

# **Transforming BBC World Service for a digital age: a strategy for 2010 and beyond**

Speech to staff  
by  
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## **Introduction**

Good morning and thank you for coming to hear about our strategy to take the World Service to 2010 and the exciting plans that lie at the heart of it. A special welcome to those of you joining us from our international offices outside the UK, and the wider BBC in the UK.

The changes I am going to outline today will affect everyone who works for the BBC World Service, and the millions of listeners and new media users who value it across the globe. They will also be of considerable interest to many BBC colleagues who either work now, or have worked in the past, for the World Service and are among its most passionate supporters.

All of you have waited patiently to learn the outcome of the 2010 work. It has been a particularly anxious time since the spring, when speculation about the future of the services began to emerge. It is a difficult time for some of us, but also a time of opportunity too.

BBC World Service, as we have known it, is about to change profoundly.

It adds up to the biggest transformation of the World Service since the end of the Second World War – and one of the most far-reaching since the BBC began international broadcasting more than 70 years ago.

The strategy was approved by the BBC Governors last week. The Foreign Secretary has given his approval to the opening and closing of services. He is obliged to do so under our Broadcasting Agreement with the Foreign Office.

## **The heart of this new strategy**

At its heart, this strategy means a radical change in the range and scale of the news services we can and will offer global audiences in this new digital age.

Our world and the needs of our audiences are changing faster than any of our predecessors could ever have imagined. Audiences are demanding new multi-media services from us.

However difficult it is to make changes personally and professionally, audiences come first. But, we cannot afford to provide the full range of multi-media services to everyone.

It's about providing the right services for each market. We have to make difficult choices and in this plan to take us to 2010, we have made them.

## **Background to the changes: the role of the WS2010 process and the journey over the past year**

But before I go into detail on the future shape of the World Service, let me explain how we have got here. I also want to stress the very important part the World Service 2010 sessions played in its creation.

This new strategy is the result of over a year of hard work, analysis and deliberation by the World Service Management Board, steered by the strategy team under Fred Martenson's very able leadership.

## **How this strategy fits with the Green Paper**

You will remember the Government's Green Paper on the future of the BBC as a whole, which was published in the spring. It called for a "bold and radical reassessment of our strategy", echoing our own internal views.

The Green Paper also had another clear message: there were no extra funds for any new services and funding for them must be found from existing resources and through reprioritisation.

In response, we pledged to ensure that we invest our "limited Grant-in-Aid resources where they are most needed", and we welcomed the opportunity to review the present portfolio of 43 languages with "a

view to significant change”.

We also wanted to involve as many of you as we could through the World Service 2010 sessions. It was vital you played a full part in the creation of this plan.

I want to thank all of you who took part.

We noticed how the mood changed over time; from apprehension and curiosity to excitement and expectation. We argued over the detail, but a consensus emerged that change was necessary.

You believed radio and, more recently, online were a very important part of what we do, but we had to face up to, and do something about, the competitive threat of television, the growth of the web and the arrival of the iPod generation.

### **Making choices within finite resources**

Some people have asked: “why can’t we get more money to make new investments and keep everything else? Surely the World Service is important enough, especially in the current global climate?”

It is hard to secure more funds when the income of the BBC World Service is at its highest level in real terms since the early 1990s.

We have kept some funds back from the last two spending rounds in 2002 and 2004 to help finance our new plans.

But the sums involved in carrying out a true multi-media strategy are considerable, particularly when it comes to television.

The result is that, by the time the current Spending Review ends, we are going to redirect up to 20% of our total operating budget into new high priority activities and covering rising costs.

All the savings we make – and I cannot stress this too strongly – are going to be reinvested into BBC World Service.

### **The BBC World Service vision for 2010**

Let me turn to the overall vision of BBC World Service. We have started by being clear about our core aim. It is:

“to be the world’s best known, most creative and most respected voice in international news, thereby bringing benefit to the UK, the BBC and to audiences around the world.”

But we have added a critical extra element: “most creative”. It has always been an implicit part of our vision but we need to be more explicit about it. Why?

Because creativity is at the heart of what we do.

It is the driver of our world class journalism and other outstanding output. We have recently seen how we can meet this aspiration with our seasons on China, Africa and the “Who Runs Your World?” season. Or the way we responded to a year of unprecedented news events: Beslan, the tsunami, the London bombs and, lately, the earthquake in South Asia.

