



Paris Declaration

Post-2015 Agenda: The right of access to information, independent media, and safety for exercising freedom of expression, are essential to development

**World Press Freedom Day International Conference, 5-6 May 2014
 “Media Freedom for a Better Future: Shaping the Post-2015 Development Agenda”**

We, the participants at the UNESCO World Press Freedom Day International Conference held at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France 5-6 May 2014,

- Recalling Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”;
- Recognising that freedom of expression across all media platforms is an enabler of human development, including a culture of peace;
- Believing that freedom of expression, which encompasses press freedom and the right to access information, including through information and communication technologies (ICTs , such as the Internet, is central to contemporary democracy, sustainable and human rights-centered development and economic growth;
- Honouring the journalists, media workers and social media producers who contribute public interest journalism to human development processes, often risking their personal security, and even their lives, in the process;
- Recognising the importance for sustainable and human rights-based development of the safety of journalists and an end to impunity for crimes against them, and UN Human Rights Council Resolution 21/12, the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/68/, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1738, as well as the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, which UNESCO spearheaded and is coordinating in taking forward;
- Affirming that the continuing high level of killings of journalists calls for intensified action by international organisations, governments, media and other actors to give heightened attention to strengthening the safety of journalists and to bringing their killers to justice;
- Acknowledging the principles and recommendations of the previous World Press Freedom Day Declarations, in particular the Washington Declaration on 21st Century Media: New Frontiers, New Barriers and the Maputo Declaration on Freedom of Expression, Access to Information and Empowerment of People;

And noting that the 2014 World Press Freedom Day takes place at an important juncture, with the opportunity to inform and shape an ambitious and global post-2015 development agenda, and observing further that:

- The 3 May statement by 31 UN special rapporteurs, experts and working groups, "*Free media reinforcing the post-2015 goals*", underlines how rights to freedom of expression and information, freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association, and public participation are essential for achieving human rights for all and related development goals;

- The report of the UN Secretary General's High Level Panel on the post-2015 Development Agenda, *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development*, recognises the importance of governance to sustainable development, which it defines as a society's ability to guarantee the rule of law, free speech and open and accountable government;
- Participants in the United Nations "My World" global survey ranked, after education and healthcare, "an honest and responsive government" as the third highest development priority out of a list of 15;
- The Global Thematic Consultation on Governance, led by the UN Development Group's Millennium Development Goals Task Force, highlighted the importance of freedom of expression and information and of the media in particular;
- The document 194 EX/14, presented to UNESCO's Executive Board in April 2014, titled "UNESCO'S participation in the preparations for a post-2015 development agenda" underlined the importance of issues relating to communication and information in the range of engagements about future sustainable development goals, echoing similar perspectives made at the UNESCO Leaders' Forum held during the 37th session of the General Conference in 2013;
- The United Nations Groups on the Information Society (UNGIS) stated in 2013 that "ICTs in general, and the Internet in particular, play an important part in ensuring rights-based development, especially enabling wider exercise of freedom of expression and press freedom, which in turn are critical to combating corruption, ensuring gender-sensitivity, deepening accountability, and promoting socially inclusive development";
- The statement by international civil society issued on 3 February 2014, endorsed by over 200 international, regional, and national groups from over 77 countries, which calls on the United Nations' Open Working Group to integrate governance-related recommendations that refer to freedom of expression and the right to access to information.

We accordingly affirm that:

1. Freedom of expression and its corollary of press freedom and the right of access to information are fundamental rights as well as enablers of many goals relevant to the post-2015 development agenda;
2. Men and women have the right to equal access to and participation in the media;
3. Developing a diversity of media actors, content and languages, relevant and meaningful to all peoples and cultures, is important within the framework of universal human rights;
4. Overcoming poverty requires citizens to be empowered through reliable and quality information and inclusive platforms for public voice;
5. Media and information literacy competencies are essential for all, to ensure all consumers and producers of media are equipped to find, evaluate and engage with information, including that pertaining to development debates;
6. The rule of law is a prerequisite for, as well as an outcome of, governance and a sustainable and human rights-centered development agenda, and that freedom of expression and the safety of journalists are prominent issues for the rule of law;
7. The safety of journalists is often a symptom of the strength of the rule of law, and impunity for crimes against journalists constitutes a barometer of fragility of a State and evidence of a major obstacle to development;
8. Journalism promotes vigilance towards and respect for the rule of law, especially through fostering investigative journalism, the openness of court, legislative and administrative proceedings, and access to officials and to public documents.

