



NEWS RELEASE

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PURGING THE PIRACY PARASITE ATN APPLAUDS GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

Toronto, Canada; April 29, 2021: ASIAN TELEVISION NETWORK INTERNATIONAL LIMITED (ATN) (TSX-V-SAT) is happy to welcome what may well turn out to be the moment of the beginning of the end of distribution of pirated television and movie content by organized crime in Canada and also of its corresponding underground cash economy and activities related to that.

We are encouraged in this by the very recent joint announcement of The Honorable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Canadian Heritage and The Honorable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry which relates to a review of existing copyrights and related legislation and public consultations process followed by an overhaul of the same as deemed necessary. Law is always in the process of catching up with technology and especially so as relates to the internet.

‘We applaud this progressive initiative and sincerely thank both the Honorable Ministers and the Government of Canada for taking their leadership and initiative’, said Dr. Shan Chandrasekar, President and CEO of ATN.

We are also encouraged by the fact that the Canada US Mexico Agreement CUSMA came into force in July 2020. As a signatory Canada has to have its laws amended or revamped such piracy and infringement of IP rights and to that end, amongst other things, as per US Trade Representative, by:

- *Granting of Ex officio* authority to law enforcement officials to stop suspected counterfeit or pirated goods at every phase of entering, exiting, and transiting through the territory of any Party.
- Express recognition that IP enforcement procedures must be available for the digital environment for trademark and copyright or related rights infringement.

- Meaningful criminal procedures and penalties for unauthorized camcording of movies, which is a significant source of pirated movies online.
- Civil and criminal penalties for satellite and cable signal theft and criminal penalties for eradication of watermarks.

We are encouraged by the fact that in the very recent past a similar initiative on Counterfeiting, which impacted the fashion and couturier industry much the same way IP piracy has impacted media and cultural industry, led to the signing of the signing of The Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement by Canada in October 2011 and following that, in the process of meeting the obligations set thereunder, Canada enacted an entire Statute aptly named 'Combating Counterfeit Products Act' which was given Royal Assent on 9 December 2014.

And we are encouraged by the fact that we do have the courts and their unlimited inherent jurisdiction and that in our jurisprudential system the concept of 'For every wrong there is a remedy' is well and alive.

AND last but not the least, ATN takes great pride in the fact that some of the industry leaders, namely, Bell Media Inc., Groupe TVA Inc. and Rogers Media Inc., have taken a joint initiative and are engaged in a litigation process in aid of combating piracy.

ATN supports net neutrality and does so fully and unequivocally not only from a sense of civic responsibility but also, being a small stake holder, out of pure self-interest. What is Net Neutrality? A discerning Net Neutrality or a blind one? An egalitarian ideal or a battle cry of a cult movement?

A blind Net Neutrality which does not distinguish between legal and illegal is prone to be abused and indeed is abused by organized crime at one level as it is abused by demagogues in the process of dismantling democratic institutions and governments.

Net neutrality is not a new concept of this age. It is at the very basis of our system of democracy. Equal treatment under the law is guaranteed under our Bill of Rights and that is neutrality at its core. Our ancestors handled it in the form of 'carriage neutrality' more than a century ago and they did so without any fret or sweat by keeping things very simple. The same 'carriage neutrality' endures under the current Canada Transportation Act and it is still immune against any abuse on account of its sheer simplicity. But they did not allow that carriage neutrality to permit, or worse still, to mandate carriage of stolen goods or toxic goods.

If the key provision currently in place relating to the issue of net neutrality was as clear as what was the case in US under the Obama Bright Line Rules (since revoked under Trump) piracy may have been kept under leash if not totally abolished. Those Rules were:

1. *“A person engaged in the provision of broadband Internet access service, insofar as such person is so engaged, shall not block **lawful** content, applications, services, or **non-harmful** devices, subject to reasonable network management. (emphasis added)*
2. *A person engaged in the provision of broadband Internet access service, insofar as such person is so engaged, shall not impair or degrade **lawful** Internet traffic on the basis of Internet content, application, or service, or use of a **non-harmful** device, subject to reasonable network management. (emphasis added)*
3. *A person engaged in the provision of broadband Internet access service, insofar as such person is so engaged, shall not engage in paid prioritization.”*

Another example is Canada Post. It is required to and does operate on a ‘mail neutrality’ mode. The fact that it has powers to intercept, open and deal with issues related to the content if those are toxic or illegal, does not take away from the fact that it does so in fulfilling that ideal of neutrality.

Canada needs a strong and healthy cultural industry which grows to its full potential and for that is only possible if the parasite of piracy is purged out of the system for ever.

About ATN-Asian Television Network International Limited

ATN serves Canada’s diverse cultural communities with over 50 specialty television channels. The Company offers its flagship ATN-HD general interest service along with 7 other general interest channels, 3 sports Channels, 7 news Channels, 5 Bollywood movie channels and a variety of channels that include music, lifestyle, and several regional language channels that includes Punjabi, Tamil, Bengali, Urdu, Gujarati & Marathi. ATN has been a pioneer in the Production of Multicultural Television Programming in Canada. ATN has programming alliances with leading international broadcasters like Sony Entertainment Television, Viacom, India Cast, Zee Network, Doordarshan, Times Television, B4U, NDTV, Republic TV, ABP News Network, Jaya TV, ARY, FOOD FOOD Network and many more. ATN is also a pioneer broadcaster of Cricket in Canada and has exclusive broadcast rights for various International Cricket Boards. ATN has its own State Of The Art Production facilities. ATN’s content is also available on Amazon Prime in USA & UK and also operates a 24X7 South Asian Radio Service on Sirius XM Radio across The United States and Canada. ATN channels are available on various Cable, Satellite and licensed Platforms across Canada like Shaw Cable, Bell TV, Rogers Cable, Bell Fibe TV, TELUS Optic TV, Shaw Direct, Cogeco Cable, Videotron, V-Media and Others.

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