



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

IPDC THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION

Agenda item 11: Discussion: Expanding the Role of IPDC

INFORMATION NOTE: IPDC PROPOSED NEW MEDIA RESEARCH AND REPORTS WHICH PROMOTE EXTENDED DIALOGUE AMONGST MEMBER STATES

BACKGROUND

As per Resolution 43 of the 36th UNESCO General Conference in 2011, the Communication-Information Sector is charged to promote dialogue amongst member states on issues related to freedom of expression and journalistic safety.

As signaled by the Secretariat at the IPDC Bureau meeting in February 2012, this mandate is best fulfilled by IPDC, which has been developing its role as a forum for debate on key issues at each biennial meeting of its Council. To provide for such discussion, and for a factual basis for it, the Secretariat proposes to introduce three activities under IPDC every biennium:

- (i) a Member States Forum that involves an expert group,
- (ii) a research Report that presents an overview of global trends,
- (iii) a focused topical thematic research Study.

IPDC THEMATIC FORUM

It is proposed that IPDC work to fulfill the General Conference mandate by giving greater attention to Member State dialogue by creating a distinctive full-day event. This will be called the “IPDC Thematic Forum”, and will be held on the last day of IPDC Intergovernmental Council session. As is current practice at the IPDC session, a group of experts will continue to be convened on a particular topic; however, their numbers will be expanded and their inputs will now be situated during the Thematic Forum day. The expert group will constitute a think tank for Member States, and there will be more time than currently to do justice to inter-state dialogue and debate. The currently existing “thematic debates” as parts within the IPDC Council agenda will therefore effectively be upgraded and assigned to a dedicated full day at the start of the meeting. It is also proposed that as part of this change, the current character of the “thematic debates” is boosted by coupling this activity to two complimentary research projects (see below).

RESEARCH INPUTS

To ensure high quality and evidence-based discussion at the IPDC Thematic Forum, each event will have the following components:

- Expert comments and Member States discussion of a biennial overview trends Report which will be titled “*World Trends in the State of Freedom of Expression and Media Development*” and issued in English and French.
- The preliminary identification and scoping of a single thematic in-depth international research Study to be carried out over the ensuing two years. This study will be known as the “*Thematic Research Study*” and issued in English and French.
- Member State discussion of findings of the *Thematic Research Study* at the following Council meeting when the resulting research is tabled.

To enrich these research dimensions of the Forum, the event will seek participation by the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression, relevant experts appointed by the Human Rights Council (HRC) and representatives of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Other specialized UN and intergovernmental institutions will be asked to participate depending on the theme. From their own activities and capacities, these actors may well be able to assist in developing the research concept and even in implementing it. Collaboration with relevant universities will also be explored, especially to help in the implementation of the research.

The Report, the Study and a record of the Forum discussion amongst the Member States will be submitted to UNESCO General Conference as evidence of fulfillment of the 36th General Conference mandate. In alternate years between IPDC Council meetings, the Secretariat will submit mid-term reports on the progress of the two research projects to the IPDC Bureau (which meets on an annual basis).

RESEARCH INPUT I:

“WORLD TRENDS IN THE STATE OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA DEVELOPMENT”

IPDC will also seek to produce a biennial Report of a general nature which will summarise the global trends related to freedom of expression and media development. Such a document will be analytical and draw out these trends *using secondary sources*. The outcome will be not more than 100 pages in length. It will be guided and peer-reviewed by five top global experts (who will be standing invitees to the Forum think-tank). This study can comprise topics such as:

1. *Media Development: law, institutions, economics*

Major trends drawing from:

- Universal Periodic Review
- Reports of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression
- MDI (including gender indicators) – key findings
- IPDC Projects – key findings that have a wider significance
- Media and Communication Statistics on :
 - Media density
 - Access
 - Use
 - Media Structure, Media Ownership, Media Market

2. *Practitioners: Performance and Safety of Journalists in the context of freedom of expression*

Major trends drawing from:

- DG Report on The safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity

- Existing indexes (Freedom House, IPI; CPJ, Reporters Without Borders, Index on Censorship) and other tools (INSI, Committee to Protect Journalists, IFEX, Human Rights Watch, Article 19, WPFC.)
 - Reports on developments around ethical standards and self-regulation
3. ***Capacity: Journalism Education and Training***
 4. ***Public: Media Literacy***
 5. ***New resources: A selection of new manuals, tool-kits, websites, publications, etc.***

RESEARCH INPUT II:

“THEMATIC RESEARCH STUDY”

In addition to the Report, the IPDC will also benefit from a Study. In this modality, each Forum, aided by the Experts, will identify and analyse a single significant contemporary issue (typically within the IPDC-endorsed Media Development Indicators) where in-depth empirical research can provide focused evidence so as to inform Member State discussion.

Thereafter, the IPDC Secretariat will refine and implement such a Study, as a fact-based international exercise which will *entail primary research* in a selected number of countries. The results of this Study will be reported back at the next Forum and published by UNESCO in English and French. The following possible themes may apply:

- Understanding what it means to ensure “online safety” for journalists
- Freedom of expression and Internet governance
- How are privacy issues in cyber-space impacting on Freedom of Expression

Other ideas might be:

- “How traditional print and broadcast media, and new media, can find a successful sustainability model?”
- “How to ensure media independence from political and economic interests?”
- “How to coordinate international assistance to media development?”
- Promoting a culture of self-regulation
- Knowledge generation about media development activities

FUNDING

The proposed activities will require additional extra-budgetary funding and additional capacity in IPDC Secretariat. Part of this capacity can be sourced by securing an Associate Expert to help oversee this research work. Interested member states and foundations can also be approached to support the costs of convening the Forum’s expert team and the costs of carrying out the two research projects. The cost of projects would be approximately **\$ 550 000** for each biennium:

- *World Trends in the State of Freedom of Expression and Media Development: US\$ 130,000*
- *Thematic Research Study: US\$ 220,000*
- Associate expert (for co-ordination): **US\$ 200,000**

CONCLUSION

The upgraded forum, the expert group and the two research exercises would ensure that UNESCO can achieve a strong fulfillment of Resolution 36C/DR.43. In addition, the whole initiative will also serve the vital function

of strengthening of IPDC's work in particular. More generally, it would further significantly advance UNESCO's intellectual role and status as a global leader in knowledge of media development.

ALTERNATIVE SCENARIO - STATUS QUO

Should it not be possible to proceed with this expanded role of IPDC, the following modality will be operated:

- The IPDC Secretariat, after consultation with the IPDC Chairperson and IPDC Bureau, proposes three themes to the IPDC Council to be developed for the following IPDC Council session.
- The IPDC Council discuss and select the theme of the Thematic Debate.
- A concept paper and provisional agenda is presented for its discussion and endorsement to the IPDC following IPDC Bureau.
- A document/report/paper for discussion is prepared.
- The IPDC Thematic Debate takes place at the IPDC Council.

Proposals for discussion and selection of the theme for the next 29th IPDC Council:

- Understanding what it means to ensure "online safety" for journalists
- How traditional and new media can find a successful sustainability model
- How to ensure media independence from political and economic interests
- Freedom of expression and Internet governance
- How are privacy issues in cyber-space impacting on Freedom of Expression
- How to coordinate international assistance to media development
- Promoting a culture of self-regulation.
- Knowledge generation about media development.