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## World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters

### Press Statement

#### **World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, AMARC concerned for Community Radios in Thailand**

June 16, 2014, Kathmandu. The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, AMARC, has expressed concern over reports of the recent closure of media outlets in Thailand and especially at the restrictions imposed on community radios. Media reports indicate that a large number of broadcasters, including community radios, were suspended after the military takeover.

Although, it is heartening to learn from more recent reports that approximately 500 licensed community radios are preparing to resume broadcast at the behest of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission (NBTC).

Speaking on the issue, Maica Lagman, President of AMARC Asia-Pacific has called upon the Thai junta to take cognizance of the invaluable contributions that community radios can offer towards inclusive dialogue and peace-building. "I earnestly urge the Thai military to let the community radios resume broadcast without further delay, so that dialogues at community levels can resume, and all sections of the society can participate in a positive resolution of the problems Thailand is facing currently. Community radios in other parts of Asia-Pacific as well as throughout the world are recognized for their contribution towards fostering dialogue and peace, and Thailand must take advantage of its community radios in this regard. Also, any impedance on community broadcasting is an impedance over freedom of expression of the people and this must be avoided," Ms. Lagman has said.

Ms. Lagman also expressed her concern over the content restriction under the martial law which poses negative impact to the essence of community radios as a medium for local voices. "If conversations through this channel are limited only to commercial or entertaining content, the limitation will gradually undermine the value of community radios. We believe that community radio is one of the most effective tools for political expression. Such is why each community needs its own community station," she has said.

AMARC calls on the Thai military to return to the democratic process, respect human rights and fundamental freedoms including press freedom, and create a conducive environment for community radio stations in Thailand to operate free from restriction or fear.

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