

## **IndoChina Roadshow, 3rd leg report – Roberto Saracco**

In this 3rd leg (I was alone since at the last moment Dr. Zisheng Niu had to forfeit due to unexpected business commitment) I had the opportunity of giving talks in Vietnam (Hanoi) and Hong Kong.

A brief summary of results follows.

### **1. Inauguration ceremony of Hanoi COMSOC Chapter. Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

The Hanoi COMSOC Chapter was approved on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008. The ceremony of its official start took place at the Hanoi Vietnam University at the presence of many professors and students. Mr. Tran Xuan Namxxx, Chapter Chair, gave a talk in which he thanked the support received from the COMSOC officers and pointed out how the July series of meetings in Hanoi in the first leg of our Roadshow has stimulated interest that has led to the Chapter formation. He also presented to the audience the COMSOC, its goals and structure.

Mr. Tran is expecting a significant growth in the coming years and considers the continuous support of COMSOC very important to this goal.

### **2. Talk at the Vietnam University. Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

I gave a talk on the subject of telecommunications ecosystems. There were about 40 people attending, professors and students. My impression is that not all of them were sufficiently fluent in English. This is in general a problem in Vietnam. However, I left with them also an extensive text containing and expanding on the lecture I gave so I hope they could understand the presentation. I also gave them pointers to the COMSOC web site where there are Distinguished lecturers presentations.

### **3. Keynote at the Second Hanoi Forum, Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

I gave a keynote talk at the Second Hanoi Forum on behalf of Doug who was invited but could not attend. The topic was “ From Atoms and bits, seamless integration of Information and Communications Technologies”; the keynote generated, unusual, several questions.

The audience (close to 200 people) included academia, industry and institutions, mostly coming from the region (Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam). Invited speakers came from USA; India, Bosnia, Thailand, Korea.

The event was cosponsored with the Korea Foundation for Advanced Studies.

I'll post the talk on the web in January.

### **4. Meeting with Dr. Nguyen Ai Viet, Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

Dr. Nguyen Ai Viet, [naviet@mic.gov.vn](mailto:naviet@mic.gov.vn), +84 91 200 6861, is the Vice President of the National Institute of Information and Communications Society Ministry of Information and Communication Vietnam. He gave the opening keynote address pointing out the Government Plans to develop the Information Society and the challenges in implementing this plan. One of these, and possibly the most important one, is the need to better the education of people, to create a fabric of researchers. Based on that I followed up presenting him COMSOC and what COMSOC can do to help the Government Plan Implementation. I also mentioned Bob's Walp initiative to help developing Nations and we agreed to follow up where they can become part of this group discussing how to implement this initiative. If we can come up with a proposal they are willing to consider it and to work with us.

I feel this is something to pursue. We need a Government back up to implement it and from what I have heard they are desperate to work with some international organization to move forward.

We could create with them an education package, selecting from what we already have, establish connections with international companies that may be interested in hosting Vietnamese Researchers in their Lab, organise workshops and conferences to bring people to Vietnam. Our local Sister

Society , REV, shall be involved. I spoke of this with Prof. Phan Anh who was at the conference and he also showed interest.

### **5. Meeting with academia in Hanoi, Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> , 2008**

During my stay I met with several professors, listed in the Annex. I particularly like to mention two professor from Cambodia, an area where we have very little and has significant needs to grow its competences in Communications. A follow up with them might be effective, providing a package to enrol some students. They are eager to be connected with the international community.

I tried to socialise with some of the professors the Wireless Certification Program but I did not find any concrete interest. True the program is targeted to professionals aiming at industry but I was expecting an interest from professors, particularly in areas like Vietnam where wireless communications is the chief infrastructure. I got the feeling that they are seeing this as a competing initiative since it is they who are the ones to provide this kind of certification. I do not know if this may be the feeling in other countries. May be it can be worth trying a different approach by taking universities on board, letting them to become the advertisers and places where to take the test and possibly encouraging them organize courses based on the test. That would place them at the centre and I feel there would be a bigger interest. They might see this as a complement to their teaching, giving their students the option of getting an international certification. However, one problem for countries like Vietnam is the cost. It might be worth considering offering a package per “professor” so that with a certain amount he can have 30-50 students taking the certification exam.

