

**Association of Community Radio Broadcasters Nepal (ACORAB)**  
**Pokhara Declaration**  
**27 January 2018**

**Preamble:**

We, the community radios of Nepal, participating in the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting and national Convention of ACORAB,

- Asserting our firm commitment to freedom of expression;
- Reiterating our pledge to be the voice of the voiceless;
- Renewing our commitment to the protection and promotion of right to information;
- Declaring our unflinching commitment to democracy, human rights and plurality;
- Advocating for the right to life with dignity; and
- Addressing the challenges and opportunities facing community radios in the present times;

Proclaim and uphold this Pokhara Declaration.

**Our commitments:**

- 1) We resolve to continue our campaign and play a catalytic role for positive social transformation by ensuring ‘radio in every household for building a prosperous Nepal through informed and responsible citizens;’
- 2) We renew our commitment towards the promotion and uplifting of women’s rights as well as that of every under privileged and deprived community through policy reconstruction leading towards their enhanced participation in community radios;
- 3) We resolve to renew our commitment to strive for ending all social discriminations and mal-practices including child marriage, dowry tradition, and chaupadi system through increasing attention of community radios on these issues;
- 4) We resolve to increase our commitment towards building resilient societies that are well informed to withstand incidents of disasters induced by climate change;

**Our demand:**

- 1) We have taken serious notice of the recently issued ‘action plan for the management and operation of FM radio’ that grants locally elected bodies unprecedented control over licensing, renewal, and monitoring of local radio stations. We call upon the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development of the Government of Nepal to immediately withhold its implementation of the action plan - which we recognize as being against the spirit of the Constitution of Nepal and against the principle of freedom of expression, and hold consultations with all concerned stakeholders to revise the action plan in line with the principles of freedom of expression and democratic media management;

2) In order to ensure that all elected provincial and local governments deliver their services to the people in a transparent, inclusive and effective manner, and recognizing the value of a working relationship between community radios and the elected governments, we call upon the Government of Nepal to formulate and implement a clear policy for the same in consultation with the concerned stakeholders;

3) We call upon the Government of Nepal to implement the decision of the Honorable Supreme Court of Nepal and implement the policy of proportional advertisement distribution with immediate effect;

4) We strongly denounce the highly objectionable, unilateral, and rushed decision of the Ministry of Communication of Government of Nepal to withhold renewal of FM radio licenses unless music royalty fees has been paid up. We call upon the Ministry to take back its decision immediately and without any pre condition and ensure smooth renewal of the radio licenses;

5) We call upon all relevant national and international stakeholders including locally elected governments to continually support the campaigns promoted by community radios against Harmful Traditional Practices such as, Caste Based Discrimination, child marriage, dowry tradition, girls' empowerment and chaupadi system;

6) We call upon the Government of Nepal to formulate and implement a community radio policy that will ensure people's right to communication, promote sustainability of community radios and promote good governance in the media sector as a whole;

7) We have taken serious note of the fact that security agencies including the military and police department, as well as locally elected governments have taken interest to establish their own radio stations despite the high level of presence of community radios all over the country. We call upon the Government of Nepal to immediately halt such practices, which will eventually lead towards stifling of people's freedom of expression and mis-management of the overall broadcasting sector of Nepal. We also call upon all concerned parties to coordinate with community radios to promote an atmosphere of coordination and collaboration.

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