

## **Report of the Moderator of the Sub-Group on Community Media WSIS Action Line C9 Media (Geneva, 21 May 2008)**

### **Introduction**

1. The WSIS 2003 Plan of Action states, in Action Line C9 Media: “The media - in their various forms and with a diversity of ownership - as an actor, have an essential role in the development of the Information Society and are recognized as an important contributor to freedom of expression and plurality of information.”

2. At the 2007 WSIS follow-up meeting on Action Line C9, it was agreed to establish a Sub-Group on “community media, particularly radio and multimedia centres”. The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) offered to moderate this sub-group and has been invited by UNESCO to prepare a progress report.

3. During 2007/08 AMARC supported the work of UNESCO to prepare a new set of media development indicators that were endorsed, in March 2008, by the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC)<sup>1</sup>. These indicators can assist in monitoring the implementation of Action Line C9. Annex 1 provides a set of outline indicators for community media development against the objectives of the WSIS Plan of Action and drawing on the UNESCO media development indicators.

4. This first Moderator’s report for the Sub-Group on Community Media summarises progress in 2007 on community media development using these outline indicators as a basis for current reporting. It is also offered for consultation and stakeholder feedback as an approach to be developed in future annual reports for the Action Line C9. The body of this report tracks progress against the Action Line C9 objectives.

### **New community media services established**

5. In 2007 there has been significant growth in community radio reported in Bangladesh, Cape Verde, Colombia, Comoros, Georgia, Ghana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Liberia, Macedonia, Mozambique, Nepal, South Africa, United Kingdom and Uruguay, among others. UNESCO supported one regional and 22 national

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<sup>1</sup> [http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=26320&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=26320&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

community media projects through IPDC, bringing total UNESCO support to 130 community multi-media centres in 32 countries. AMARC reported an increase of countries with community media organisations in membership from 113 to 117. New countries represented from 2007 were Cambodia, Cape Verde, Comoros and Vietnam.

6. In Nepal a review of 10 years of community broadcasting was commissioned by UNESCO in collaboration with the Government of Nepal and the Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (ACORAB)<sup>2</sup>. In the Caribbean UNESCO supported a national conference on community multimedia centres (CMCs) in Kingston, Jamaica.

### **Legal and/or regulatory provision for community broadcasting**

7. Significant country level developments in legal and/or regulatory provision for community broadcasting have taken place in, among others: India - implementation of the 2006 Community Radio Policy<sup>3</sup>; Hungary – new media law in 2007 gives community broadcasters a priority in access to digital frequencies<sup>4</sup>; Uruguay - Law on Community Radio approved in January 2008 and widely considered to be a model of good practice<sup>5</sup>; Bangladesh - adoption of a Community Radio Policy in March 2008.

8. In June 2007 a National Orientation on Community Radio in the Maldives was held in Male with participants calling for an independent committee representing all stakeholders to formulate a draft community radio policy. In Zimbabwe, in July 2007, community radio initiatives formed the Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations (ZACRAS) to represent civil society groups seeking broadcasting licences.

9. At the international level, the Joint Declaration on Diversity in Broadcasting, adopted in December 2007 by the four international mandates for promoting freedom of expression<sup>6</sup>, reinforced, as an international standard, the importance of making specific legal and other provision for community broadcasting, stating, inter alia:

“Community broadcasting should be explicitly recognised in law as a distinct form of broadcasting, should benefit from fair and simple licensing procedures, should not have to meet stringent technological or other licence criteria, should benefit from concessionary license fees and should have access to advertising”.

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<sup>2</sup> Pringle, I. and Subba, B. (2007) Ten Years On: The State of Community Radio in Nepal.

<sup>3</sup> <http://mib.nic.in/CRS/CRSmainpg.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Article 25, Act LXXIV/2007, Hungary

<sup>5</sup> [http://legislaciones.item.org.uy/files/URU\\_Ley\\_Radiodifusion\\_Comunitaria.pdf](http://legislaciones.item.org.uy/files/URU_Ley_Radiodifusion_Comunitaria.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Adopted by the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe) Representative on Freedom of the Media, the OAS (Organisation of American States) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and the ACHPR (African Commission on Human and People’s Rights) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information. See: [http://www.osce.org/documents/rfm/2007/12/28855\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/rfm/2007/12/28855_en.pdf)

10. In Europe, the European Parliament and the Council of Europe, both for the first time, commissioned major studies on community and third sector media<sup>7</sup>. The Council of Europe also confirmed observer status for Community Media Forum Europe and the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC).

### **Development of codes of practice**

11. AMARC's Latin American and Caribbean section has developed a detailed set of "Principles for a Democratic Legislation on Community Broadcasting"<sup>8</sup>. In Nepal, the Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (ACORAB) produced and published a "Code of Conduct for Community Radios"<sup>9</sup>. UNESCO published "Community Radio: A User's Guide to the Technology"<sup>10</sup>, a comprehensive manual on technical planning.

### **International partnerships and networks**

12. "OURMedia 6", hosted by School of Communication Arts, University of Western in Sydney, Australia in April 2007, brought together scholars, experts, policy makers and activists under the theme "Sustainable Futures: Roles and Challenges for Community, Alternative and Citizen's Media in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century".

