

## **Concluding Statement of AMARC/UNESCO International Community Media Seminar**

UNESCO, Paris, 11 November 2009

### **On models of policy, law and regulation**

We applaud countries, such as France and South Africa, which have demonstrated a sustained commitment to policies, laws and regulation that positively enable and support community broadcasting. Characteristics of such policies include independent regulatory bodies, recognition of community broadcasting as a distinct sector, reservation of frequencies, public funding arrangements, and the absence of licence fees.

We recognize, in the experience of countries such as Nepal, the importance of effective country level associations to defend and advocate for the community broadcasting sector and the need to provide solidarity and support to civil society coalitions for media reform, as well as to document and learn from successful experiences of country level advocacy.

We recognize the strategic importance of international mechanisms such as the Universal Peer Review Mechanism of the Human Rights Council, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the international special mandates on freedom of expression, which can contribute to the development and promotion of international standards and the adoption of good practice in community media policy, law and regulation.

### **On good practice in sustainability and growth**

We note that community media often exist in economically precarious conditions and are thus vulnerable to external economic pressures as well as facing other external challenges such as may result from political and social change, and new technological developments.

Nevertheless we recognize that the sustainability of community media is most often linked to the strength of their social base and community participation through mechanisms such as community contributions, listener clubs, citizen reporters and engagement with broader social movements and civil society organizations.

We also recognize that new media and communications technologies present important opportunities for community media to develop their mechanisms for participation and interaction, for example using the mobile phone, as well as enabling community media to establish on platforms, such as the internet, that do not face the same restrictions as communications services that are dependent on access to radio frequency spectrum.

### **On achieving social impact**

We note that the social impact of community media is wide ranging including combating poverty and contributing to sustainable development, defending human rights, promoting women's rights and gender equality, promoting peaceful conflict resolution, campaigning for local accountability, assisting disaster mitigation and disaster relief, among others.

We note that the community media sector is closely associated with movements for social change and its impact and effectiveness often contingent on wider political contexts and we assert the importance of defending the freedom and independence of community media from the influence of governments, political parties and commercial interests.

We call on AMARC:

- to continue to promote and defend the community media sector including supporting country level and international advocacy, networking and knowledge sharing, capacity building and training, research and analysis

We call on UNESCO

- to continue, as a priority, to provide direct support to innovative and strategic community media initiatives, through IPDC and other mechanisms, and to document and share knowledge on community media good practice

We call on UNESCO Member States

- to ensure policies, laws, regulations and funding mechanisms enable and support development of community media including in the transition to digital platforms

We call on development partners and community media stakeholders

- to encourage and facilitate the contribution of community media to sustainable development and human rights through partnership and strategic support