

**Title of session: The role of traditional media in new media landscape**

1. **Date and time of session: Tuesday 26 February 2013, 14h30 – 16h00**
2. **Number of participants: 70**
3. **Number of remote participants:** (ask the remote moderator) 4
4. **Session personnel (moderator, main speakers, discussants):**
  - Moderator:** **Larry Kilman**, Deputy CEO and Executive Director of Communication and Public Affairs, WAN-IFRA.
  - Panelists:**
    1. **Anette Novak**, Board of Directors World Editors Forum and Vice-president Fojo Media Institute
    2. **Aidan White**, Director, Ethical Media Coalition
    3. **Amadou Mahtar Ba**, CEO of the African Media Initiative
    4. **Frank La Rue**, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression
    5. **Philippe Massonnet**, Global news director of *Agence France-Presse*
5. **Summary of presentation and/or debate: Please see our press release: <http://www.wan-ifra.org/node/73345>**

“When everyone has the ability to blog, tweet and publish, traditional media have a greater responsibility to provide ethical, credible journalism.”

In the context of the Summit’s discussions on ethics, the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) and the World Editors Forum (WEF) panel focused on the role of traditional media in the digital age.

In the digital environment, when the source of information is often unknown, it becomes more difficult to determine credibility. Is the source supporting a hidden point of view? Is the blogger offering to promote products for a fee? Does the ethical culture transfer to the online environment? The panelists explored how the tenets of traditional media - quality editorial, credibility and ethical reporting, and investigative journalism – translate in the new media landscape.

“All too often, discussions about the information society focus on telecommunications and delivery platforms. But the focus should really centre on the content being delivered,” said **Larry Kilman**, Deputy CEO of WAN-IFRA and the panel moderator. “I’m glad we have the opportunity to discuss the role of the traditional media in the new media landscape, but in some ways it is unfortunate that we need such a debate. The role should be self-evident – to provide the credible information necessary for citizens to make informed decisions in society.”

**Aidan White**, said: "If traditional media is not able to deliver quality journalism, then who will deliver and who will pay for it?"

“I believe that democracy is served by a broad media landscape”, said **Anette Novak**. “News is about content, not platform. Funding for quality content should go to platforms chosen by the audience, and at present, this is mobile devices.”

Managing the online debate is pivotal, while guaranteeing journalistic transparency has become increasingly vital to the independence of news outlets, particularly given the reliance on citizen journalists who in many newsrooms play the role formerly occupied by foreign correspondents.

“Traditional media IS new media,” said **Philippe Massonnet**. “Being on the ground is gold and whether it is a traditional foreign correspondent or a citizen journalist, our role as content providers is to check and double check our sources”.

How investigative journalism is benefiting from the mobile information society, especially in emerging democracies in Africa, also figured prominently in the discussions.

“By 2015, there will be one billion mobile phones in Africa. Mobile phones are now a universal right. We must make sure news content is available on mobile phones for the development of humanity,” said **Amadou Mahtar Ba**.

**6. Any agreed recommendations from the session  
(These are submitted jointly by WAN-IFRA and the African Media Initiative)**

1. That this meeting of stakeholders reaffirms the three recommendations in *UNESCO’s WSIS+10 Working Papers on Exploring the Evolving Media Landscape: Towards Updating Strategies to Face Challenges and Seize Opportunities*.<sup>1</sup>
2. Reminds the ITU and all stakeholders in the WSIS process, that the private sector through media publishers and the community sector through civil society should share an equal role with the telecommunications sector in the multi-stakeholder process in determining a coordinated strategy for an Information Society that is accessible to all.
3. Reminds all stakeholders that the independent private media can play a leadership role in developing the national policy frameworks between governments, the private sector and civil society organisations in the areas of freedom of expression, freedom of information, media development, promotion of editorial quality, combatting hate speech, content development, gender issues and the upholding of ethical journalism.
4. Recognises the continual evolution of the media landscape and mobile technology as an emerging universal delivery platform for news content and information.
5. Reaffirms the importance of transparency in media ownership and urges media professionals to adhere to ethical practices and to promote quality editorial, ensuring the lines between editorial and advertising are not blurred.
6. Reaffirms that the economic independence of newspapers is an essential condition for the defence and promotion of press freedom.
7. Reaffirms the fundamental role of newspapers and the entire news publishing industry in society and in building and sustaining democracy.

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://unesdoc.unesco.org/Ulis/cgi-bin/ulis.pl?catno=219743&set=512C84B7\\_2\\_18&gp=&lin=1&ll=f](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/Ulis/cgi-bin/ulis.pl?catno=219743&set=512C84B7_2_18&gp=&lin=1&ll=f)  
*UNESCO’s WSIS+10 Working Papers* pp 67 - 71