Regional Conference Update no. 1

Dear friends and colleagues,

This is an update about the AMARC Asia Pacific regional conference being organised in Bali, Indonesia from November 24 – 27, 2005. It provides basic information about the conference. It has been issued in order to help you prepare for your participation. New updates will be issued on a regular basis. You can get the copy of this as well as all future updates in the AMARC Asia Pacific website: http://asiapacific.amarc.org.

I. Registration:

This is a must. Please register by logging on to http://conference.asiapacific.amarc.org if you plan to participate. This will help us make the best possible arrangements for you. In case you have difficulty in registering on-line, please send the following information to suman@wlink.com.np and we will do the registration for you:

1. First name:
2. Last name:
3. Organisation:
4. Address:
5. City:
6. Zip:
7. Phone:
8. Fax:
9. Email:
10. Citizenship:
11. Do you speak English:
12. Passport number:
13. Spoken languages:
14. Languages spoken:
15. Date of departure:
16. Date of Arrival:
17. Registration request:
18. How will you contribute:
19. Other: (such a food preference and any other matter)

II. Visa Regulations

Visiting Indonesia Without Any Visa:
Entering Indonesia without any visa is possible now only for nationals of the following 11 countries and territories:

Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Hong Kong, Macau, Malaysia, Morocco, Peru, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Citizens of the above countries will be issued on arrival a stay permit for 30 days free of charge upon presentation of a passport which is valid at least for another 6 months. This stay permit cannot be extended or converted into another type of visa.

Visa on Arrival (VoA):
This facility is available for nationals of the following countries:

Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, South Africa, South Korea, Switzerland, Taiwan, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Citizens of these countries will be able to apply for a VoA valid for either 3 or 30 days upon arrival by air in Bali, Jakarta and a few other international airports or by ship at

a limited number of Indonesian sea ports. A 3-day visa costs US$10 and a 30-day visa costs US$25.

The VoA cannot be extended or converted into any other kind of visa. Also be aware that Immigration officials calculate the 30-day period as follows: Your arrival day is counted as your first day, and you must leave the country on the 30th. day!

Fourteen additional countries to receive VoA Facilities from August 1st, 2005:
According to the Bali Post, Minister of Justice and Human Rights Hamid Awaluddin told a press on Friday, July 8th, 2005, that he had issued a formal decision (No. M-05.IZ.01.10 2005) addressing changes in the VOA policy and setting the implementation date for August 1, 2005.

Fourteen new countries have been added to the existing list of 21 countries eligible to purchase a visa upon arrival in Indonesia. The 14 new countries eligible to obtain visas on arrival include **Austria, Belgium, China, Egypt, India, Ireland, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Maldives, Portugal, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Spain.**

How to Obtain the "Visa on Arrival" (VoA):
Travellers from the above countries must have a passport, which is valid for at least 6 months from the date of arrival and the completed embarkation/disembarkation card they received from their airline. They must also be able to prove they have sufficient funds for their stay in Indonesia.

Arriving travellers with Visa-On-Arrival status have to go first to one of the 'VoA Counters' to pay the appropriate fee and have their passports stamped with the VoA before proceeding to the Immigration Clearance Desk. An official bank is part of the VoA service counters. Payment of visa fees can only be made in US dollar bank notes, Indonesian Rupiah equivalent or by VISA or MASTERCARD.

Requirement of a Visa <u>BEFORE</u> Arrival:
Citizens of countries neither on the VoA nor Visa-Free lists are <u>required to apply for a visa overseas before travelling to Indonesia</u>. **Nationals of ALL countries planning to stay for more than 30 days in Indonesia** also have to apply for the appropriate visa (tourist, business, social-cultural, etc.) at an overseas Indonesian Consulate or Foreign Mission before departing for Indonesia.

Please apprise the OC should Indonesian Embassy not be there in your country and the OC will verify visa obtaining procedure for you. The Organising Committee (OC) can provide formal invitation letter if requested. Email address of the organising committee: faprc_indonesia@yahoo.co.id. Please copy your mail to suman@wlink.co.np.

Visas are non-extendable, and travellers must exit the country for at least two weeks before they can return.

A visitor's visa for business purposes and social/cultural stays of longer duration require a letter of intent/sponsorship from the employer and/or sponsor.

Indonesia strictly enforces its immigration/visa requirements. Several have been jailed for visa violations. Violators may also be subject to substantial fines.

In an effort to prevent international child abduction, many governments have initiated procedures at entry/exit points. These often include requiring documentary evidence of relationship and permission for the child's travel from the parent(s) or legal guardian if not present. Having such documentation on hand, even if not required, may facilitate entry/departure.