### **Our mission up to 2010**

How will we deliver on this ambitious vision? We need:

“to provide the most trusted, relevant and high quality international news in the world, and an

indispensable service of independent analysis, with an international perspective, which promotes greater understanding of complex issues.”

The key words here are “independent” and “international”.

We serve no political or commercial interests, only those of our audiences. Our international perspective is a vital quality in a world where global forces are ever more powerful.

The next element of our work is to enable audiences everywhere to connect with each other. We need:

“a ‘global conversation’ – which transcends international boundaries and cultural divides, and gives audiences opportunities to create, publish and share their own views and stories.”

The internet makes this possible.

For the first time, we are now recognising the important part our audiences play in the creation of our content. It enables us to build a deeper relationship with our audiences. That is a real competitive advantage. In essence, we want:

“to enable people to make sense of their increasingly complex world, and thus empowered, lead more fulfilling lives.”

This is a great ‘public good’ and an ambition I hope everyone in BBC World Service can identify with, and be proud of.

### **Identifying target audiences**

I am also very conscious of your wish, highlighted repeatedly in the World Service 2010 sessions, to identify our target audiences and priority markets. Today is not the time for the detailed discussion on this, but briefly we have three target audiences.

The first are opinion-formers and decision-makers; we will target them in every market.

Secondly, people needing basic news and information as targets in developing markets.

And thirdly, audiences for lifeline services in areas of profound conflict and failed states.

We also need to be clear about what we broadcast and where. English will remain our core service everywhere, on radio, television and online.

We will provide a multi-media service for the Arab and wider Islamic world, as well as China, Russia, India and the Americas. Radio will continue to be our focus in Africa and Asia, including in countries like Nigeria and Bangladesh. It will also continue to be a lifeline in what some see as “failed states” such as Somalia, or “closed societies” like Burma.

We will carry on serving a number of other markets but review what we offer regularly to assess political and market developments, and audience impact.

Over the next 12 months, we will be working with Fred Martenson and Alan Booth, who head our Strategy and Marketing teams, to continue to define our measures of success. By next summer, no-one working here should be in any doubt about their primary audience targets, both in terms of size and type of audience.

### **New investments: five priorities to 2010**

And now to our top priorities on the road to 2010.

Let's start with television.

It is the preferred medium for news and information in many important markets.

As part of BBC Global News Division, we already share in the success of BBC World, the BBC's commercially funded international news and information channel in English, which can now be seen in more than 260 million homes and attracts almost 60 million viewers every week.

But in some societies, where English is not widely spoken, audiences will also need a service from the BBC in their own language.

What BBC World Service needs to do, as many of you argued at the 2010 sessions, is to offer television in major regional languages.

### **1. BBC Arabic television**

Outside English, Arabic has historically been one of our highest priority languages and it remains so.

But the Middle East's media landscape has changed profoundly following the spread of satellite television. Without a BBC news presence in Arabic on television, we run the risk of always being second to television, despite the quality of our radio and new media offers.

Indeed, many of you will remember that the BBC was the first to see and react to the potential of television in Arabic.

We launched a commercially funded subscription channel in Arabic in 1994, which was then shut down two years later following a major editorial disagreement with the Saudi-backed distributor, Orbit.

But that experience does not negate the need for an independent news and information channel in Arabic from the BBC, as some have argued. It tells us instead we had the wrong funding model and means of distribution.

That is why we are now going to launch a publicly funded BBC Arabic television service in 2007. It will be funded exclusively from the Grant-in-Aid, and made freely available to everyone with a satellite or cable connection.

This will enable it to be seen easily in countries where the growth of satellite television has been fastest, and where local regulation prevents BBC radio being heard clearly enough to make a significant impact.

#### **Evidence of demand for Arabic television**

But many of you have asked: how can we be sure that there will be a demand for such a BBC channel in such a competitive market?

The latest research from seven capital cities across the Middle East in 2005 indicates that 85% or more of the target group are likely to watch, and that figure has risen in all but one city in the last two years.

The main reason people give is quite simple: it is because the BBC would provide an independent news service they could trust.

#### **A world class news and information channel**

The channel will consist of a world class news service about international and major regional issues together with multi-media discussion programmes and debates in conjunction with our radio and online services.

We will begin by broadcasting 12 hours a day at times of highest viewing and aim to increase that to 24

hours when we can secure additional funding.

