



**55th IPDC Bureau Meeting
UNESCO HQ, Paris, 22-24 March 2011**

Opening remarks by Mr Raghu Menon, Chairman of the IPDC Council

Distinguished Members of the Bureau,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am greatly honoured to open this 55th Meeting of the Bureau of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), which I will be chairing for the first time. I am confident that I can rely on your experience and professional expertise to support me in this process.

2010 has been an exceptional year for the IPDC. The total funds contributed to the Programme have reached almost US\$ 2,5 million (US\$2,497,186), a level unprecedented in the last decade. Contributions have been steadily increasing in recent years, from 1,7MM in 2008 to 1,9 MM in 2009 to almost 2,5MM in 2010, and this despite difficult global economic context.

I would like to echo the gratitude expressed by the representative of the Director General, Mr Karklins, to the eleven donors to whom we owe this favourable financial situation. India, Spain and Switzerland deserve special recognition for their contributions that reached almost – or even slightly surpassed – half a million US dollars. Denmark, Finland, Norway and the United States of America also provided very generous

contributions, all exceeding US\$150,000. I also wish to mention the remaining donors – Andorra, France, Israel and Sweden - for their vital support.

The presence of donors such as India, which provided this year's largest contribution to the Programme, is a reflection of the fact that IPDC is no longer just a mechanism of North-South cooperation but rather of North-South-South cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would now like to briefly report on the missions that have been carried out in the last year to promote the IPDC among donors. On 13-15 December 2010, I participated, along with Mr Jayaweera, the Director of the IPDC Secretariat, in a National Consultation on Community Radio in India held at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication in New Delhi. The purpose of the meeting was to make proposals for creating a more enabling environment for the community radio in the country. It also provided an opportunity to advance the visibility of IPDC among national stakeholders.

One month later, on 20 January 2011, the Director of the IPDC Secretariat made a presentation in Norway at a meeting focused on IPDC organized by the Norwegian Committee of Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Press, a body established by the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO.

Mr Janis Karklins, UNESCO's Assistant-Director General for Communication and Information also met with the UK National Commission in London in November 2010 in order to explain to them the work of the Communication and Information Sector, including IPDC's activities and priorities.

Distinguished Members of the Bureau,

Let me now proceed to briefly reminding you of the project selection process, the main task we face in the next few days.

As you know, the Bureau acts on behalf of the IPDC Intergovernmental Council. The Council relies on the Bureau to evaluate project proposals according to their merits, and I expect all of us to work together as an expert team, without favouring the region or country we are coming from.

In line with the rule 12.4 of the rules and procedures of the Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC, the Director of the Programme is entitled to participate in the deliberations.

Please note that while observers are most welcome to attend the selection process, which is open and transparent, they should abstain from taking the floor to lobby in favour of any particular project.

I also wish to request those who are presenting the projects to make a very objective assessment of the project, without advocating for it.

I will now recall the main criteria on which you should base your assessment of the projects:

- (i) To what extent does the immediate objective of the project relate to one of the 3 priorities of the IPDC (promoting freedom of expression and media pluralism; development of community media; capacity building of media professionals)?
- (ii) Justification of budget in relation to the project activities and outputs. Budget breakdown should be clear and in line with local remuneration rates. No recurrent costs, including project management and coordination costs, should be covered by IPDC.
- (iii) Contribution made by submitter clearly presented and justifiable.
- (iv) Credibility of submitter. (If the Bureau members have any questions as to the credibility of a particular submitter, they can raise them and UNESCO staff will provide necessary information).
- (v) Extent to which the project contributes to long-term institutional capacity building and networking, rather than just supporting a one-off event.

- (vi) Development objectives of the projects linked to UNESCO's Media Development Indicators.
- (vii) Preference given to projects submitted from Least Developed Countries (LDCs), countries in transition, and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
- (viii) We should avoid supporting more than one project per country except in the case of LDCs and when the proposals concern the IPDC Special Initiatives such as support to the potential centers of excellence in journalism in Africa.
- (ix) In the case of projects submitted from a country represented by a member of the Bureau, it would be good for us to allow the other Bureau members to comment on the project first.
- (x) The quality of the project and the credibility of the submitter are the most important factors.
- (xi) Regarding the training of media professionals, I wish to remind you that the 2007 external evaluation conducted on UNESCO support to capacity building was critical about supporting ad-hoc, one-off training. Since then, UNESCO has been careful to focus its efforts on the capacity building of local training institutions to help them offer quality training programmes rather than on one-off training sessions proposed by various organizations. I would therefore urge you to evaluate the training projects in the light of their contribution to strengthening local training institutions. You will agree by doing so, IPDC's resources will be better used.
- (xii) I would also like to ask you to bear in mind in your discussions the tight time constraints that we face. Indeed we have 2,5 days to discuss no less than 118 project proposals. Project presenters should ensure their presentations are succinct (approx. 2 minutes per project) – briefly explaining the problem that the project seeks to address, the solution it proposes, the activities foreseen and the justification of the budget requested.

Finally, I wish to remind you of the Decision taken by the IPDC Bureau at its 53rd meeting in 2009 to allocate up to US\$ 100,000 from the IPDC Special Account to support Member States in their efforts to carry out assessments on the basis of UNESCO's Media Development Indicators (max of US\$ 15,000 per country). A number of projects involving MDI-based assessments of national media sectors have thus been partly funded thanks to this modality, including in Bhutan, Brazil, Ecuador, the Maldives and Nepal.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The opportunities to develop free, independent and pluralistic media are expanding in an unprecedented manner, particularly in the Arab region. Given this emerging situation, I propose that we change the order in which the project proposals submitted to us will be discussed. Instead of starting, as has traditionally been the case, with projects from Africa, I suggest that we start with those included at the very end of the document that you will be examining today – i.e. the projects from the Arab Region, and go backwards from there.

Overall – we need to understand that the Bureau is entrusted with the task of allocating the funds given to the IPDC to foster free, independent and pluralistic media. Thus it is our duty to examine the projects very carefully and to determine those that merit IPDC's support in terms of their potential impacts. I highly rely on your expertise and knowledge to identify the most deserving projects, i.e. those which will have the strongest impact on improving, each in their own manner, the situation of the media in the countries in which assistance is being sought. I wish you constructive and fruitful debates during the coming days and will now pass the floor to the Director of the Programme to explain how the projects will be presented.

I thank you for your attention.