

SEOUL COMMUNITY RADIO DECLARATION

THE WORLD ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY RADIO BROADCASTERS (AMARC) – ASIA PACIFIC, SEOUL, REPUBLIC OF KOREA,

DECEMBER 5, 2013

Community radio stations, national associations, community radio production groups, communication associations, aspirant community radio groups and community radio and communication rights supporters from the Asia Pacific region gathered at the 3rd World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, Asia Pacific Regional Assembly in Seoul, Republic of Korea, during December, 2013.

We are communicators, broadcasters, journalists, activists, artists, communication scholars and researchers. We come from East Asia, South Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific. We gathered together with our different cultural and political identities; with gender and generation differences; with our participation in diverse organisations and social movements; with multiple experiences and memories.

Reaffirming that the right to information and freedom of expression is fundamental in ensuring other rights and freedoms enshrined in international human rights instruments;

Recalling Article 19 of the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”, which states "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media, and regardless of frontiers."

We reaffirm that everyone has a right to life, with dignity. All people have the undeniable right to be informed about decisions affecting every aspect of their lives including quality of life, as articulated in the United Nations conventions on human rights.

With reference to the 2005 “United Nations Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions” which celebrates "... the importance of cultural diversity for the full realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other universally recognised instruments"

We reaffirm that freedom of thought, expression, and information, as well as diversity of the media enable cultural expressions to flourish within societies.

We acknowledge the diversity of opportunities and challenges that confront community radios and communications practitioners across the region.

We take note that the enabling regulatory structures within some countries do not yet fully recognise community radio as a legitimate third tier of broadcasting.

We regret that in some countries radio practitioners and journalists are persecuted by the state or are not offered the protection or justice of the state where perpetrators of violence against radio practitioners and journalists are identified.

We bear in mind that wealth and resources are not equally and equitably distributed among nations within our region.

We are mindful that natural and human-induced climate change has a disproportional impact among our members' nations and is emerging as a great challenge.

We are aware that natural and human induced disasters negatively impact the social, economic and political structures of our members' nations.

We are highly concerned with the unavailability of equal rights for all citizens in some of our members' countries.

We consider that in some members' countries indigenous peoples are marginalised and denied access to basic human rights and in some members' countries women, people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity, the differently abled, Dalit communities, migrants, and religious and ethnic minorities are marginalised and denied basic human rights.

We bear in mind that some member countries do not fully recognise the welfare and rights of children, to whom basic human rights apply.

We acknowledge that in some members' countries conflict is ongoing and where it is not the post-conflict social, political and economic situation is difficult.

In acknowledging these fundamental issues that impact all human beings, we recognise that community radio has an important role to play in addressing our above-mentioned concerns.

We recognise and firmly believe that our strength lies within our diversity.

We recognise that equitable access to spectrum is central to the implementation and development of community radio.

We recognise that dangers exist where radio practitioners and journalists seek to speak truth to power.

We recognise that different subregions have varying levels of resources – knowledge, financial, and human – which must be shared as appropriate whenever possible to promote the establishment, development and sustainability of community radio.

We recognise that community radio has an important role to play in raising awareness in communities about the value of conservation of their natural resources in mitigating the effects of climate change.

We recognise that community radio has an important role to play in planning for, the management of and participation in disaster risk reduction and post disaster reconstruction efforts prior to, during and following the effects of natural and human induced climate change and natural and human induced disasters.

We recognise that community radio is an important tool in breaking down social barriers and stereotypes that marginalise or exclude people based on their gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity, class, caste, religious beliefs or disability.

We recognise that community radio has an important role to play in peace building and reconciliation in post-conflict areas.

We agree that as a region we need to build linkages with other like-minded organisations, non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations, donor organisations, and other bodies to progress the work of community radio within the Asia Pacific region.

Taking into account our recognition of the valuable role of community radio and being aware of the important role community radio can play in furthering human development and the expression of and support for human rights, we the participants of the 3rd Regional Assembly of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, Asia Pacific, hereby:

- Call upon the governments of the countries of the region to recognise community media as a third tier of broadcasting and to incorporate community media in planning, policy, regulatory and legislative measures.

- Urge the governments of the countries of the region to bring specific legislative provisions safeguarding the community radios in line with the principles of community broadcasting outlined in the 2010 AMARC “40 Principles of Guaranteeing Diversity and Pluralism in Broadcasting in Audiovisual Communication Services”.
- Resolve to continue to participate in the promotion of equitable access to the airwaves for community broadcasters.
- Resolve to develop policy and strategic initiatives to engage with regulators and governing authorities with the purpose of ensuring that community radio has equitable access to digital spectrum and other emerging broadcast technologies.
- Continue to oppose violence against journalists and media practitioners and to resist legislative measures that would dilute the right to free and open reporting on matters of community interest or concern.
- Resolve to develop mechanisms to facilitate the sharing of resources for the enablement of community radio through the strengthening of institutional networks between donors, non governmental organisations, civil society organisations, inter-governmental bodies and community radio associations.
- Resolve to work cooperatively to lobby governments for adequate funding to protect, support, promote and subsidise community radio infrastructure and operations.
- Resolve to strengthen capacity among community radios to develop independent funding initiatives and develop relationships with sponsors and donors.
- Resolve to develop strategies, programs and training opportunities for community radio stations to be better equipped to participate in disaster planning, mitigation, response and recovery.
- Renew our endorsement of and call for the implementation of Article 16 of the “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” which reaffirms the right of indigenous peoples to establish their own community radios in their own languages and have access to non-indigenous community radios without discrimination.
- Resolve to create spaces on the airwaves for diverse and marginalised voices, irrespective of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity, class, caste, religious beliefs or disability.
- Resolve to promote and encourage gender equality in our communities with programs that are fully integrative and supportive of women.
- Reaffirm our endorsement of and commitment to implementing the “AMARC Gender Policy for Community Radio” and incorporate gender equality in all areas of community radio activity.
- Resolve to work towards ensuring food security and food sovereignty with those whose lives and livelihoods are threatened by denial of these basic human rights.
- Resolve to ensure the inclusion of the voices of all migrant, internally displaced peoples and refugee communities in our community radios and support them in the establishment, ownership and management of their own community radios.
- Resolve to support the establishment of community radios in conflict areas as a means of peace building and reconciliation and call upon governments to ensure protection for community radio practitioners and infrastructure.
- Resolve to work cooperatively in peace building and reconciliation activities for the establishment of post conflict resolutions to ethnic, sectarian, religious, political or civil armed conflict.

- Resolve to strengthen our regional network by developing and deepening our interactions with each other, AMARC International, regional inter-governmental bodies, donor organisations and supporters, and national associations.
- Resolve to strengthen our ties with United Nations organisations.

We, the representatives of community radio broadcasters, production groups and other community media practitioners from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Commonwealth of Australia, People's Republic of Bangladesh, Kingdom of Bhutan, Kingdom of Cambodia, Canada, Republic of Chile, People's Republic of China, Republic of Fiji, Republic of France, Republic of India, Republic of Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, Republic of the Philippines, Solomon Islands, Republic of South Africa, Democratic Republic of Sri Lanka, Kingdom of Sweden, Kingdom of Switzerland, Kingdom of Thailand and Democratic Republic of Timor Leste agree to uphold this declaration and strive to implement the values and aspirations it states.