We also need to strengthen our newsgathering operations on the ground. Whilst broadcasting from London is seen as “brand advantage”, we must have a strong presence in the Middle East itself. We will develop our bureaux in the Middle East, adding television facilities in Cairo and other Arab capitals.

In addition, we will build our presence at the centre of the world’s global powers – in the USA, Russia and South Asia.

The initial annual cost for the service will be £19m, all of which must be funded from within the existing World Service budget.

In five years we aim to win a significant share of the market for international television news.

We will make a major impact with those in the Middle East who follow news regularly and provide trusted information to those who feel the current plethora of channels are neither sufficiently independent or international in their agenda.

Planning starts now for a launch scheduled in 2007. To succeed, we will have to attract the top talent, train them well, and ensure all our programmes live by the BBC’s editorial values.

If we do this, the value to our audiences will be considerable. The BBC will be the only media organisation offering a full news service in Arabic across all three media, and I believe that is a very exciting prospect indeed.

### **Television in other languages**

There is a strong case for television in other languages. Persian would be the top priority for public funding after Arabic. But we cannot fund such a television service at the moment. We would need a successful bid for Grant-in-Aid as part of the Spending Review process in 2007.

There is also a case for exploring how we could mount limited television operations in Spanish, Hindi and other languages. But it would be hard to persuade our funders that, whilst important, ventures like this are a top priority for Grant-in-Aid, given their cost and the range of free-to-air channels already in existence.

Instead we will continue to look for partnerships with commercial companies. But the partners would have to sign up for an extended period and be able to fund our production and distribution costs.

There are, however, alternatives to full-scale television. If we are resourceful, we can make the most of our investment in new media to provide short programmes or bulletins for television companies and external websites. This arguably is a more realistic proposition in the next three years for some languages.

## **2. New media**

That takes me to new media itself and its future priorities. We are committed to delivering a major expansion in our new media services, with the addition of increased interactivity and news reporting in video in our priority languages.

Our video investment will take account of the need to deliver high quality news reports that can either be downloaded or accessed as streamed video on demand, both of which are emerging as major news platforms.

In most expanding internet markets, new users are jumping straight across to broadband and expect services which exploit this technology.

Additional resources will increase the opportunities for users to interact and contribute their own material. You will remember this lies at the heart of our mission to connect and engage with audiences, to create a truly 'global conversation'.

We are going to put more money into key areas to keep us ahead in the new era of portable, on-demand digital media, including podcasting.

All these new media initiatives will be focused initially in English, Arabic, Portuguese for Brazil, Spanish, Persian, Russian and Urdu languages.

This extra investment of £4.6m a year by the end of 2007/8 will mean the creation of 41 new jobs in new media and our priority languages over the current Spending Review period.

### **3. FM developments**

Now to distribution. Improving our audibility in radio is critical to our long term success.

We need to intensify our fight for FM presence in the world's capital cities and in the larger conurbations. For these audiences, short wave is increasingly an irrelevance; medium wave an intermittent solution.

We will spend a further £3.5m a year by the end of 2007/8 in this critical area.

Some of this money will be used to nurture our so-called "platinum partners", with programmes made especially for specific stations, as well as supporting a co-branded marketing presence in these crowded urban markets.

### **4. International offices**

One of the ambitions of the whole World Service Board is to improve the quality and connectivity of our international offices.

As I have traveled to our bureaux, I've become increasingly aware that many of them fail to live up to our ambitions. The worst ones can be debilitating places to work in. In the last two years, we have made great strides to improve conditions in places like Moscow, Dhaka, Cairo and Washington. But there are still bureaux which fail the dual test of being both pleasant and productive buildings to work in; Abuja and Delhi to name two.

Over the next three years, we will accelerate our strategy of rebuilding or relocating them with the top priorities being in Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Indonesia and Brazil.

### **5. Marketing**

More money for marketing is an integral part of our plans. I know that many of you will support this as you argued in the 2010 sessions, that we have underinvested in this area in the past.

We need effective marketing to promote our existing services to increasingly demanding radio audiences and online news consumers, as well as the new BBC Arabic TV channel. By focusing its efforts in a smaller number of markets, and being inventive and creative in its campaigns, our marketing team are helping us break through in both radio and new media. This extra investment of £2.5m a year will enable them to react quickly and creatively to fulfill our marketing needs.

### **Making savings**

Altogether, the planned investments add up to an almost £30m a year by the end of the Spending Review period.