We therefore:

Call on relevant international organisations, as well as UN Member States, media, donors and civil society to:

1. Advocate for media institutions across the range of public, private, community and social sectors as a foundation for free, pluralistic and independent media to play their full role in sustainable human development;
2. Promote media sustainability with viable institutional foundations that can enable and protect the independence and diversity of journalism, along with professional standards, such as verification and public interest;

3. Ensure that aid programmes take into account the importance of freedom of expression issues for all development efforts and that they support activities to promote freedom of expression, including the safety of journalists, as an essential element in media development;
4. Prepare for the first commemoration of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists on 2 November 2014, following the declaration of this day by the UN General Assembly in 2013;
5. Undertake concerted efforts to enhance the role of knowledge in driving both the development of the media and a context-specific understanding of media's role in development, including enhancing knowledge about the correlation between free, independent and pluralistic media and sustainable human rights-centered development.

Call on the United Nations' Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

1. To fully integrate into the SDGs, the issues of freedom of expression, press freedom, independent media and the right of access to information, as proposed by the UN High Level Panel of Eminent Persons Report, as part of an overall good governance goal;
2. To include these issues in the elaboration of post-2015 development targets and indicators;
3. To incorporate into the SDGs, universal access to ICT, and the importance of governments making available comprehensive, reliable, accurate and accessible information related to the development agenda.

Call on UNESCO Member States to:

1. Actively support the Open Working Group to include the points raised in the paragraph above;
2. Reaffirm the importance of free expression and a free, independent and pluralistic media on all platforms to the achievement of sustainable and human-rights centered development;
3. Reaffirm that this further requires putting in place a legal and institutional environment which can promote the safety of journalists, as outlined in the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity;
4. Condemn the killings of journalists and ensure that such crimes are subject to independent, speedy and effective investigations and prosecutions, and to provide comprehensive and timely responses to the call by the UNESCO Director-General for information about investigations into killings of journalists in line with the decisions of the Organisation's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC);
5. Put in place systems to promote greater transparency in ownership and financing of media, which are relevant issues to good governance;
6. Ensure that development processes include, where needed, the transformation of state-owned media into public service media;
7. Avoid the use of economic levers to undermine media independence and diversity;
8. Support the provision of quality training and education for journalists, as well as broader media and information literacy, as part of long-term efforts to promote media sustainability and professionalization.

Call on relevant intergovernmental organisations

1. To endorse publicly the inclusion of a specific goal to ensure good governance and effective institutions along with relevant indicators relating to freedom of expression as essential rights and as enablers in the post-2015 development goals agenda;
2. To promote and monitor the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity as appropriate.

Call on journalists, professional and support associations, media outlets, internet intermediaries and social media practitioners:

1. To participate in the debate about freedom of expression and development;
2. To support the UN Plan on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity with complementary or joint actions, and to enhance cooperation with each other.

Call on UNESCO to:

1. Continue to be proactively involved in highlighting the importance of freedom of expression and media development in the post-2015 development agenda processes;
2. Raise these issues in the context of ongoing consultations on crafting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as current negotiations concerning the World Summit on the Information Society after 2015;
3. Promote the importance of free, independent and pluralistic media as the core of media development, and which are essential for good governance and the rule of law;
4. Consider support for, as reflected in the Africa Platform for Access to Information, the recognition of 28 September as World Right to Information Day;
5. Continue monitoring the safety of journalists and state of impunity, and submit reports about this on a regular basis;
6. Expand the implementation of the UN Plan of Action to further interested countries, and to continue coordinating the implementation of the UN Plan of Action throughout the UN system;
7. Sensitize governments to the importance of media freedom and an end to impunity for crimes against media practitioners as part of commitments to post-2015 development goals and programmes;
8. Continue work to support media professionalism as well as media and information literacy.
9. Reinforce the contribution of the Information for All Programme (IFAP) and the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) to the post-2015 development agenda.
10. Make this Declaration widely available to Member States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Open Working Group, and to other international and regional organisations.