
**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**

**51st Meeting of the Bureau of the
Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for
the Development of Communication**

**UNESCO Headquarters, Paris
27-29 March 2007**

**Opening Remarks
by
Abdul Waheed Khan
Assistant Director-General for
Communication and Information**

27 March 2007

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

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you, on behalf of the Director-General, to the 51st Meeting of the Bureau of the International Programme for the Development of Communication.

This meeting comes at a very positive time for IPDC. In April 2006, a Strategic Donor Meeting was organized with existing and potential donors, to present to them the very encouraging conclusions of the evaluation carried out by external evaluators from the University of Oslo. The report acknowledged the effectiveness of the reforms introduced by IPDC in the last few years.

The meeting also aimed at discussing with donors the funding needs of the Programme. I am pleased to report that their response was extremely positive.

Contributions to the Programme have increased substantially: in 2006, IPDC received a total of nearly US\$ 2,5 million from 15 donor countries. Not only has the number of donors increased but also the size of their contributions. The main contributors were Denmark, Finland, Norway, Spain, Switzerland and the USA.

I would also like to highlight the contributions of Andorra, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, India, Japan and Tanzania, each of which played a role in assisting the IPDC in its efforts to promote media development in developing countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

IPDC now occupies a strategic position in international cooperation for media development. UNESCO's key responsibility in this field was reaffirmed when UNESCO was designated sole facilitator for Action Line 9 "Media" of the Action Plan of the World Summit on the Information Society, in October last year.

Media development itself is increasingly recognized as an integral part of any development strategy. The growing recognition of the impact of the media in addressing development challenges was highlighted during the

recent 10th UN Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development, which UNESCO hosted in Addis Ababa in February.

Participating agencies agreed on a series of recommendations. Among others, they requested the Chief Executives Board of the UN system “*to impress upon senior-level decision-makers of United Nations Specialized Agencies, Programmes and Funds the importance of prioritizing Communication for Development principles and methodologies in all programmatic areas, and the need to allocate human, technical and financial resources for this effort*”. Communication for Development cannot happen without the development of communication systems such as electronic and print media.

Within this context, the IPDC has a central role to play.

I recently had the opportunity to make a presentation to Delegations at the United Nations explaining the importance of IPDC’s role in the development of free and independent media around the world. In fact, IPDC is one among few UNESCO programmes that has received constant support through resolutions adopted at the UN General Assembly.

In the last three years, the IPDC Bureau approved 159 media development projects and provided 3.8 million US dollars for their implementation. IPDC now represents a 50% increase in decentralised funds over the Regular Programme funds the CI Sector provides to the field offices. IPDC projects have made a significant contribution to the media situation in several countries.

One such is example is Cape Verde, where the Programme provided legal expertise to assist the government in setting up media regulations that would be simultaneously fair, appropriate to the context and respectful of freedom of expression. Thanks to this project, several press laws have been revised, expanding the space for freedom of expression.

Another good example of IPDC’s contribution to improving media legislation is India, where the Programme played a significant role in promoting community radio, notably through its pilot project establishing the Namma Dhwani community radio station based on cable casting. It inspired the community radio movement in India, thereby contributing to convincing the authorities to accept community radio as a vital element of communication for development.

The IPDC Chairman also fielded a mission to India to encourage the formulation of a community radio policy. In November 2006, the

Government of India adopted a new enabling community radio policy. According to Shri S. K. Arora, Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting of India, it will foster the creation of some 4000 community radio stations within the next few years.

Distinguished delegates,

I would also like to bring to your attention the important initiative launched by the IPDC at the 25th session of its Intergovernmental Council last year. It decided to initiate a broad consultation aimed at defining indicators of media development, in line with the priorities of the Programme. The final objective is to reach an agreement on a common set of indicators, which could be used by development agencies, decision makers, project proponents, as well as the IPDC, to measure the level of media development in a given country and determine the areas in which assistance is most urgently required.

On behalf of UNESCO, Andrew Puddephatt, former Executive Director of Article 19, has prepared a background paper, for your discussion. It provides a detailed mapping of the main existing initiatives to elaborate indicators of media development and suggests a number of indicators to be retained and further developed. This paper, which I believe you have all received, will be presented by Mr Puddephatt on Thursday. I invite you all to actively contribute to the discussion that will follow and provide any comments or suggestions you may have, in order to ensure that these indicators are developed in a truly participatory manner.

On this occasion, I would also like to highlight another, not unrelated, recent UNESCO initiative, developed within the framework of the Organization's media capacity building strategy.

This new initiative aimed at establishing criteria and indicators for quality media/journalism training institutions and identifying potential centres of excellence in journalism training in Africa. In collaboration with UNESCO, Rhodes University, South Africa, and the *École Supérieure de Journalisme de Lille*, France, carried out a comprehensive assessment of 96 African media training institutions.

After international consultation, the authors of the assessment came up with a selection of 15 institutions which could be developed into centres of excellence in media training within the next 4-5 years. This study is

presented in the document [show document] which has been distributed to you for your information.

Africa is one of UNESCO's priorities. Therefore, I would urge the IPDC Bureau to mobilize support for the transformation of the selected institutions into centres of excellence and to encourage the institutions themselves to submit project proposals to the Programme to this effect.

Another area which I would invite Members of the Bureau to further look into is the popularization of science communication through media. A very interesting project in this respect is the agreement reached by UNESCO and the BBC to distribute high quality science programmes in developing countries in Africa and Asia. UNESCO has acquired the rights for one year to 46 titles from the award-winning BBC Horizon series for distribution in 41 African and 9 Asian countries. Each of the 50-minute programmes will be distributed by UNESCO to public service broadcasters free of charge. I would like to encourage you to pay special attention to building the capacities of journalists to report on scientific issues.

Distinguished delegates,

I know that I can count on all of you to help IPDC explore these and other new areas of activity, as well as strengthen its efforts in existing priority areas.

As you are aware, IPDC relies entirely on the voluntary contributions of Member States. It is therefore vital that donor support to the Programme continues to increase, as it did last year, in order to ensure that the IPDC is able to carry out its critical mission of securing a healthy environment for media in developing countries throughout the world.

The objective of the IPDC, as assigned by the General Conference of UNESCO, is to *“contribute to sustainable development, democracy and good governance by fostering universal access to and distribution of information and knowledge by strengthening the capacities of the developing countries and countries in transition in the field of electronic media and the printed press.”*

One hundred and eight projects from 80 countries will be presented to you during the next few days for your consideration. The IPDC has a programmatic approach to media development in its three priority areas - Freedom of Expression, Community Media and Training of Media

Professionals - as defined by the Council. Your task, therefore, is to approve projects which will have a notable impact in these three areas.

I wish you all a very successful meeting.