Public Seminar on UNESCO’s Impact in the Arab Region

Promoting Freedom of Expression

- Promoting an enabling and safe environment for quality journalism in transitional and post-conflict contexts
- Fostering a sustainable future for Arab media: placing youth and gender in the spotlight

4 May 2016
UNESCO is the UN specialized agency with a mandate to defend the universal right to freedom of expression, instructed by its Constitution to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image. Following the 2011 uprisings in the Arab region, and with the support of the Governments of Finland and Sweden, UNESCO has supported the democratic transitions in the region through promoting freedom of expression, freedom of information, and independent and pluralistic media. The deterioration of the conflict and the post-conflict situation in the region in the recent years exacerbates the vulnerability of matters related to freedom of expression, access to information and safety of media professionals in the region. In line with its mandate, and as a response to emerging needs, UNESCO’s actions in this regard have resulted in greater awareness of freedom of expression and the safety of journalists, enhanced understanding of internet freedom, increased media and information literacy, and strengthened capacities of media institutions and professionals, as well as women and youth.

This seminar will provide a platform for discussion on the importance of freedom of expression for sustainable development, democratic governance and intercultural dialogue, particularly in post-conflict environments. Through an interactive discussion between various stakeholders from the region, international development partners and donors, beneficiaries including media and local partners, and UNESCO representatives, the event will highlight the impact of UNESCO’s projects funded by the Governments of Finland and Sweden with a focus on the Arab region. Members of the public will have the opportunity to learn more about the state of freedom of expression as well as engage with speakers and participate in debates on ongoing and emerging needs and priorities.

**Panel A: Promoting an enabling and safe environment for quality journalism in transitional and post-conflict contexts**

- Magda Abu-Fadel, Director, Media Unstuck, Lebanon
- Nour Lajeri, President of the Independent Broadcasting Company (INBC), Tunisia
- Tarek Kallash, Syrian human rights activist and sociopolitical activist, photojournalist, and citizen journalist
- Michael Cretz, former UNESCO Representative and Head of Office in Libya
- Mohammed Abid, photographer, Egypt
- Una Chalwe, Executive Director, Association Radio Razora, Paris
- Amrani Harraz, Executive Directors, Organization for the Support of Free Media in Syria (ASMS)

**Panel B: Fostering a sustainable future for Arab media: placing youth and gender in the spotlight**

- Bruno Attaf, Director of Caritas Nijmegen Center Jodoh
- Yehya Fares, MA International Relations, Mawaddah Center Manager
- Mohamed Mansou, Presenter of ‘Sar’s Samia’ (the Syrian Hour) Radio Programme
- Norbert Otshur Otshur, Director of Good News Radio, in Ramleh, South Sudan
- Tawfiq Alza, CEO and Founder of the Egyptian Media Development Program (EMDP), and Publisher of Mnoopah and Zamia Carah
- Bida Bahad, Co-Rounder and Executive Director of the Syrian Female Journalist Network (SFJN)
- Khadija Bajaj, Financial and Management Control Director and 22 TV, Monze
- Regina Sabion, Communication Manager, Anna Lindh Foundation

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**Seminar Agenda**

**Wednesday, May 4 2016 | Finlandia Hall**

**14:00 - 14:45**

**Opening with a film showcasing the tangible impact of activities carried out by UNESCO in the Arab region on matters of freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists with funding provided by the Governments of Finland and Sweden.**

Opening remarks by:
- Gay Berge, Director, Division of Freedom of Expression and Media Development, Communication and Information Sector, UNESCO
- Karl Aboulella, Deputy Director General, Department for Africa and the Middle East, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
- Marie Ottosen, Assistant Director General and Head of Department for International Organizations and Policy Support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)
- Maha Manzou, Senior Evaluation Expert - Participating in ODI, presents key findings of the external evaluation on the impact of the projects funded by Finland and Sweden

Moderator: Moody Hazzaz

**14:45 - 15:00**

**Two panels will be organized on key matters of freedom of expression. The aim of these key panels will showcase work carried out by UNESCO and its partners in the Arab region, mainly on the projects funded by the Governments of Finland and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and highlight the impact through first hand accounts of beneficiaries in an interactive and participatory manner.**

**15:00 - 17:00**

**Public Streaming Available via UNESCO Website**