



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

Opening remarks by Mr Janis Karklins, Representative of the Director-General and Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO

Monsieur le Président,

Honorables Membres du Bureau,

Mesdames, Messieurs

C'est avec grand plaisir que je vous accueille, au nom de la Directrice Générale, à cette 55^{ème} réunion du Bureau du Programme international pour le développement de la communication (PIDC). Comme vous le savez, le PIDC est le seul forum multilatéral chargé au sein du système des Nations Unies de mobiliser la communauté internationale en faveur du développement de médias libres, pluralistes et indépendants – essentiels au bon fonctionnement de la démocratie. C'est une tâche que le PIDC accomplit avec succès depuis plus de trente ans déjà, entraînant une confiance de plus en plus visible de la part donateurs ces dernières années, comme en témoigne la montée des contributions au Programme. La somme totale des contributions a atteint en 2010 son plus haut niveau de la décennie, à savoir près de 2,5 millions de dollars américains. Cette somme permettra au Programme de financer cette année un nombre plus important encore de projets et apporter ainsi un soutien indispensable aux acteurs locaux qui cherchent à améliorer la qualité et la diversité des médias dans leur pays respectifs, ainsi que les conditions dans

lesquelles ils travaillent, afin de leur permettre d'exploiter pleinement leur potentiel démocratique.

Chairman,
Distinguished Members of the Bureau,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I will leave it to the Chairman of the IPDC Bureau and the Director of the IPDC Secretariat, whose Opening Remarks will follow, to provide you with more detailed information about the financial contributions received by the Programme this year as well as the projects that will be presented for your consideration in the coming days.

I will focus instead on the IPDC's strategic approach and on how the Programme fits into UNESCO's Regular Programme activities. As you know, IPDC selects projects according to its three main priorities: (i) promotion of freedom of expression and media pluralism; (ii) community media development; and (iii) human resource development.

However, in addition to these priorities, IPDC has in recent years launched three special initiatives in order to further strengthen its programmatic approach to media development. These three initiatives are: (i) the development and application of a set of Media Development Indicators to assess national media landscapes and provide evidence-based recommendations to help foster media development; (ii) monitoring the safety of journalists and fighting the impunity of those who commit crimes against them; and (iii) developing centres of excellence in journalism education in Africa.

I will now briefly outline to you the progress IPDC has made within the framework of each of these three initiatives since the last Bureau meeting.

With regard to the Media Development Indicators, endorsed by the IPDC Intergovernmental Council at its 26th session in March 2008, they have been used to carry

out comprehensive multi-stakeholder assessments of national media landscapes in view of improving the enabling environment for free, independent and pluralistic media. Assessments have been completed in Bhutan, Croatia, Ecuador, the Maldives, Mauritania and Mozambique, while others have been launched in Brazil, East Timor, Nepal and Uruguay. Emphasis is placed on partnering with credible, independent national research institutions in order to ensure national ownership of the process.

In Egypt and Tunisia, the recent popular uprisings have made clear a widespread demand for profound political and social reforms. These events represent a moment of great hope for the people of the southern shore of the Mediterranean and for democracy in the Arab world. However, the authorities in these countries are now faced with the difficult task of ensuring a smooth democratic transition. Creating a favorable environment in which the media can foster transparency and accountability and stimulate citizen's participation in decision-making processes will be essential in this process. For this reason, UNESCO is launching a regional project, to assess the current needs of the media in the MENA region and make recommendations on the directions reforms should take with regard to media-related policies. This initiative, which will be funded largely through Funds-in-Trust arrangements, will be presented to you in more detail during this meeting. A similar approach might also be used in selected countries in post-conflict situations.

UNESCO has also provided MDI-based policy advice to governments, including in Brazil, on the formulation of the broadcasting regulatory system; in India, on the review of the community radio policy; and in Mongolia, on the establishment of an ethnic public broadcasting channel.

Finally, in order to address some of the gaps identified during the application of the MDIs in the media-related data available at national level, UNESCO CI has collaborated with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) on the development of a new set of media survey instruments that are currently being piloted in 26 countries worldwide.

I will now turn to IPDC's role in monitoring the safety of journalists and preventing impunity. Following the Decision adopted by the IPDC Council at its 26th session in 2008 inviting the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC to explore how appropriate projects that support local capacity building in safety and protection of journalists can be given priority, I am pleased to inform you that this year ten of the projects being submitted to you include safety training components in their activities and most of them have been prepared in collaboration with the major international networks working on these issues.

