

Closing Declaration of the Round Table on Community Media and Sustainable Development

Marrakesh, 21 November 2004

We, community media practitioners and stakeholders, meeting in Marrakesh, the 21 November 2004, at the first Round Table on Community Media and Sustainable Development;

Recognising that Community Media, that is media which are independent, community-driven and civil society based, have a particular role to play in enabling access and participation for all to information and communications, especially the poorest and most marginalized communities;

Noting growing recognition of the crucial contribution that community media can make to the achievement of the goals of the Millennium Declaration and that Community Media can be vital enablers of information, voice, and capacities for dialogue;

Recognising that legal, regulatory and policy frameworks that protect and enhance community media are especially critical for ensuring vulnerable groups access to information;

Call on Governments to ensure that legal frameworks for community media are non-discriminatory and provide for equitable allocation of frequencies through transparent and accountable mechanisms;

Call for targets to be established for the opening up of broadcast licensing to allow for the operation of community broadcasting where this is not currently permitted;

Insist that spectrum planning and regulation should ensure sufficient spectrum and channel capacity, and appropriate technical standards, for community media to develop in both the analogue and digital environment;

Call for a donor civil society partnership to invest in and support community-driven information and communication initiatives, using traditional media and new ICTs including projects that make provision for the poorest communities, for cultural and linguistic diversity and for the equal participation of women and girls;

Propose that this should include:

- Engagement of community media expertise in planning for media and ICT investment around development,
- inclusion of a community media element in all ICT investment,
- establishment of a Development Fund for Community Radio in Africa,
- encouragement of national level funds for community media support;

And agree to establish a Task Force on Funding and Resourcing Community Media to take forward these proposals and to evaluate their implementation.