notes the Committee's encouragement to emulate good programmes of this genre from broadcasters internationally and in the region.

Programmes for the Elderly

MediaCorp would like to reiterate there will be an additional half-hour magazine programme (with contents similar to that recommended by the Committee) targeted at the elderly viewers. This would be in a new time-slot, on Thursdays, from October 2008. There will be trailers to inform viewers about this programme as well as the 1-hour “*黄金年华*” (*Golden Age*) programme.

Dramas

MediaCorp has taken note of the Committee’s recommendation to continuously provide a diverse range of drama serials on Channels 8 and U, as well as the call for proper Mandarin usage.

Variety and Entertainment Programmes

Likewise, MediaCorp has taken note of the Committee’s reminder to exercise more discretion and greater caution when selecting the visuals and clothing items.

Children’s and Youth Programmes

Unlike Central, which is focused on specific pockets of audiences, Channel 8 caters to all Chinese-speaking audiences, across all age-groups and from all walks of life. Setting a kids’ time-belt between 5pm and 6pm daily would result in the exclusion of the housewives and other viewers who are available in that time pocket. Besides, half of the children population (who are in the afternoon session) would not be home during this time pocket.

MediaCorp notes the Committee’s recommendation to cross-promote our kids’ programmes on Kids’ Central and would work with them further on this. At the same time, MediaCorp would like to mention that Channel 8 had previously aired a kids’ song and dance programme much like Hi-5. The programme was “*A-ha Kids*” (*啊哈快乐派*).

MediaCorp would like to reassure viewers that professionals’ and counsellors’ advice have always been incorporated within programmes that involve the exchange of views, such as “*小孩不笨, 谁才笨*” (*I Not Stupid Forum*),

Recommendations for Radio Programmes

The Chinese radio stations have always strived to maintain a high standard of language on air. The presenters on Capital 95.8FM have a good command of the language and the station continues to emphasize the importance of the language through its programmes. YES 93.3FM and Love 97.2FM have a bilingual audience and English is sometimes used in the broadcasts to cater to the needs of the listeners. Training by language teachers is also conducted regularly for all presenters.

MediaCorp Radio informed that workshops on compliance and code of ethics are conducted on an ongoing basis for all presenters.

Conclusion

MediaCorp would like to thank ACCESS for all the feedback and suggestions provided and would take note of all relevant points made. At the same time, MediaCorp would strive to continually improve and strike a balance in our programming, to take care of all stakeholders' needs.

b) SAFRA RADIO'S RESPONSE

Observation and Recommendations for Radio Programmes

SAFRA Radio agrees with the comments that as a predominately Chinese radio station, 88.3Jia FM will air important information such as News Bulletins, weather reports and traffic updates in Mandarin. SAFRA Radio will also look into the recommendation given by the Committee to feature foreigners who are learning Mandarin within radio programmes.

For news bulletins, SAFRA Radio will take note of the Committee's recommendations that news editor should improve on their language and writing skills.

c) SPH UNIONWORKS' RESPONSE

Observation and Recommendations for Radio Programmes

SPH UnionWorks holds the view that the mass media has the responsibility to use standard Mandarin. As an infotainment radio station, Radio 100.3FM has always see it as necessary to use standard Mandarin, especially within its News and info-educational programmes. The station feels that the use of colloquial Mandarin within its radio talkshows and lifestyle programmes would be able to appeal to listeners more.