

## **BANGKOK COMMUNITY RADIO DECLARATION**

### **THE WORLD ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY RADIO BROADCASTERS (AMARC) – ASIA PACIFIC, Bangkok, Kingdom of Thailand**

**September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

The member organisations of AMARC – Asia Pacific, aspirant members, supporters and donors gathered at the 5th World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, Asia Pacific Regional Assembly in Bangkok, Kingdom of Thailand, in September 2023. Meeting for the first time after the global pandemic we came together to celebrate unity in our diversity, our collective dreams and aspirations, and our commitment to the following beliefs and course of action.

- 1) Recognising our differences and diversity but by acknowledging our common aims and aspirations we hereby reaffirm our belief:
  - 1:1 That the right to information and freedom of expression is fundamental in ensuring other rights and freedoms.
  - 1:2 That everyone has a right to life with dignity and to be recognised and affirmed.
  - 1:3 That freedom of thought, expression, and information, as well as diversity of the media enable cultural, ethnic, religious, social, class, caste, differently abled, gendered or sexual, political and age-appropriate expressions to flourish.
  - 1:4 That, as communities and individuals, people have the right to self-determination and freedom from oppression, discrimination, intimidation and fear.
  - 1:5 That community radio can play a central role in the development and sustainability of resilient communities by facilitating communication and discussion within, between and beyond those communities.
  - 1:6 That as our communities increase their engagement and interaction with digital and online platforms, we should embrace the opportunities presented by these technologies to achieve our aims and objectives.
  
- 2) In reaffirming these beliefs:
  - 2:1 We acknowledge the diversity of opportunities and challenges that confront community radios and communications practitioners across the region.
  - 2:2 We accept that natural and human induced disasters negatively impact the social, cultural, economic and political structures of our members' countries.
  - 2:3 We consider that in some countries in our region indigenous peoples, women, children, older people, people with diverse sexual orientation and gender identities, the differently abled, dalits, migrants, refugees, displaced people and asylum seekers, peasants, workers, fisher folks, those trafficked, the stateless, religious and ethnic minorities are marginalised and denied basic human rights.
  - 2:4 We recognise that in some countries there is no legislative framework to enable the creation, development and sustainability of community radio stations or where there is legal status for community radio stations, they and community radio practitioners and journalists are not afforded natural justice or protection from damage, persecution, intimidation, assault or injury.
  - 2:5 We acknowledge there has been a growing pushback on human rights including those of women with many online platforms gatekeeping any protest against the status quo and that, for many women, community radio is the only safe space to speak and be heard.
  - 2:6 We recognise the growing threat of unregulated online and digital spaces where misinformation, disinformation, untruths, false narratives and fake news can flourish creating a climate of hate, fear and insecurity.
  - 2:7 We accept the many and varied challenges that impact our communities and hinder, restrict or obstruct them as they try and build resilience for the betterment of all people.

- 3) Taking into account these considerations and recognising the valuable role community radio can play in furthering human development and the expression of and support for human rights, we the participants of the 5th Regional Assembly of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, Asia Pacific, hereby:
  - 3:1 Resolve to strengthen our regional network by developing and deepening our interactions and ties with each other, regional inter-governmental bodies, donor organisations and supporters, national associations and United Nations organisations.
  - 3:2 Commit to rebuild an international network of community radio broadcasters to reunite the regions through networking opportunities, to provide a coordinated voice within global forums and to donors, to revive the collective strength of our sector, and to assist and contribute to re-establish an international community radio movement.
  - 3:3 Renew our commitment to work with each other, regional and global inter-governmental bodies, the United Nations and other relevant NGOs in developing strategies and programs focusing on achieving the sustainable development goals as described in the United Nations' Resolution 70/1 "2030 Agenda".
  - 3:4 Recognise the importance of the "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction" as endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 2015 and resolve to continue to develop strategies, programs and training opportunities for community radio stations to be better equipped to participate in disaster planning, mitigation, response and recovery.
  - 3:5 Call on the governments of our region to respond to the 2022 Draft Resolution of the UN Human Rights Council on "countering the negative impact of disinformation" and the 2022 report of the UN Secretary General, "Countering disinformation for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms" in digital and online platforms by developing regulation and legislation to prevent the dissemination of misinformation, disinformation, untruths, false narratives and fake news and which protects "free and independent media and dialogue with communities" and strengthens "digital media and information literacy".
  - 3:6 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 radio stations in their own languages and have access to non-indigenous community radio without discrimination.
  - 3:7 Urge the Australian community to take heed of the invitation in the "Uluru Statement from the Heart" to come together for "a fair and truthful relationship" with its First Nations Peoples and to affirm the referendum to establish an "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice" to Parliament.
  - 3:8 Resolve to create spaces on the airwaves for indigenous peoples, peasants, workers, fisher folk, refugees, displaced people and asylum seekers, the stateless, the trafficked and diverse and marginalised voices, irrespective of cultural, ethnic, religious, social, class, caste, disability, gender or sexual or political identification or age.
  - 9:9 Resolve to create space on the airwaves for dalit communities to own, manage and operate community radio stations and to call out instances of caste-based discrimination through community radio programming whilst renewing our anti-caste efforts through capacity building and policy advocacy that will support and sustain CRs that work on behalf of dalit communities.
  - 3:10 Commit to work with local communities, of all types, to record and preserve local knowledge.
  - 3:11 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.
  - 3:12 Denounce all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, particularly during times of conflict from the domestic sphere to war that is waged on the bodies of women.
  - 3:13 Acknowledge women's rights for safety in community broadcasting and commit to put in place policies that recognise and aim to prevent harassment and intimidation in all forms and set up redressal measures for sexual harassment of women in our radio stations, networks and our communities.
  - 3:14 Resolve to develop and implement health and safety policies for broadcasters and journalists working in community radios in the region.
  - 3:15 Acknowledge the response of the local government of the Jombang, in East Java province, who responded immediately to the incident of sexual violence in Islamic boarding schools in 2021. However, recognising that ongoing sexual violence is still occurring throughout the Republic of Indonesia, we encourage the national