13. The thirteenth General Assembly of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange was hosted by AMARC Latin America and Caribbean (AMARC-LAC) and Institute for Press and Society (IPYS) in Montevideo, Uruguay in October 2007.

14. The first international conference on Community Radio in Africa and the Middle East took place in October 2007, in Rabat, organised by AMARC, in partnership with the UNESCO Regional Office in Rabat and the UNESCO Chair in Public and Community Communication, and supported by the Kingdom of Morocco.

15. In December 2007 at the Global Knowledge 3 (GK3) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, community media was represented by a range of activities. UNESCO organised a CMC exhibition and demonstration. AMARC coordinated a series of meetings and a delegation of community radio producers to provide coverage of the event.

16. In February 2008, the International Conference "Community Radios for a Better World" was organised in Bogota, Colombia by AMARC-LAC with the support of the Colombian communication project SIPAZ (System of Communication for Peace).

### **Gender equality**

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<sup>7</sup> KEA (2007) The State of Community Media in the European Union. European Parliament <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/committees/studies/download.do?file=17791>; Lewis, P. and Scifo (2008) Community, Local, Minority and Social Media. Council of Europe

<sup>8</sup> [http://amarcwiki.amarc.org/upload/documents/Principles\\_CR\\_5\\_May\\_2008.pdf](http://amarcwiki.amarc.org/upload/documents/Principles_CR_5_May_2008.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.acorab.org>

<sup>10</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001561/156197E.pdf>

17. From 25 November to 10 December 2007, community broadcasters collaborated in the “16 Days Against Gender Violence” campaign to end violence against women.

18. On International Women’s Day 2008, community broadcasting campaigns focussed on the UNCHR 1325 resolution on women, peace and security with the aim of promoting women’s involvement at decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions engaged in preventing, managing and resolving conflict.

19. AMARC Women’s International Network (AMARC-WIN) organised training for trainers and international knowledge sharing workshops at the World Social Forum (Nairobi, January 2007), Our Media 6 (Sydney, April 2007), AMARC Africa/MENA conference (Rabat, October 2007) and GK3 (Kuala Lumpur, December 2007).

### **Access to ICTs and connectivity**

20. UNESCO supported the development of mobile community multimedia centres including the project “Telecentre on Wheels” launched by the Change Initiative, a rural India NGO, and also supported by the West Bengal Renewable Energy Development Agency. The e-TukTuk, operating from Kothmale Community Multimedia Centre in Sri Lanka, won the Stockholm Challenge GKP Award.

21. AMARC promoted use of the Internet for programme sharing and exchange among community broadcasters, through joint campaigns (including International Women’s Day and International Day Against Racism), international events coverage (including World Social Forum, Nairobi and G8 Summit, Rostock), and support for the Latin American radio news network and programme sharing service, Pulsar<sup>11</sup>.

### **Forthcoming events and activities**

22. “OURMedia 7” will be hosted by Ghana Community Radio Network in Accra, Ghana in August 2008 with the theme “Identity, Inclusion, Innovation – Alternative Communication in a Globalized World”. AMARC Asia-Pacific will hold a conference in Indonesia, in October 2008, on community broadcasting and disaster management. An international conference and celebration to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of AMARC will be held in Montreal, Canada in November 2008.

23. AMARC, UNESCO and Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation will publish “Fighting Poverty: Utilising Community Media in a Digital Age” based on contributions to a roundtable held during the World Conference on Communications for Development. UNESCO is working on two new publications on community media: “101 ways to do Community Media” and “Community Multimedia Centres around the World: A Global Directory”. AMARC is working on a publication: “Women Empowerment and Good Governance through Community Radio”.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.agenciapulsar.org>

## Annex 1

WSIS Plan of Action C.9	Indicators for Community Media
a. Encourage the media - print and broadcast as well as new media - to continue to play an important role in the Information Society.	New community media services established that assist to connect poor and marginalized communities. <i>(UNESCO MDIs Category 2)</i>
b. Encourage the development of domestic legislation that guarantees the independence and plurality of the media.	Legal and/or regulatory provision for community broadcasting within a fair and transparent regulatory framework. <i>(UNESCO MDIs Category 2)</i>
c. Take appropriate measures - consistent with freedom of expression - to combat illegal and harmful content in media content.	Development by the community media sector of self-regulatory codes of practice on content and other matters. <i>(UNESCO MDIs Category 3)</i>
d. Encourage media professionals in developed countries to establish partnerships and networks with the media in developing ones, especially in the field of training.	Encourage international community media partnerships and networks. <i>(UNESCO MDIs Category 4)</i>
e. Promote balanced and diverse portrayals of women and men by the media.	Women and men are equally represented at all levels of operation in community media services. <i>(UNESCO MDIs Category 3)</i>
f. Reduce international imbalances affecting the media, particularly as regards infrastructure, technical resources and the development of human skills, taking full advantage of ICT tools in this regard.	Community media have access to ICT skills, tools and infrastructure <i>(UNESCO MDIs Category 5)</i>
g. Encourage traditional media to bridge the knowledge divide and to facilitate the flow of cultural content, particularly in rural areas.	New community media services established that assist to connect poor and marginalized communities. <i>(UNESCO MDIs Category 2)</i>