



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# IPDC THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION

## Agenda item for discussion Global Initiative for Excellence in Journalism Education

### INFORMATION NOTE

#### SUMMARY CONTENT OF DOCUMENT

This document presents the proposed Global Initiative for Excellence in Journalism Education, for which the IPDC Bureau's endorsement is sought. It is based on the *Potential Centres of Excellence/Reference in Journalism Education in Africa* project – a “Special Initiative” of the IPDC until the 57<sup>th</sup> IPDC Bureau decided to conclude it as such.

## Global Initiative for Excellence in Journalism Education

(February 7, 2014)

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### 1. BACKGROUND

This is an outline of the proposed Global Initiative for Excellence in Journalism Education. It is based on the *Potential Centres of Excellence/Reference in Journalism Education in Africa* project – a “Special Initiative” of the IPDC until the 57<sup>th</sup> IPDC Bureau decided to conclude it as such. The project was the subject of an internal review. Its findings are available at: [http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/review\\_centres\\_excellence\\_rev.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/review_centres_excellence_rev.pdf). This present initiative is an outcome of that study.

### 2. PURPOSE

The proposed Global Initiative for Excellence in Journalism Education has been developed with a view to UNESCO's strategic approach towards supporting journalism education in the 2014-2018 C4 planning period. It goes beyond the recent past in which selected African journalism schools were recognised by UNESCO and entitled to identify themselves as centres of potential excellence or reference. Using the lessons of the past five

years to promote globally shared excellence in journalism education, the Initiative seeks to place the success stories amongst the African centres at the heart of promoting international collegial discussion and sharing of perspectives of excellence in teaching, research and professional outreach.

To this end, UNESCO has partnered with Orbicom – the Montreal-based network of UNESCO chairs in communication – to take forward the dialogue and debate. Conceived as a set of critical-thinking skills and practices, journalism education has potential to raise awareness of contemporary development challenges and the role of the world’s journalism schools in it, thereby helping to produce questioning, independent and internationally-informed journalism graduates who, through their journalistic outputs, can disseminate quality knowledge for peace, development and democracy.

As a key part of this global strategy, this unfolding new phase of our work will see UNESCO supporting African schools of journalism to become more integrated, as a dynamic force, into the global mainstream of journalism education such as through strategic partnerships facilitated by the Organization’s convening power. As a first step, UNESCO and Orbicom invited the twelve African centres which took part in the review to become **Founding Members** of the Global Initiative. More specifically, through this initiative, UNESCO, notwithstanding its financial constraints, will aim to:

- **Provide** opportunities and advice where journalism schools seek to establish a UNESCO chair in a particular specialisation where they are on course to excel (e.g. Entrepreneurial Journalism, Science Journalism, etc.).
- **Expand** access to other schools of journalism in the network by encouraging and actively supporting membership in key international networks of journalism educators (Orbicom, Association of Education in Journalism and Mass Communication [AEJMC], etc.).
- **Support** efforts to access the modest funding grants that are available from UNESCO’s IPDC.
- **Facilitate** with funding partners active participation in national/regional/international conferences (e.g. World Journalism Education Congress [WJEC]).
- **Encourage** institutions to actively use UNESCO-commissioned curricula resources, including specialized syllabi such as those recently published and available on our website.
- **Invite** schools to participate in research into and discussions of media development data related to the IPDC-endorsed Knowledge-Driven Media Development initiative as well as other similar activities within UNESCO and its partner organisations.

### 3. PROMOTION

The Initiative is in its early stages. UNESCO continues to shape it in the most cost-effective and efficient manner that will better respond to the institutional needs of its participants. Consultations have included (i) discussions with African schools of journalism; (ii) public lectures in Paris under the *Public Lecture* series of the CI Sector; and (iii) presentations during the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the World Journalism Education Congress (WJEC) in Mechelen, Belgium, and during the International Communication Division (ICD) Business Meeting of the Association of Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) in Washington, DC, USA.

Further promotion of the Initiative will involve engagement with journalism educators during the upcoming Colloquium on Communication and Social Change in Africa, scheduled for 10-12 April 2014 in Douala and Orbicom’s meeting in Turkey with the Department of Journalism of the University of Istanbul in September 2014.

## 7. CONCLUSION

IPDC has a powerful track record of supporting journalism education, and the proposed Global Initiative provides a holistic framework within which all related activities can be conceptualised and interlinked. Endorsement by the Bureau of this initiative will enable formalisation of this trajectory of work, and reporting back on an annual basis.

## 8. BUREAU ACTION

The Bureau, having discussed this document and any amendments, may wish to:

- *Endorse* the Global Initiative for Excellence in Journalism Education as an IPDC special initiative.