1. Title:
   Citizen Journalism

2. Date and Time:
   Wednesday, 27 February 2013 from 11:05 to 12:30

3. Venue:
   Conference Room IX

4. Concise session description and agenda (modality, target audience and expected outcomes):
   This session will discuss the emerging phenomenon of citizen journalism and its impact on freedom of expression, the safety of journalists and new forms of journalism in an era characterized by media convergence.

   Like their professional counterparts, citizen journalists employ journalistic principles and rules related to issues of credibility, accuracy, sourcing, investigations, reporting and timeliness. They rely on similar mechanisms to establish authority, including eye-witness accounts, sourcing, quotes, images, video and reputation. The integration of alternative self-published media sites (including blogs, video-sharing and photo-sharing sites, and microblogs) with mobile phones has enabled instantaneous reporting and transmission, sometimes even without access to a computer or the Internet. These unedited, free, instantaneous informational platforms challenge the ability of the state or private corporations to control the information environment, while giving activists tools for building national coalitions and transnational support. Thus much citizen journalism amounts to activism.

   Citizen journalists often contribute to professional media outlets, though many are also often driven by different objectives than their professional counterparts, and tend to be more interpretive and subjective, often explicitly disavowing the norm of objectivity. This has implications for shaping news flows, agendas and framing choices in the 21st century, while also posing distinct challenges for the verifiability of information, accuracy of reporting, and definition of what constitutes news. The building blocks of information gathering, reporting, publishing and dissemination are potentially available to anyone with an Internet connection or mobile phone, yet laws and regulations to protect press freedom in many countries are insufficient or are unclearly applied in this new media ecosystem. Like freelance journalists, citizen journalists operate outside the organizational protection mechanisms of traditional journalists working for media outlets, making them vulnerable and susceptible to distinct safety and security threats.

   Key Questions:
To what extent is there a difference between citizen journalism, citizen-generated content and social media? How do they each reshape the public sphere?

How have mainstream media outlets incorporated citizen journalism, and what effect has this had on content and coverage? How does it vary across regions? Do the same dynamics hold across platforms (e.g. broadcast and satellite television, newspapers, online news sites)?

How is citizen journalism reshaping institutional configurations in the mainstream media? How does it impact the news agenda, and global and regional news flows?

If a crucial task of self-regulatory mechanisms is to foster public trust in the media, what does this mean for citizen journalism and self-regulation of these media?

How have professional media outlets adapted to a more competitive media environment?

Do citizen journalists constitute a 5th Estate? How do they act as watchdogs of the mainstream press, and what impact do they have the nature of journalism? What new issues arise concerning accuracy and verifiability? Are there mechanisms or self-correcting systems that could be put in place to prevent the spread of false information?

What specific threats do citizen journalists face, and what can be done to address them?

**Expected Outcomes**

Review of: the practice of citizen journalists/citizen reporters around the world; the impact on global news flows, journalism practices and media institutions; and assessment of the obstacles and risks citizen journalists face. Possible recommendations to strengthen their support and protection include: (i) citizen journalists should strive to produce accurate information and develop self-correcting systems or mechanisms; (ii) media development initiatives should take into account the role of citizen journalism and collaborative media in institutional capacity building and strategic planning and training; (iii) professional development, ethics training and security training should be extended to citizen journalists; and (iv) professional journalists and institutional media should partner with citizen journalism while also avoiding amplifying hate speech, rumors and other dubious content circulating on social media.

5. **Names of the organizer(s) of the workshop and their affiliation to various stakeholder groups (government, the private sector, civil society and intergovernmental organization):**

Division of Freedom of Expression and Media Development, Communication and Information Sector, UNESCO, Intergovernmental Organization
6. **Names and affiliations of the panelists and the remote moderator:**

   Mr Stuart Allan, Professor of Journalism, *The Media School, Bournemouth University*, Civil Society, United Kingdom (Chair)

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   **Panelists** (10 minutes each)

   Mr Maurice Ali, Founder and President, *International Association of Independent Journalists*, Civil Society, Canada

   Mr Hisham Al-Miraat, Advocacy Director, *Global Voices*, Civil Society, Morocco

   Ms Oiwan Lam, Regional Editor for Northeast Asia, *Global Voices*, Civil Society, China

   Mr Julien Pain, Journalist and Director of “*Les Observateurs*”, *France 24*, Private Sector, France

   Ms Sana Saleem, Executive Director and Spokesperson, *Bolo Bhi*, Civil Society, Pakistan

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   Ms Htaike Htaike Aung, Program Manager, *Myanmar ICT for Development Organization (MIDO)*, Civil Society, Myanmar (Remote Moderator)

7. **Contact person:**

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   **Organization:** UNESCO
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