

## Session Outcome Document

### Session 331 - Community Media Networks: Envisioning the Future

ICT4D Collective, ACORAB/CIN (Association of Community Radio Broadcasters/Community Information Network, Nepal); Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication, Tac-Together, Cape Town TV, CEMCA (Commonwealth Education Media Centre for Asia)

**Wednesday, 29 May 2024 11:00–11:45 (UTC+02:00)**

<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Agenda/Session/331>

#### Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

The following key issues were discussed:

- Key development in community radio since the original WSIS meetings in 2003 and 2005.
- Community radio's special success in providing information to some of the most isolated and marginalised communities. It is important to note that with two way communication (by phone or post), community radio can also be interactive.
- The important shifts taking place towards community media (not just radio), and the challenges (and costs) of shifting towards digital modalities of delivery
- Community radio plays a particularly important role in emergencies (floods, earthquakes, and war)
- Need for guidance on good practices (especially in digitalisation) that can be shared with those without such expertise

#### Towards WSIS+20 and WSIS beyond 2025, please share your views on the emerging trends, challenges, achievements, and opportunities in the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines to date (5-8 bullets)

- Much has been achieved in community radio within the context of Action Line C9 over the last 20 years; much remains to be done.
- It is essential to understand the needs of different audiences and ensure that programmes and content are delivered in ways and on topics that appeal to these audiences.
- Community radio has proved to be especially valuable in disaster contexts (as in Nepal earthquake in April 2015) and also for reaching isolated communities.
- It is essential that high quality training resources are made available so that good practices can be shared, especially in how radio networks can update to digital provision.



- There is serious competition from commercial media and “digital giants”, and community radio stations and networks need to find new sustainable business models to survive.

**Tangible outcomes (such as key achievements, announcements, launches, agreements, commitments, figures, and success stories (3-5 bullet points))**

- In India, the National Institute for Disaster Management is well aware of the use of community radio during landslides, earthquakes, cyclones and floods, and proposals are well underway for the creation of a network of 250 community radio stations to serve the 7500 kms of India’s coastline.
- In Bangladesh, BNNRC has won several awards, including the UN World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Prize 2016 and recognition as a Champion for Media Development and Digital Transformation. BNNRC has been hosting the Secretariat of the Bangladesh Internet Governance Forum since 2006 and the Bangladesh Initiative for Unified Voices on the Global Digital Compact and UN Summit of the Future since 2022.
- In Nepal, ACORAB is the umbrella organisation for 360 community radio stations spread across the length and breadth of the country, and broadcasts in 70 languages, especially in isolated rural areas without other connectivity.
- The Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development has a long history and wide network across the world sharing good practices in community media, and welcomes delegates to the 19<sup>th</sup> Asia Media Summit in September 2024

**Actionable plan and key recommendations (2-5 points)**

- Community media have a key role to play in empowering isolated and marginalised communities, especially in the contexts of social cohesion and disaster management
- Governments, with support and advice from relevant international agencies, should prioritise actions and licensing regimes to enable them to benefit from the potential to enhance their services through the adoption of the latest digital technologies.

**Suggestions for thematic aspects that might be included in the WSIS Forum 2025 (one paragraph)**

- There could be exciting potential in encouraging those working on Action Lines C8 (Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content) and C9 (Media) to convene a joint set of sessions addressing the important synergies between them.