

Celebrating World Radio Day in Rwanda on 13 February 2017

Joint Press Briefing

Rwanda Media Commission (RMC) in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and with support by the Government of Sweden, are pleased to inform the general public and the media fraternity in particular, that Rwanda will for the first time be joining the rest of the world to celebrate the World Radio Day.

World Radio Day is a global event that is marked on the 13th of February every year. Following a UNESCO proposal, it was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2012 to coincide with the anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Radio in 1946. This day is celebrated to raise awareness of the importance of the radio and how it positively impacts on millions of lives every day. It is also a day to celebrate radio as a medium of communication, to improve international cooperation among broadcasters and to encourage major networks and community radio alike to promote access to information and freedom of expression.

The theme for the 2017 edition of World Radio Day is **Public participation: "Radio is You!"**. It is a call for greater participation of audiences and communities in the policy and planning of radio broadcasting. This is meant to encourage radio stations around the world, whether community, private, or public radio stations, to develop the tools they need to enhance their capacity and remain effective, while ensuring they have continued dialogue with the industry, its audience and the public in general. It also aims to promote freedom of expression and cultural diversity.

In Rwanda, several activities have been lined up to celebrate this day. These include broadcasting radio jingles to raise awareness of the day, and a press conference to be held at the RMC premises on 10 February at 9:00 a.m. On the 13th February 2017, media stakeholders will also gather at the Hill Top Hotel for a half day conference with the participation of community radio managers from Kenya and Uganda. The conference will be crowned by a panel discussion on the *"Role of the Radio in promoting public participation: challenges and opportunities"*, making reference to the UNESCO Freedom of Expression Tool Kit, which has been translated into Kinyarwanda.

Considering the important role the radio plays as an enabler and driver of the diversity of cultural expressions and ensuring that they are accessible to all, UNESCO will also host an evening cocktail for the media and culture stakeholders in Rwanda on the 13th February 2017, 18h30 at Hill Top Hotel. This takes into account that the media, artists, cultural professionals, civil society actors and local/national listeners are important to ensure that diverse local contents are available in Rwandan media.

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