In order to achieve that scale of investment, we started by looking at the scope for savings in areas of

the budget not linked directly to programme making. BBC World Service spends less than 10% of its budget on overheads; that means we spend more than 90% on content creation and distribution. Whilst we can be more efficient in these areas, it will not help us deliver sums of the kind we need. There is no option but to close a number of existing services.

### **Closing language services**

Making any decision about closing services is extremely difficult. It has been the hardest part of the 2010 work, and led to a lot of soul searching. Everyone on the Board is deeply conscious of the impact on people's lives and careers, and the loyalty of existing audiences.

Our review took into account three sets of factors: the relative geopolitical importance of each market, the availability of other national and regional independent or "free" media, and our current audience levels and our best predictions for the future.

The outcome of this review is that we are going to reduce the number of language services from 42 to 32, and cut back investment in two others.

It is clear that recent political and media changes in Europe have lessened the need for a number of language services we currently broadcast to that region. In many cases, but not all, as choice expands rapidly in television and radio, our audience levels have declined.

### **Changes in Europe**

For these reasons we are going to close services for Europe in the following eight languages: Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Greek, Hungarian, Polish, Slovak and Slovenian.

### **Other language service closures**

We are also closing the Kazakh and Thai services, essentially because of their relatively low market impact.

In addition, whilst maintaining our radio news bulletins for use by our key partners, we are going to make Portuguese for Brazil an internet-only service.

The Brazilian service now attracts significantly more online users than radio listeners in Brazil. With the end of short wave broadcasts and little appetite from key partners for longer programmes, we will withdraw from our traditional long-form radio output.

We have also decided – with some strengthening of the online offer – to reduce investment in BBC Hindi online in the light of its relatively low traffic levels and the higher usage of bbcnews.com, our English news online service, in India. The balance of staff will change with more of the team based in the new bureau in Delhi.

### **Tribute to services that are closing**

The time to pay a full tribute to the many achievements of each of these language services is to come.

But I would like to share with you what I said to staff in these services earlier this morning.

The contribution of all the staff in these services has been immense and their professionalism and skill is beyond question. The decision to end broadcasting in these languages is a strategic one and in no way reflects adversely on the abilities of the individuals in the services or the quality of their programmes.

Many of these services arose out of the conflict in Europe during the Second World War. Many of them have lit and maintained a beacon of free and independent information which burned through the long Cold War years and right up to the present day. They were a lifeline for many.



Now the countries to which they broadcast have been transformed: people travel freely, English is widely taught in schools, in a climate of much greater free expression.

Independent media is flourishing. New radio and television services are springing up to provide a genuine choice and challenge the hegemony of the state broadcaster, and ourselves.

As a result, audiences to BBC World Service are declining; we now have under three million listeners to these services in Europe. Five years ago we had nearly seven million.

The BBC will still be available in English on radio and I will shortly visit the capital cities where we have an FM presence. I will be meeting the staff there and seeing how we can maintain our FM presence for the future. There is, of course, BBC World and our English news online services, both growing rapidly in their use.

For these language services, when they eventually close, it will be a job truly well done. Their distinguished record and their impact will never be forgotten.

The Thai Service can also trace its roots to the Second World War, and it too has an immensely proud record. Its dedicated journalists have seen Thailand emerge as an Asian democracy with an extensive choice of radio and television outlets. As with some European countries, that choice has meant a declining audience despite the assiduous cultivation of many broadcasting partners.

The Kazakh service, although set up comparatively recently in the 1990s, has covered the momentous post-Soviet years with skill and dedication. But its impact has been hampered by the decision of local stations to stop broadcasting its daily programme on FM. Given that audiences will still get our regional Russian service, it is the right decision to close it.

I want to say more about the Brazilian Service's radio contribution as one of the oldest services in Bush House. In the sixties and seventies, at a time of widespread censorship under military rule, its short wave output was essential listening. People there will always be loyal to the BBC. The team are reinventing the service as the leading website for international news, and that's why it's right to build on their online success.

### **Target date for the end of transmissions**

I have set a target date of 31st March for the last transmissions of these services. The majority will close earlier as I am aware that staff will only want to continue broadcasting with the highest quality programmes and that this will become increasingly difficult if their colleagues find other jobs. We have to balance that against our obligations to listeners, and our many partners. I will be guided on by Zdenka Krizman, and her team in Europe and the other Regional Heads Behrouz Afagh and Abbas Nasir as to the exact date of the last transmissions.

