



Press Release

“NHK Amateur Singing Contest”

~To be Transmitted live in

High Definition from Singapore~

October 30, 2003 – Television history will be made this Sunday, 2 November 2003, when a song competition is beamed live on high-definition TV to audiences in Japan and other parts of the world.

NHK will transmit the *Amateur Singing Contest (Nodojiman)* via satellite from Suntec Singapore Convention Hall.

The weekly Japanese musical show, an audience participation event organised by NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation), features groups and soloists competing to reach the grand finals, which will be held this Sunday.

Viewers in Singapore will be able to receive the programme on Starhub’s NHK channel (Channel 43) at 11.15am, Singapore time (12.15pm - Japan time) on Sunday, 2 November. Viewers in Japan will also be able to receive the programme via NHK General TV, NHK-BS2 and BS-hi (digital satellite HD channel). The broadcast signal will be uplinked from the Bukit Timah earth station to NHK Tokyo Broadcasting Center via JCSAT-2A with an additional back-up system. The transmission route details are attached in Annex A.

The President of NHK, Mr Katsuji Ebisawa said, “I sincerely hope that this innovative Hi-Vision (NHK’s HDTV system) live transmission will deepen mutual understanding and contribute to the promotion of cultural exchange through broadcasting between Singapore and Japan. I would like to express my profound gratitude to those who are involved in the realisation of this significant project, *The NHK Amateur Singing Contest*, in Singapore.”

The Chief Executive Officer of the Media Development Authority, Mr Lim Hock Chuan, said the live transmission marks a milestone for the digital broadcasting industry.

“We are delighted that NHK has chosen Singapore to hold this global event. It is a testimony of Singapore's capabilities to support digital broadcasting. Digital media is a growth industry and the Media Development Authority will continue to support the development of the digital broadcasting industry in Singapore. This is in line with our vision of developing Singapore into a vibrant global media city under our Media 21 strategic plan,” he said.

In addition to the main contest, NHK will be showing the preliminary rounds of the contest and other NHK programmes at the foyer of the Convention Hall. All the programmes were also recorded on HD and will be shown on a 50-inch HDTV set. This is to allow the audience to enjoy the quality of HD in its fullest. For screening details, see Annex B.

HD technology will soon be fully applied in the digital terrestrial TV service in Japan. The digital terrestrial broadcasting is a gateway to the creation of a new broadcasting culture in the 21st century. For the status of digital TV in Japan, see Annex C.

Exhibition of HDTV and NHK World

The preliminary rounds of the contest and the main contest will be shown on a 50-inch HDTV screen at the Convention Hall.

1. HDTV Exhibition

Screenings:

a) 31 October

The *NHK Amateur Singing Contest* preliminary rounds will be shown two days before the contest. Audience can watch it with a time lag of 20 to 30 minutes.

b) 2 November

In addition to the preliminary rounds, NHK will broadcast other programs such as *NHK Special: Simultaneous Live Broadcast of the Auroras from the Arctic and the Antarctic* (aired on 20 September in Japan).

2. NHK World Exhibition

The aim of the exhibition is to give the audience an opportunity to enjoy NHK's global television and radio service, "NHK World". Besides being able to view programmes from "NHK World Premium", they can also listen to the news programs and security information of foreign countries aired in 22 languages on Radio Japan.

Status of Digital TV in Japan.

Hi-Vision (NHK's HDTV system)

NHK has been conducting research and development in the field of Hi-Vision (HDTV) since 1964, as part of our unwavering commitment to quality. HDTV has 1,125 scanning lines that give HDTV pictures their detailed realism. HDTV uses a wide-screen format with a 16:9 aspect ratio that provides a more powerful viewing experience. An HDTV image has five times more visual information than a conventional television picture. NHK broadcasts a wide range of HDTV programs that include news, drama, sports and documentaries, all with breathtaking realism provided by high-definition quality pictures and high-fidelity sound.

Digital Satellite Broadcasting

Launched in December 2000, NHK's Digital Hi-Vision is the world's first 24-hour HDTV-only satellite channel. Programs of every genre including news, documentaries, sports, drama, music and entertainment are shown on this channel. It also offers such advanced features as data broadcasting and interactive TV.

Digital satellite broadcasting was first launched in the U.S.A. in 1994, and it is now available in over 60 countries/regions on more than 5,800 channels including services via BS (broadcasting satellite) and CS (communication satellite). While many European countries are placing more weight on multi-channel services, some of the satellite channels in the U.S.A. and South Korea are providing HDTV services, featuring high picture quality. Europe is also planning to start HDTV services in January 2004.

NHK HD Digital Terrestrial Broadcasting Commences on December 1

The transition to digital broadcasting has become a global trend. Digital terrestrial broadcasting was first launched in the U.K. in 1998, and it is now available in 10 other countries – Singapore, the U.S.A., Sweden, Spain, Australia, Finland, South Korea, Germany, Canada, and the Netherlands. Four of these countries, the U.S.A., South Korea, Australia, and Canada, are broadcasting in HD. Singapore is transmitting its HD broadcasts for mobile terminals. NHK will launch its digital terrestrial broadcasting, fully applying HD technology, on December 1st in the metropolitan parts of Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya. China has been planning to start its experimental broadcasting in 2003 with its own system.

Hi-Vision (NHK's HDTV system), which will be at the heart of Japan's digital terrestrial TV broadcasting, was adopted as the international studio standard by the ITU in 2000.

Digital Future

The leading technology of HDTV and other digital technologies were developed in NHK Science and Technical Research Laboratories. The Laboratories have been studying a variety of services and technologies including super high-resolution television with 4000 scanning lines. Its picture resolution will be 16 times better than the current HDTV system. We aim to exhibit this system as Japan's most advanced equipment in the International Exhibition scheduled in 2005 in Aichi prefecture, Japan.

Laboratory staffs are also working on other research and development such as the broadcasting service based on home servers which enables highlight viewing, and the Flexible Film Display units that can be folded and carried around.