government to continue to listen to and hear the voices of young survivors of sexual violence and recognise there is a power difference between the managers and the female students in all educational settings and to provide ongoing redress to them.

- 3:16 Resolve to abide by the provisions of the UNHRC resolution 32/2 “Protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity” and develop, in co-operation with local gender diverse and sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) communities, policies, procedures and programming that breaks the silence on and addresses “the multiple, intersecting and aggravated forms of violence and discrimination faced by persons on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity.”
- 3:17 Reaffirm our commitment to provide funding support for capacity building projects that will provide and enhance opportunities for women to participate at all levels of community radio operations including management. and on-air and off-air roles.
- 3:18 Call on the Republic of the Philippines to drop all trumped-up charges against our young colleague Frenchie Mae Cumpio and immediately release her from unjust imprisonment. We likewise urge the Philippine government to bring justice to all victims of media killings as well as stop its red-tagging activities and other forms of persecution against independent media to allow them, including community broadcasting, to exist and operate freely.
- 3:19 Commit to abiding by the principles set out in the 2014 World Youth Conference “Colombo Declaration on Youth: Mainstreaming Youth in the Post-2015 Development Agenda” and create, develop and implement strategies to empower youth to participate in all aspects of community radio training, programming, planning and management.
- 3:20 Reaffirm our commitment 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 all affected people and community radio practitioners and infrastructure.
- 3:21 Resolve to develop, in partnership with organisers and campaigners against human trafficking, programs and activities to raise awareness of the need to protect the rights of women and children subject to this abuse.
- 3:22 Commit to working cooperatively and sharing resources across the region to develop a ‘best practice’ model for community radio capacity building and policy advocacy strategies.
- 3:23 Call upon the governments of the countries of the region to recognise community media as a third tier of broadcasting, including in the digital radio spectrum and other emerging broadcast technologies, and to incorporate community media in planning, policy, regulatory and legislative frameworks and to develop legislative provisions safeguarding community radio 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”.
- 3:24 Call upon the governments of the countries of the region to recognise the vital role community radio plays in developing a vibrant, responsive and democratic society and encourages them to create a regulatory and legislative environment that supports the stable operation, growth and sustainability of community radio.
- 3:25 Call upon governments of the region to recognise the important role community radio has to play in strengthening democracy.
- 3:26 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 in accordance with “A Resolution for the creation of an AMARC Action Committee for the Protection of Community Broadcasters” unanimously adopted at AMARC 10 in La Plata, Argentina in 2010.
- 3:27 Accept the responsibility that as community radio broadcasters, practitioners and journalists we, individually and collectively, can have a positive impact within our communities by being agents of empowerment in building resilience.

We, the representatives of community radio broadcasters, production groups and other community media practitioners from the Republic of Austria, Commonwealth of Australia, People's Republic of Bangladesh, Kingdom of Bhutan, Kingdom of Cambodia, Republic of Fiji, Federal Republic of Germany, Republic of India, Republic of Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Kenya, Mongolian People's Republic, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, Republic of the Philippines, Republic of South Korea, Kingdom of Thailand, Democratic Republic of Timor Leste, United States of America, agree to uphold this declaration and strive to implement the values and aspirations it embodies.