### **Reorganising the regional structure**

As a result of the language service closures, we are going to reorganise World Service's regional management structure.

This will help to reduce costs and simplify the way we work.

Africa and the Middle East region, headed by Jerry Timmins, will remain unchanged in terms of its language portfolio, but will now face the added challenge of launching BBC Arabic television. The other four regions will merge into two.

The current Americas Region will be brought together with the four remaining services to Europe – Albanian, Macedonian, Romanian, Serbian, as well as the Russian, Turkish and Ukrainian services. The new region will be called Americas and Europe and will be headed by Lucio Mesquita.

The Asia Pacific region will expand to include the Central Asian languages together with Persian and Pashto, and will be headed by Behrouz Afagh.

Jerry, Lucio and Behrouz will all do an excellent job in their expanded regions. They have the track record, creativity and stamina to carry out these demanding leadership roles.

As a result of these changes, Zdenka Krizman, the current Head of Europe, will take on the role of overseeing the closure of the language services and our disengagement from their locally based operations. She will also take the lead role in managing the transition of the current five regions into three, working closely with the Management Board to ensure an effective implementation by April 2006. Zdenka is an exceptional manager who will undertake this work with sensitivity to her staff at this difficult time, whilst taking into account the wider needs of the BBC.

After she has completed this important role, Zdenka will be leaving the BBC herself at the end of next year. She has done an outstanding job as head of the Europe Region. Audiences and staff will always have reason to thank her profoundly for leading her team so well.

I would also like to thank Abbas Nasir, who will return to his substantive role as Executive Editor, Asia Pacific, for acting as Regional Head over the past eighteen months. Placed in the role at short notice, following Barry Langridge's illness, he has led the team ably and sympathetically and provided strong editorial leadership over this difficult period. I am delighted he will continue to play a central role in this expanded region when it is established fully next year.

After discussions with each of them, I am pleased to say that all the five current Regional Executive Editors will continue to support our journalism in a similar or existing role. James Painter and Olexiyei Soloubhubenko will join Lucio in the Americas and Europe Region, Abbas and Nikki Clarke will support Behrouz in the expanded Asia Pacific Region, and we will advertise for another Executive Editor to work with Jerry and Kari Blackburn in the Africa and Middle East Region.

### **The role of studio managers and regionally based technical staff**

Now I want to turn to the role our studio managers will play in these new regions. They contribute enormously to the success of our output and are keen to learn new skills in this multi-media age. With the changes to our regional structure, now seems the best time to integrate them fully into our regional teams. Linda Walker will work with Regional Heads to establish how best to do this by March 2006.

I will also be asking Mike Cronk, our Controller Distribution and Technology, to examine our technology support and how this can be best structured given both the new regional structure and our new investments.

Now that the new regional structures have been finalised, work will continue to make sure our other support services are configured in the right way for the challenges ahead.

Alison Woodhams will lead a review of business development and administrative support in the Regions to ensure the scale of them and the way they are organised fits our new priorities. Once we have made clear decisions about the scope of these reviews, we will organise special briefings on them with the relevant teams or through the Regional Heads.

### **Changes to the English Network**

Now I want to turn to changes in the English Network, and how they will affect the role of those programme makers who work in departments outside BBC World Service, but provide their programmes for the English schedule.

Our global English programming on radio remains a core part of the BBC's future multi-media service for its worldwide audiences.

But technology and competition mean that audience usage is changing here too and the English offer needs to keep pace with that change.

Research clearly shows that eight out of 10 listeners are exclusively or primarily interested in news and topical information. That's why, as now, news will remain at the heart of what we do in English – as in all our languages.

And our research also shows that our audiences have a fairly wide definition of what they mean by news. That's why, when we say that in future the English networks will be focused around news and information, our definition of what that will cover will be wider than news and major geopolitical events. It will mean at different times a rich mix of programmes about business news and trends, science and technology, health, religion, arts and culture, entertainment, music, social issues and sport.

By a process of evolution, the English Network will move to a more focused offer centred on information, offering a world view of events trends and cultures

We announced earlier this autumn that a number of programmes in factual and music areas will no longer be commissioned and some other programme titles will be merged.

The programmes will be different but the range and insight will still be very evident.

Now I want to turn to the way we work with BBC News and the extent to which we are asking staff in World Service News and in Newsgathering to find efficiencies and new ways of working over the next two years.

