



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织



Concept Note

UNESCO International Conference “News organizations standing up for the safety of media professionals”

Date: 5th February 2016.

Duration: 1 Day.

Venue: UNESCO HQ Paris.

Executive Summary

Journalism matters for society, and for what UNESCO calls the “free flow” of ideas and information. Because of the service they provide to the public, those who do journalism need to be protected. On this basis, UNESCO is to organize an international conference for the leading decision-makers of news organizations, especially owners, publishers, chief executives and editors-in-chief.

During April 2015, the UNESCO Executive Board 196 adopted Decision 31 which mandated a conference with high level representatives of news organizations from all regions “in order for them to share good practices on the safety of journalists and more proactively highlight the issue of journalist safety”.

The UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, led by UNESCO, is part of the background to this conference. The UN Plan recognizes that journalists’ safety needs a multi-stakeholder approach, and it identifies news organizations as one of the major stakeholders in improving the safety of journalists. The UN Plan originates in UNESCO’s International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), and donations to the IPDC are supporting this conference.

Objectives

The conference aims to provide news organizations with a platform to discuss existing and new measures aimed to strengthen journalists’ safety worldwide and engage with UNESCO Member States on these issues. It intends to deepen knowledge about the issues of journalists’ safety, to share industry good practices, to promote dialogue on the issue, and to identify gaps for possible follow up.

It will further explore possibilities of cooperation between the industry, professional associations and Member States which can help to better address the safety of journalists.

In these ways, the event also seeks to advance understanding and reinforce news organizations' involvement in safety.

The conference is an opportunity for participants to:

- Brainstorm innovative solutions aimed to strengthen the safety of journalists for both national and international media;
- Share good practices aimed to enhance the safety of journalists;
- Discuss the safety of freelance journalists and social media users who produce journalism,
- Engage with initiatives to strengthen the safety of freelancers and bloggers;
- Explore ways to strengthen cooperation between news organizations and UN agencies within the framework of the UN Plan, respecting the roles and autonomy of all actors;
- Explore gaps in training, and how resources needed for safety training can be made available for news organizations of various capacities;
- Discuss how news organizations might do ongoing stories around the importance of journalists' safety and the problem of impunity;
- Discuss the possibility of using the anniversaries of World Press Freedom Day (3 May) and International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (2 November) as occasions to cover safety-related issues in a concerted way;

Participants: up to 200

- Top representatives of the news organizations;
- Civil Society, Intergovernmental & Professional Associations;
- Representatives from the UNESCO Member States;

Draft Programme

8:30-9:00 Registration & Coffee

9:00-9:30 Opening Statements

9:30-11:00 High Level Session 1: Safety of Journalists - Global Problem, Different Manifestations

Theme: How can the media industry strengthen safety of journalists worldwide?

Interventions by Media Leaders

Discussion: Representatives of the Member States & Participants

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:00 Breakaway Roundtables

Round Table A: Good Newsroom Practices

Themes: Trainings, working conditions, post trauma recovery programs, etc.

Interventions by Media Leaders

Discussion: Representatives of the Member States & Participants

Round Table B: Safety for Community and Local Media

Theme: Including community & local media into national safety networks.

Interventions by Media Leaders

Discussion: Representatives of the Member States & Participants

Round Table C: Safety for Freelancers and Social Media

Theme: Recognizing the conditions of those who generate journalism without fixed connections to media institutions, and what the media industry's stake is in their safety.

Interventions by Media Leaders

Discussion: Representatives of the Member States & Participants

Presentation of Safety Resources (in the hallway)

13:00-14:30 Lunch

14:30-16:00 High Level Session 2: Ending Impunity Together

Theme: Dialogue between media Industry with the Member States, awareness raising, coverage coinciding with World Press Freedom Day & International Day to End Impunity, National campaigns to fight impunity

Interventions by Media Leaders

Discussion: Representatives of the Member States & Participants

16:00-16:30 Coffee

16:30-18:00 Final Session: Open microphone & Closing remarks

Theme: Recapping key points, comments, discussing way forward

Rapporteurs on the Breakaway RT discussions (5' each)

Interventions by any other participants

Final comments