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AGENDA ITEM OF THE IPDC COUNCIL:

**DEFINING INDICATORS FOR MEDIA
DEVELOPMENT**

(FOLLOW UP TO WSIS ACTION 9: MEDIA)

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL OF THE IPDC

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Agenda Item: Follow up to WSIS Action 9: Media

DEFINING INDICATORS FOR MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

The objective of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) as stated in Resolution no 32 C/75, adopted at the 32nd General Conference in October 2003, “is to contribute to sustainable development, democracy and good governance by fostering universal access to and distribution of information and knowledge through strengthening the capacities of developing countries and countries in transition in the field of electronic media and print press.”

The Resolution required the Programme to concentrate its support on projects that fall within the following four development priorities:

- Promotion of freedom of expression and media pluralism;
- Development of community media;
- Human resource development;
- Promotion of international partnership;

Since then, the IPDC has supported the implementation of more than 170 projects in developing countries in line with the above-mentioned priorities.

Thus far, the evaluation of IPDC support has been limited to randomly selected projects from different regions. However, the evaluation of implemented projects alone is not sufficient to determine the level of media development in a recipient country and therefore to identify the areas where assistance can be directed more effectively.

For that reason, the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC proposes to launch a broad consultation to define indicators of media development in the priority areas adopted by the Council. The development of such indicators would enable media professionals, policy makers, development agencies, implementers and project proponents to analyze the various elements of a media system and to identify the areas where support is essentially required.

There have been a few important initiatives that have contributed to determining what is meant by media development, particularly in the context of the new priorities defined by the IPDC. For example, the definition of free and pluralistic media given in the Windhoek Declaration on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press, adopted in 1991 in Namibia, provides useful guidance to understanding the fundamental elements of media development in relation to freedom of the press and media pluralism¹.

¹ By an independent press, we mean a press independent from governmental, political or economic control or from control of materials and infrastructure essential for the production and dissemination of newspapers, magazines and periodicals.

By a pluralistic press, we mean the end of monopolies of any kind and the existence of the greatest possible number of newspapers, magazines and periodicals reflecting the widest possible range of opinion within the community.

However, organizations dealing with development assistance need more than just definitions to be able to measure the level of development achieved through their support. Development being a process, such definitions have to be assessed through measurable indicators.

An example of such indicators can be found in the Media Sustainability Index developed by IREX to determine the extent to which the multiple news sources in Eastern Europe provide citizens in the region with reliable and objective news. For that purpose IREX used the following indicators with a Likert scale.

PLURALITY OF NEWS SOURCES INDICATORS:

- A plurality of affordable public and private news sources (e.g., print, broadcast, Internet) exists.
- Citizens' access to domestic or international media is not restricted.
- State or public media reflect the views of the entire political spectrum, are nonpartisan, and serve the public interest.
- Independent news agencies gather and distribute news for print and broadcast media.
- Independent broadcast media produce their own news programs.
- Transparency of media ownership allows consumers to judge the objectivity of news; media ownership is not concentrated in a few conglomerates.
- A broad spectrum of social interests are reflected and represented in the media, including minority-language information sources.

It is obvious that above set of indicators needs more elaboration and should cover other important elements such as provisions for community media, the editorial independence of public service broadcasting systems, and the level of media penetration in terms of local and linguistic groups, etc.

Taking into consideration the need for development indicators in the media sector, it is proposed that the Intergovernmental Council should delegate the Bureau of the IPDC to initiate a broad consultation among media experts and professionals to define indicators for media development in line with the four priorities of the IPDC. It is expected that such indicators could be utilized by the Bureau to assess the development needs in a given country when assistance is sought from the Programme and would allow UNESCO to contribute effectively to the WSIS Action Line 9: Media.

From Tunis Commitment and Agenda for the Information Society

(Document WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/7-E and WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/6)

“This Summit is an important stepping-stone in the world’s efforts to eradicate poverty and to attain the internationally-agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals. By the Geneva decisions, we established a coherent long-term link between the WSIS process, and other relevant major United Nations conferences and summits. **We call upon** governments, private sector, civil society and international organisations to join together to implement the commitments set forth in the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action. In this context, the outcomes of the recently concluded *2005 World Summit on the review of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration* are of special relevance.”

« **We reaffirm our commitment** to providing equitable access to information and knowledge for all, recognising the role of ICTs for economic growth and development. **We are committed** to working towards achieving the indicative targets, set out in the Geneva Plan of Action, that serve as global references for improving connectivity and universal, ubiquitous, equitable, non-discriminatory and affordable access to, and use of ICTs, considering different national circumstances, to be achieved by 2015, and to using ICTs as a tool to achieve the internationally-agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals, by:

- *promoting the use of traditional and new media* in order to foster universal access to information, culture and knowledge for all people, especially vulnerable populations and populations in developing countries and using, *inter alia*, radio and television as educational and learning tools;
- *Reaffirming the independence, pluralism and diversity of media, and freedom of information* including through, as appropriate, the development of domestic legislation, **we reiterate** our call for the responsible use and treatment of information by the media in accordance with the highest ethical and professional standards. **We reaffirm** the necessity of reducing international imbalances affecting the media, particularly as regards infrastructure, technical resources and the development of human skills.”

WSIS : Declaration of Principles (Document WSIS-03/GENEVA/DOC/4-E)

55. Media

55. We reaffirm our commitment to the principles of freedom of the press and freedom of information, as well as those of the independence, pluralism and diversity of media, which are essential to the Information Society. Freedom to seek, receive, impart and use information for the creation, accumulation and dissemination of knowledge are important to the Information Society. We call for the responsible use and treatment of information by the media in accordance with the highest ethical and professional standards. Traditional media in all their forms have an important role in the Information Society and ICTs should play a supportive role in this regard. Diversity of media ownership should be encouraged, in conformity with national law, and taking into account relevant international conventions. We reaffirm the necessity of reducing international imbalances affecting the media, particularly as regards infrastructure, technical resources and the development of human skills.

WSIS : Action Plan (Document WSIS-03/GENEVA/DOC/5-E)

C9 : Media

24. Cultural and linguistic diversity, while stimulating respect for cultural identity, traditions and religions, is essential to the development of an Information Society based on the dialogue among cultures and regional and international cooperation. It is an important factor for sustainable development.
- a. Encourage the media - print and broadcast as well as new media - to continue to play an important role in the Information Society.
 - b. Encourage the development of domestic legislation that guarantees the independence and plurality of the media.
 - c. Take appropriate measures - consistent with freedom of expression - to combat illegal and harmful content in media content.
 - d. Encourage media professionals in developed countries to establish partnerships and networks with the media in developing ones, especially in the field of training.
 - e. Promote balanced and diverse portrayals of women and men by the media.
 - f. Reduce international imbalances affecting the media, particularly as regards infrastructure, technical resources and the development of human skills, taking full advantage of ICT tools in this regard.
 - g. Encourage traditional media to bridge the knowledge divide and to facilitate the flow of cultural content, particularly in rural areas.