Customs regulations: Indonesian customs authorities have strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Indonesia of items such as prescription medicines and foreign material or videotapes.

Criminal Penalties: With regard to visa violations, the Indonesian Government has detained people for conducting business, academic, or other non-tourist activities while in tourist visa status. Penalties for such immigration/visa violations incur a prison sentence of up to 5 years and a fine of 25 million Rp. We encourage you to contact the Embassy or Consulate General of Indonesia, whichever is nearest to you, should you have visa questions.

Sources: U.S. Department of State (http://travel.state.gov) and http://www.baliguide.com.

III. Hotel arrangement:

We are trying to ascertain the best deals possible for the conference participants. The final rates and details regarding the hotels will be provided in the next issue. The hotel rates vary from US dollar 15 to 30 per person in Bali. We will make arrangements so that you can book your hotel at a discount rate through us. This information will be provided in the next update.

IV. Bali Climate:

You can expect pleasant day temperatures between 20 to 33 degrees Celsius or 68 to 93 degrees Fahrenheit year-round. From December to March, the West monsoon can bring heavy showers and high humidity, but usually days are sunny and the rains start during the night and pass quickly. From June to September the humidity is low, and it can be quite cool in the evenings. During this time of the year, you'll have hardly any rain in the coastal areas.

Even when it rains in most parts of Bali you can often enjoy sunny days on the "Bukit", the hill south of Jimbaran Beach. On the other hand, in Ubud and the mountains you must expect cloudy skies and showers throughout the year (this is why the international weather reports for "Denpasar" or "Bali" mention showers and rain storms during all times of the year). In higher regions such as in Bedugul or Kintamani you'll also need either a sweater or jacket after the sun sets.

Please visit http://www.baliguide.com or other several websites for more information on Bali.

Ferry from Singapore to Bali

Here is an interesting idea from Niranjan Udumalagala of Sri Lanka Community Radio Association:
"To reduce expenses I would like to suggest that South Asians travel from Singapore to Bali by ferry. If we arrange a ferry on 23rd morning we all can go by that -- Sri Lankans, Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Nepalese, and others. Other international participants are welcome to join too. I think we can save money this way."

Organising committee adds: *We are currently exploring the rates, schedule, etc. of ferry services. In the meantime, those interested please contact us by email so that we know that there is substantial interest to organise a group plan. Please contact us in: faprc_indonesia@yahoo.co.id. In the subject, please write: Ferry from Singapore.* Please copy your mail to suman@wlink.co.np.

Quotable quotes:

(Following are quotes from AMARC partners in the Asia-Pacific region regarding the regional conference and their expectations from it. We hope that these quotes will help us better understand each other's viewpoints and thereby let us make the best out of the conference. Please feel free to send your own views regarding the conference to suman@wlink.com.np, along with a photo of yours.)

Sonia Randhawa, Director, Centre for Independent Journalism, Malaysia:
"The sharing of skills, experiences and ways of overcoming problems, whether from legislation or practical difficulties, is the main benefit I expect to gain from AMARC Asia-Pacific."

Ashish Sen, Executive Director, VOICES, India:
 "It is the very first time that many of us, community broadcasters and stakeholders from the Asia Pacific Region will be meeting. The conference comes at a point when the Community Radio scenario is akin to a melting pot in the region. For many of us the struggle for legitimacy continues. Others who have a tradition of Community Radio find themselves thwarted by changes in the political climate. And yet there are other countries like the Philippines and Australia which have a robust Community Radio practice. Overarching all these is the need for community media at a time when public - private lines are blurring and being increasingly governed by the market. In this context the AMARC Asia Pacific conference will provide a vital forum for learning, sharing and networking."

Bowo Udoso, President, JRKI (Community Radio Association of Indonesia):

"The upcoming conference is extremely important for our struggle in Indonesia. Our struggle is for freedom of expression, people's right to broadcast and resource mobilisation among other things. I am interested to learn about struggles and successes of community broadcasters from other countries. I want to share with them our stories. I am hopeful that the collective voice of AMARC will enhance our ability to carry forth our struggle."

Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, Coordinator/Producer-Director; femLINKpacific, Media Initiative for Women, Fiji Islands: "The Pacific Island communities have been greatly marginalised from the WSIS process due to the general political notion that anything to do with information communication technologies is about the Internet (only). For us radio remains the most important communication and information vehicle for communities.