However, putting an end to crimes against journalists and to the impunity of their perpetrators can only be achieved by involving not only civil society but also governments. The IPDC Council has therefore continued to actively monitor the status of the judicial inquiries conducted by Member States on each of the killings condemned by the Director-General and the actions taken by them to prevent impunity. A report presenting information on the responses received from Member States on this issue, as well as an overview of the killings condemned by the UNESCO Director-General in 2008-2009, was thus presented to the IPDC Council at its last session in March 2010. Moreover, for the first time data on journalist safety in 14 countries was submitted to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) within the framework of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a unique process involving a review of the human rights records of all UN Member States once every four years. This practice will be continued.

At its last session, the IPDC Council also adopted a second Decision on the Safety of Journalists, requesting the Director-General of UNESCO to consult with Member States on the feasibility of convening an inter-agency meeting of all relevant UN agencies with a view to formulating a comprehensive, coherent and action-oriented approach to the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity. The Director-General has followed this request and sent a letter to all of UNESCO's Members States asking them to consider this proposal and advise on an appropriate course of action. Those Member States who have responded so far have welcomed the idea, deeming it appropriate that UNESCO, as the

only UN agency with a clear mandate in the field of freedom of expression, take the lead in convening such a meeting.

The third initiative I would like to draw your attention to are IPDC's efforts to nurture excellence in African journalism education. These efforts are based on UNESCO's belief that sound journalism education contributes to a professional and ethical practice of journalism. And such journalism is essential to foster democracy, dialogue and development as citizens cannot exercise and enjoy their citizenship in the absence of critical information and knowledge, which well-trained journalists are better placed to provide.

Four years ago, after a mapping of 90 journalism African education institutions, UNESCO identified 20 centres with the potential to reach excellence and together with them determined their needs for the coming years. UNESCO and IPDC have since been working hand in hand with them to help them achieve the defined criteria of excellence. Since the last IPDC Bureau Meeting, UNESCO has supported these institutions with over US\$ 360,000 to purchase equipment and textbooks, and organize three training of trainers workshops in Online Journalism, Multimedia Journalism and Media for Social Change. These funds were also used to cover their participation in the II World Journalism Congress in Grahamstown, South Africa. At this congress, UNESCO organized a consultative meeting with the 20 centres and representatives from the African Union Commission, at which the need for the highest level of political commitment to the prioritization of journalism education as both an academic and applied discipline was affirmed.

This year, thirteen projects will be presented to the IPDC Bureau requesting support for these institutions. These project proposals combine the adaptation of UNESCO's Model Curricula for Journalism Education, staff capacity building and the enhancement of media centres within their premises.

Distinguished delegates,

Since my arrival at the head of the CI Sector in July of last year, I have made it my priority to keep UNESCO's Member States regularly informed of our activities, through the organization of meetings with the Permanent Delegations on a six-monthly basis. During these meetings, I have had the opportunity to report to them on the achievements of the IPDC, emphasizing their interconnectedness with those of our Regular Programme.

I now wish to inform you of an external evaluation carried out at the initiative of UNESCO's Internal Oversight Services (IOS) on the Organization's contribution to Strategic Programme Objectives 12 and 13: Enhancing universal access to information and knowledge and Fostering pluralistic free and independent media and infostructures, which included an assessment of IPDC's performance.

The report from this exercise highlights on several occasions the effectiveness of the IPDC as an instrument through which UNESO's Communication and Information Sector progresses towards the Strategic Programme Objectives in the fields of media development, community participation and professionalization in media. In the 2008-2009 biennium, IPDC projects represented 68% of the total number of extrabudgetary projects within the CI Sector, a clear reflection of the importance of the Programme in achieving the Sector's objectives. The report states that evaluations from implemented projects suggest that IPDC is a "very effective mechanism for channeling support to grass roots media organizations and addressing capacity building needs among media professionals at all levels, with a potentially powerful cumulative impact".

While confirming the numerous merits of the IPDC as a Programme, the report does however recommend improving and increasing the systematic evaluation of IPDC projects. This is why we propose that a discussion take place, during this Bureau meeting, on eventual actions that could be undertaken in this direction. A draft Decision will be submitted for your consideration, which takes into account the financial implications of an eventual reinforcement of IPDC's monitoring and evaluation activities.

Before ending, I would like to acknowledge all of the donors who have contributed to the Programme in the last year. I will leave it to the IPDC Chairman to present to you a detailed account of these contributions and simply express my deep gratitude to India, Switzerland, Spain, the United States of America, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Andorra, Sweden, France and Israel for their support, without which IPDC's work towards meeting the needs of developing countries in terms of communication and information would not be possible.

Thank you for your attention.