At the Hanoi Technical University they graduate over 3,000 students per year (but have a target to reach 5,000), some 20 % of them are in telecommunications area.

Involvement of professors is also crucial in extending our membership. I feel we should try to provide access to our courses and conferences for free to Universities and in exchange have them using our courses as part of their curricula and invite students to join COMSOC.

Remote participation to our conferences, even to some keynotes or selected sessions, is seen as a great value. Notice that these students have no possibility whatsoever to travel. Although all of them are dreaming of getting a job abroad (mostly in Australia because of historical ties with that region). I am convinced that this would be the single most effective way to see a significant growth in membership and I also would consider this as a very concrete help that COMSOC can provide to developing nations.

### **6. Talk at the Hong Kong University, Dec. 12<sup>th</sup> , 2008**

I had the opportunity, through prof. Khaled Ben Letaief, to give a presentation at the University of Hong Kong. COMSOC is well known there, in addition to Khaled, they had the presence of Roberto de Marca and now Vijay Barghava is there.

The presentation was part of a seminar that saw the participation of about 40 students. The university has several thousands students in technical disciplines and it is surely an important place to advertise COMSOC.

I would suggest to work with Khaled to set up a marketing plan for attracting students.

After the talk I met with Raymond Leung and Feng Dongning who have submitted the proposal for the set up of a COMSOC Chapter in Shenzhen. They are now waiting for approval, the whole process being completed on their side.

They are hoping to start with the Chapter early next year and would like to see some COMSOC officer to attend the inauguration ceremony.

## **Annex – List of relevant people met**

1. Vietnam National University, Hanoi, College of Technology
  - Truong Vu Bang Giang, Deputy Director, Dept. of Graduate Training, Research and International Affair, [giangtvb@vnu.edu.vn](mailto:giangtvb@vnu.edu.vn)
  - Tran Quang Vinh, Vice Rector, [vinhtq@vnu.edu.vn](mailto:vinhtq@vnu.edu.vn)
  - Nguyen Ngoc Binh, Vice Rector, [nnbinh@vnu.edu.vn](mailto:nnbinh@vnu.edu.vn)
2. NIICS – National Institute of Information and Communication Strategy
  - Nguyen Ai Viet, Vice President, [naviet@mic.gov.vn](mailto:naviet@mic.gov.vn)
3. Vietnam Education Foundation
  - Phuong Nguyen, Country Director, [phuongnguyen@vef.gov](mailto:phuongnguyen@vef.gov)
  - Stephen F. Maxner, Member of the Board of Director, [vefhanoi@vef.gov](mailto:vefhanoi@vef.gov)
4. VietSoftware
  - Tran Luong Son, Chairman, [tran.luong.son@vietsoftware.com](mailto:tran.luong.son@vietsoftware.com)
5. AIT – Asian Institute of Technology
  - Vilas Wuwongse, VP for external relations, Prof. Computer Science and Information Management, [vilasw@ait.ac.th](mailto:vilasw@ait.ac.th)
6. JAIST – Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology
  - Tu Bao Ho, Professor School of Knowledge, [bao@jaist.ac.jp](mailto:bao@jaist.ac.jp)
7. Cambodia
  - Eap Ponna, General Director Royal Academy of Cambodia, Institute of Science and Technology, [eap\\_ponna@yahoo.com](mailto:eap_ponna@yahoo.com)
  - Phal Des, Director of IT Center, Royal University of Phnom Penh, [phaldes@rupp.edu.kh](mailto:phaldes@rupp.edu.kh)
8. Hanoi Chapter
  - Tram Xuan Nam, Chapter Chair, [namtx@lqdtu.edu.vn](mailto:namtx@lqdtu.edu.vn)
9. Shenzhen Chapter
  - Raymond Leung and Feng Dongning, Huawei, proposer for COMSOC Chapter in Shenzhen, [dongningfeng@huawei.com](mailto:dongningfeng@huawei.com)