



Fez, June 17, 2011

FEZ DECLARATION ON MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY

Preamble:

Under the Auspices of His Majesty King Mohammed the Sixth, the First International Forum on Media and Information Literacy (MIL) was organized by the Research Group on Mass Communication, Culture and Society; the Laboratory of Discourse, Creativity and Society: Perception and Implications; the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Sais-Fes; and Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Fez, Morocco, on June 15-17, 2011 at the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy, Fez, **with the collaboration of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as lead partner, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS), and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) as key partners.** The other partners that contributed in various ways to the success of the Forum are as follows: the Moroccan Ministry of Education; the Moroccan Ministry of Communication; Moulay Ismail University, Meknes, Morocco; the European Association for Viewers' Interests (EAVI); the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR); the World Summit on Media for Children Foundation (WSMCF); the Asian Media, Information and Communication Centre (AMIC); the Philippine Communications Society (PCS); Lagos State University, Nigeria; the Mentor International Media Education Association (MENTOR); the Master's programme AIGEME "E-learning and media education engineering", University of Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3, France; and the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication (AIJC).

Over 200 participants from forty (40) countries, representing the five continents, took part in this Forum, namely: Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burma, Canada, China, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Oman, Palestine, Pakistan, Philippines, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States, Yemen, and Morocco.

This first edition of the Forum on Media and Information Literacy (MIL) gathered researchers, academics, professionals, and experts in a wide range of disciplines, including media, communication and information sciences; media literacy, information literacy, journalism, ICTs, curriculum development, educational sciences, sociology, economy, international relations, youth media, linguistics, semiotics, family law, institutional law, science and technology, Internet technologies, history, cultural studies, gender studies, and Islamic studies. The Forum also gathered representatives of international organisations, regional organizations, Arab national commissions for UNESCO, and representatives from Arab ministries of education, information and communication.

- Reaffirming the conviction that MIL is a fundamental human right, particularly in the digital age of explosion of information and convergence of communication technologies;
- Considering that MIL enhances the quality of human life and sustainable development and citizenship;
- Emphasizing the importance of MIL for social, economic and cultural development;

- Noting that the main obstacle for MIL comprehensive development is the current unawareness of its empowering capacities;
- Believing that MIL is key to engage all citizens, men and women, with particular focus on the youth, in active participation in society;
- Highlighting the critical role that MIL can play in building a culture of peace towards intercultural dialogue, mutual knowledge and understanding among civilizations;
- Concerned about the perceived decline of ethical values and sound professional practices among media and information providers, and the shrinking of the watchdog function of the press and the public sphere;
- In furtherance to the Grunwald Declaration, the Paris Agenda on Media Education, and the Alexandria Declaration on Information Literacy, as well as the WSIS Declaration and Plan of Action, particularly Action Line 9

We, the Participants in the First International Forum on MIL commend the Research Group on Mass Communication, Culture and Society for taking the initiative of organizing this important event, and fully endorse the far-reaching vision that today's digital age and convergence of communication technologies necessitate **the combination of media literacy and information literacy** in order to achieve sustainable human development, build participatory civic societies, and contribute to the consolidation of sustainable world peace, freedom, democracy, good governance and the fostering of constructive intercultural knowledge, dialogue and mutual understanding.

We, the Participants in the First International Forum on MIL send out this Universal Call to all Heads of States worldwide, UN system, particularly to UNESCO, other relevant international and regional institutions, non-governmental organizations, educators, media and information professionals, policy and decision makers, and civil society actors, to join efforts for promoting media and information literacy, and enhancing regional, inter-regional and global cooperation to this effect.

We, the Participants in the First International Forum on MIL, invite UNESCO, UNAOC, ISESCO, ABEGS, and other stakeholders worldwide to:

1. Reaffirm their commitment to initiatives relating to MIL for All, and consider this International Forum on MIL an international platform for MIL.
2. Dedicate a week as World Media and Information Literacy Week to highlight to all stakeholders the value of promoting and pursuing MIL throughout the world. It was proposed that this should be celebrated on 15-21 June every year;
3. Integrate MIL in educational curricula both in the formal and non-formal systems, in order to (i) ensure the right of each and every citizen to this new civic education, (ii) capitalize on the multiplier effect of educators to train learners for critical thinking and analysis, (iii) endow both teachers and learners with MIL competencies to build up media and information literate societies, setting the stage for knowledge societies;
4. Include the production and distribution of user generated content (UGC), particularly youth-produced media, as part of the overall framework of MIL;
5. Conduct research on the state of media and information literacy in different countries so that MIL experts and practitioners would be able to design more effective initiatives;
6. Pursue appropriate follow-up to the regional consultations for the adaptation of the MIL Curriculum for Teachers and the promotion of MIL and Intercultural Dialogue;
7. Expand the UNESCO-UNITWIN-UNAOC Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue (UNESCO-UNITWIN-UNAOC-MILID) Network to include other universities representing all regions of the world; and encourage the setting-up of national, regional and international institutes or centres or clearing houses on Media and Information Literacy in all regions to support media and information literacy initiatives worldwide; making this network a driving force for fostering MIL throughout societies at large, thus contributing to building sustainable peace around the world;
8. Foster MIL for development of local cultures and as a platform for intercultural dialogue, mutual knowledge and understanding;
9. Ensure that media and information ethics are embedded in all curricula, and advocate for ethical values on the part of communication, information, and media providers;
10. Endorse the setting up of a regional MIL Institute or Centre that will operate under the umbrella of Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Fez, Morocco, and cooperate with this Institute/Centre to enhance its international relevance within the framework of the UNESCO-UNITWIN-UNAOC-MILID Network;
11. Convene biennial meetings of the International Forum on MIL to provide a venue for continuing interactions on MIL across borders, cultures, fields of study and professional practice. The Second Edition of the International Forum on MIL is proposed to take place in March/April 2013. The exact dates will be specified in consultation with all partners.