With the support of AMARC and other likeminded organisations we will carry forth the struggle to protect our space on the broadcast spectrum and to ensure that community broadcasting is recognised not only as a vehicle for information, but more importantly as a developmental tool, which assists peoples to articulate their experiences and perspectives, and actively participate in decision making - from community to national level, and beyond.

The pressures of globalisation, in particular the corporatisation of public service broadcasting, the greater commercialisation of the private radio, and the general patriarchal attitude of the "mainstream media" means that as advocates for gender equality and peace through community or independent media, we are facing a huge but not a daunting challenge to ensure that our communities, especially the more marginalised ones - women, youth, the poor and disabled are actively engaged in social, economic and political developments taking place in our countries. The upcoming AMARC regional conference offers an opportunity to promote a united front and to meet our challenges head-on."

Raghu Mainali, President of Association of Community Radio Broadcasters and Coordinator of Save Independent Radio Movement in Nepal: "It is well known that independent radios of Nepal are currently struggling for their very existence. We are fighting against a government that is hell bent on closing down all independent broadcasters including community radio. AMARC has helped us in gathering support from the rest of the word for this struggle. The upcoming conference will help us meet fellow activists and broadcasters from the region to share our stories and experiences as well as to learn from them. Secondly, I am also keen to engage in discussions on the role of community radios in promoting language and culture. Asia Pacific is home to more than 33 percent of the languages spoken world over. In this

regard, it is vital that community radios discuss how best they can work to promote language and cultural identities of the communities they serve."

Shita Laksmi, Program Officer for Media, TIFA Foundation, Indonesia:
"The existence of AMARC Asia Pacific is a huge morale booster for the activists struggling for community radio in this region. Organizing the conference in Indonesia is like a shot in the arm for the local struggle here. It makes me feel that we can ensure the development of community radio in Asia Pacific."

Joys Eggins, Communication Arts Dept, Divine Word University, Papua New Guinea:
"The regional conference in Bali will be the perfect opportunity for me to represent PNG and share in dialogue about the experiences here. PNG is isolated in terms of information in the region and there is a need to interact with other Asian countries. As a young Papua New Guinean, I know, through research, that there is a need for more

proactive communication for communities in my country. I am also expecting to get a good feedback on my research. AMARC is considered an authority in community broadcasting and I know there will be a wide range of ideas and examples that could be useful for PNG communities in terms of community broadcasting."

Imam Prakoso, Executive Director, COMBINE Resources, Indonesia: "The AMARC regional conference could not have come at a more opportune time. I think that the organising of the conference in Indonesia will have positive and long term impact on the struggle of the community broadcasters of my country. I welcome the conference whole heartedly. Organising and managing community radios as well as mobilising of resources and promoting community participating at the grass roots are some of the challenges that we are facing and I am looking forward to discussing these and other issues in the conference."

Niranjan Udumalagala, General Secretary, Sri Lanka Community Radio Association:
"In Sri Lanka all the community radios (CR) are under the government. These radios are now away from the concept of community radios. Our organisation is asking the government to provide licences to independent CR. In the AMARC Asia Pacific conference we want to raise these questions and increase the awareness of the international communities about the situation in Sri Lanka regarding community broadcasting."

Dr. Uajit Virojtrairatt, Director, Civil Media Development Institute, Civicnet, Thailand:
I want the AMARC Asia Pacific conference to give a loud and clear message to the Thai government about community radio (CR) - why it is needed; what is the real meaning and value of community broadcasting; and how any government that claims to be democratic has to facilitate the growth of CR and let CR work independently in terms of decision making, management and self sustainability.

I expect the conference to make an international declaration in support of the rights of the people to communicate through CR without interference either from state or commercials institutions. I am also hopeful that the conference will build a Consensus and an effective alliances on "How to do CR for public profit as well as local identity and how best to prevent personal or group based profits and aggrandizements.

In my view, some of the more critical issues related to CR are (1) Philosophy and Ethics of community radio; (2) Fund raising - the sustainability concern (3) Programming and production at the community level (4) How to uphold Freedom of Expression and Rights to Communication. I want the first AMARC Asia Pacific Regional Assembly to discuss these issues because theses are issues that are relevant everywhere.

●   ●   ●

**For further information on the
AMARC Asia Pacific Regional Conference, please contact:**

AMARC Asia Pacific Regional Conference
Organising Committee, Indonesia
Email: faprc_indonesia@yahoo.co.id
Please copy your mail to: suman@wlink.com.np

This update is brought to you by:
AMARC Asia Pacific Regional Office,
Kathmandu, Nepal
Phone: +977 1 5554811
Fax: +977 1 5521714
Email: suman@wlink.com.np
Website: http://asiapacific.amarc.org.