

"Earth Radio" broadcasts from Johannesburg Earth Summit

Grassroots radios broadcast "Earth Radio" shows from the Johannesburg Earth Summit while communication rights organisations lobbied for commitment to the development of the Community Radio sector.

Grassroots radio stations all across Africa and the world enjoyed one of the largest community radio collaborations ever - 5 hours per day of live radio feeds for 10 days, from the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg.

This WSSD "Earth Radio" global community radio broadcast effort, which started August 26 and ran until September 4, was a project of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (known by its French acronym AMARC), as part of its ongoing Radio Voix Sans Frontieres (RVSF), or "Radio Voices Without Frontiers" initiative.

South Africa's National Community Radio Forum (NCRF) was the main South African implementing partner for the broadcast, working with the AMARC Africa Regional Office in Johannesburg.

This RVSF "Earth Radio" project brought together about 30 community radio producers from around Africa (including Angola, Mozambique, Malawi, Mali, Togo, the Gambia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Africa), and others from North and Latin America and Europe, to produce 10 days of live radio programming from August 26 to September 4. There were 5 hours of live programming each day - 1 hour French, 2 hours English, 1 hour Portuguese and 1 hour Spanish.

The feeds provided in-depth community radio coverage of sustainable development issues, and are being distributed live via satellite and Internet platforms to community radio listeners around Africa and the world. All over Africa, about 200 AMARC Africa stations re-broadcast the feeds via the WorldSpace digital satellite audio platform.

Internationally, stations and listeners were able to listen to the audio (live and in archived ftp format) on the Internet via a link to the AMARC VSF web page, <http://www.amarc.org/vsf>. Internet listeners can also go directly to the Internet audio site at: <http://wssd.waag.org>

Latin American organisation ALER took the Spanish-language audio files from the VSF site for satellite distribution to 100 community radio stations in Central and South America.

This project is also cooperating with other Internet radio projects in Johannesburg for the Summit, including the Feminist International Radio Endeavour (FIRE) from Costa Rica, IndyMedia, Diversity Radio, and the Friends of the Earth's Radio Earth Summit project.

The WSSD comes at a time when the African population is getting poorer and sicker and the environment is being devastated by the day. As delegates try to reach a consensus on implementation of programmes that will achieve sustainable development, AMARC Africa believes that the key to sustainable development is in a consensus being reached among governments, civil society, NGOs and the grassroots. To achieve true sustainability, communities need to be part of the discussions and decisions taken at the Summit. Community radio is therefore the crucial platform on which consensus building can be achieved.

During the WSSD, AMARC Africa and the NCRF together with partners in the community radio sector lobbied for national and international commitment to the development of Community Radio sector as an integral part of sustainable development.

Also see info on the World Summit for the Information Society (WSIS) at:

www.comunica.org/cris