

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE ONE DAY COMMUNITY RADIO DIALOGUE 2010

Preamble

A one day policy dialogue on community radio development in Nigeria was held on the 29th June, 2010 at Reiz Continental Hotel, Abuja, Nigeria. The objective of the event was to discuss the state, environment and development of community radio in Nigeria with a view to accelerating community radio licensing.

The dialogue was organised by the Nigerian Community Radio Coalition and supported by Community Media Solutions, Panos Institute West Africa and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UK). Participants were drawn from policy, legislative and regulatory bodies, civil society groups, development agencies, media, grassroots communities, academia and other stakeholders.

The Minister of Information and Communications, Prof. Dora Akunyili, sent a message through a representative and the dialogue was officially declared open by Mr. Labaran Maku, the Minister of State, Federal Ministry of Information and Communications. Also present was Hon. Lanre Agoro of the House of Representatives.

Themes engaged during the dialogue included Broadcasting Policy Reform, Media Freedom, Community Radio for development, Food Security, review of the Broadcasting Code, Maternal and Child health and Capacity Building.

Observations

1. Nigeria remains the only country in West Africa without Community Radio despite being a multi-party democracy.
2. Much progress has been made on the policy reform agenda as evident in the June 2010 meeting of the Federal Ministry of Information and Communications/UNICEF on the review of National Communication Policy and Community Radio Policy in Nigeria.
3. The Legislative and Executive arms of government have expressed their commitment to actualising the licensing of Community Radio in Nigeria.
4. Community Radio is crucial to development including the health sector, agriculture and conflict resolution.

5. Ratings of some West African countries by different organisations such as Freedom House, Reporters without Borders and African Media Barometer showed Nigeria to be the lowest in terms of press freedom and freedom of information.

Recommendations

1. We urge the President to use his Executive and constitutional power as articulated in section 39 of the Constitution to approve the issuance of Community Radio licenses.
2. We urge the president to delegate powers to the National Broadcasting Commission to issue Community Radio licenses.
3. We urge the government to expedite action on the Report of the Presidential Advisory Committee on digitalisation of broadcasting by putting the document in public domain and taking action to avoid Nigeria falling behind the 2012 deadline.
4. We urge the National Assembly to speedily pass the Freedom of Information Bill so that the President can give assent.
5. In view of the urgency to actualise Community Radio stations in Nigeria, we urge the National Broadcasting Commission to step up its efforts to actualise community radio stations by the end of 2010.
6. We commend the National Broadcasting Commission on the participatory approach taken in the ongoing review process and deliver a better reviewed version.
7. We commend the National Broadcasting Commission for its professional organisation and sustainance of AFRICAST in previous years especially its inclusion of themes on community broadcasting and urge them to do more. We urge Broadcasting stakeholders within and outside Nigeria to engage the forthcoming AFRICAST through high attendance and participation.
8. We urge communities to be professional and ethical in the process of planning the establishment of their Community Radio stations.
9. We urge development partners not to relent in their support for advocacy and community capacity building in Nigeria.

Issued in Abuja, Nigeria, this 29th day of June 2010.