As I have stressed to you, news remains at the heart of what we do. The World Service newsroom is rightly valued, here in Bush House and across the BBC and, above all, by our audiences, for its cool judgement and expertise and its unflinching insistence on "getting it right".

Similarly BBC World Service's excellent news programmes, such as Newshour and the World Today, have continued to develop and grow in their ambition, journalistic curiosity and creative flair. We intend to continue that development.

But we cannot make the overall investments we need, many of which will benefit listeners to our English network, if we exempt our largest area of spend from all future savings.

After detailed discussions with the management in BBC News, we have agreed savings targets for News for the next two years.

Over the past three years we have invested heavily in new initiatives in News: new posts, new correspondents and new programmes. Just under £2m in all. And at the same time we have shielded our core news operations from much of the annual impact of World Service efficiency savings. This in turn has meant higher percentage savings for other parts of the English Networks. But the law of diminishing returns means we can't do that any longer. We now need News to make a significant contribution to the costs of the investment plan.

Working with the World Service commissioners, BBC News have developed proposals to save approximately £2.3m over the next two years — this approximates to 7% of the World Service spend with them every year. This will come from four areas: new programming and scheduling, a reduction in some services, new and different ways of working and some reductions in our newsgathering capacity.

An impact on jobs is inevitable. Of course, BBC News will seek to do this through voluntary redundancies and the team will want to begin negotiations with the staff and with the Unions as soon as possible. The ACAS agreement will cover these proposals in terms of treatment for any member of staff losing their jobs compulsorily as it will all staff in the UK affected by today's announcements. The relevant managers in News will be holding briefings with their teams later today.

**Helping those facing redundancy**

The human consequences of these changes are uppermost in our minds. We will do everything we can to help staff through this difficult period. We are putting in place a package of support, including help for individuals to deal with the personal impact of the changes they are facing, to explore options for the future and learn how to market themselves effectively.

In our international offices, we have a complex set of employment issues to tackle. We have to take account of national laws and work within these constraints in terms of the compensation we can offer to staff employed outside the UK. However, we will do all we can to make sure international staff are treated fairly and compatibly with their colleagues in the UK.

**Sum up**

Altogether approximately 236 posts will close across BBC World Service. In addition, there will be more arising from changes in BBC News, plus those already announced in BBC Radio & Music.

At the same time, around 200 new posts will be funded over the three year period – the vast majority in the UK here in Bush House, with the remainder in international bureaux.

Whilst each area will have to meet annual efficiency savings for the rest of the three year period, there are no plans for any more language service closures in the foreseeable future. But we have to make sure each service maintains its impact and does not suffer either a dramatic fall in audience performance or other issues with distribution.

**The benefits of change**

I now want to sum up what I have shared with you this morning. I believe the benefits of this strategy to global audiences are clear.

It will mean even more impact among audiences in the countries where we continue to broadcast.

By 2010, together with BBC World TV and bbcnews.com we expect to increase the global reach of the BBC's international news services from more than 190 million to more than 250 million users a week.

We'll be aiming to achieve greater reach than any other international news provider in all priority markets, with the highest ratings for reputation.

And we'll aim to provide the most innovative interactive services.

And when we achieve all this, we will have seized the spirit of the times and shaped services fit for it.

**Our values**

But none of this will be either possible or worthwhile if our services do not have at their heart the right values. Indeed, we will not succeed if we dilute or betray them.

Those editorial values; integrity, honesty, a passion to broadcast the truth, without fear or favour, are priceless. Those values create world class programmes and services.

And values are also about how we treat our staff who, through no fault of their own, have to leave the BBC as a result of strategic changes like these. The whole Board is committed to be as generous as we can afford to be. Being mean spirited is not part of our agenda.

Today we have unveiled a strategy and the detailed plans that underpin it. But this is only start, not the finish. The hard work of doing it begins now.

In that spirit, I and the whole Board ask for your support. Change of this kind is never easy. It means difficult choices, but choices undertaken to nurture a wonderful force for global good in an age of rapid change.

We all believe in BBC World Service and what it does. It has been, in Kofi Annan's famous phrase, "perhaps Britain's greatest gift to the world in the last century".

In this new century, all of us want to ensure we remain the leader in the world of international media. To achieve this we have to work together.

I am confident that with your passion, your creativity and your commitment to our World Service, we can do it.