



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# IPDC THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION

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## Agenda item for discussion Status Report on IPDC's contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

### INFORMATION NOTE

#### SUMMARY CONTENT OF DOCUMENT

This document presents an update on the activities undertaken within the framework of the Knowledge-Driven Media Development (KDMD) Initiative, with specific focus on leveraging knowledge gained from IPDC's media support to advocate for the inclusion of free, independent and pluralistic media in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

#### Status Report on IPDC's Contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (March 17, 2016)

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### 1. BACKGROUND

This status report is for the information of the IPDC Bureau on work carried out to enrich the elaboration of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that have since been endorsed by the UN General Assembly. In particular, the update takes into account the fact that work still remains for the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) to develop specific indicators for the 169 targets associated with the SDGs. The IPDC's recent efforts have thus been focused on influencing the statistical commission's work in developing indicators that incorporate freedom of expression and media development in Target 16.10, which specifies "public access to information" and protecting "fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements". Goal 16 itself aims to "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels".<sup>1</sup>

### 2. MEDIA DEVELOPMENT IN THE 2030 AGENDA

<sup>1</sup> See Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. 2014. *Outcome Document - Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals*. Available [0]: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>. Accessed 03/09/2014.

1. Since the last Bureau meeting, efforts have focused on building greater partnerships within the UN System and with a larger coalition of non-governmental international media development actors to contribute to the work of the Inter-Agency Expert Group (IAEG) on SDGs, whose initial meeting took place in New York in June 2015, followed by a second one in Bangkok in October. To this end, UNESCO initiated discussion with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the World Bank and over 200 international, regional and national media development actors represented by the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD), proposed and presented two indicators, namely:

**Priority indicator: ‘Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months’.** While this indicator does not cover every aspect of this particular target, it does identify one of the most salient and measurable dimensions that impact on the whole. Further, it is an indicator that draws upon existing UN agreements and mechanisms for data collection. The components on journalists and media personnel are already monitored regularly by UNESCO. More importantly, both from a methodological standpoint and for its relevance to the measurement of the “fundamental freedoms” enshrined in Target 16.10, it represents UNESCO’s abiding interest in pushing for freedom of expression and media development as a key aspect of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**Additional indicator: Adoption and implementation of constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information.** UNESCO, along with its partners above, also strongly supports the inclusion of a **second or additional indicator**, which addresses the equally key aspect of “public access to information,” which is clearly signposted by Target 16.10.

This dual-indicator approach is, to varying degrees, supported by FAO, UNEP, seven African IAEG members, the USA, Canada, and others. Target 16.10 was deliberately drafted and approved by the Open Working Group with two mutually reinforcing but distinct components: one for ‘ensuring public access to information’ and the second for ‘protecting fundamental freedoms’.

This additional indicator can establish: (a) whether a country (or at the global level, the number of countries) has constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information; (b) the extent to which such national guarantees reflect ‘international agreements’ (e.g. the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, etc.); and (c) the implementation mechanisms in place for such guarantees, including the following aspects: (i) Government efforts to publicly promote the right to information; (ii) citizens’ awareness of their legal right to information and their ability to utilise it effectively; and (iii) the capacity of public bodies to provide information upon request by the public.

For its data, this additional indicator will collate from multiple sources, including National Human Rights Institutions, national and international non-governmental organisations, academic institutions and national media regulatory authorities, among others. Such information will be gathered, processed and checked by UNESCO and the World Bank. Some aspects of the indicator are already being collected. For example, data on the number of countries with freedom of information laws are currently available for at least 195 countries. It is thus a relevant and measurable indicator, which also responds to the growing number of UN Member States that have already adopted legal guarantees and many others that are currently considering relevant legislation or regulation in the field.

UNESCO, within its mandate for the right to freedom of expression, which includes the corollary of the right to freedom of information, already monitors progress and issues in this area through its existing submissions to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and regularly issued research reports on *World Trends on Freedom of Expression and Media Development*, including its Media Development Indicators assessments. The inclusion of this additional indicator would impose no additional research or reporting responsibilities on national statistical offices. Besides UNESCO, the World Bank, the International Parliamentary Union and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights are among the

agencies within the intergovernmental system which currently monitor legal guarantees on access to information.

2. Other activities carried out, all of which were aimed at building the advocacy coalition referred to above, included the following:
  - a) During last year's World Press Freedom Day celebrations held in Riga, Latvia, the IPDC participated in a side-event at the Stockholm School of Economics (SSE) focused on the campaign for the post-2015 development agenda, which was organized by the GFMD. It signalled UNESCO's increasing engagement with civil society to galvanise support for the development of indicators for Target 16.10.
  - b) The IPDC participated in another side-event alongside the Security Council. Under the theme of "Protection of journalists and media freedom: key to sustainable future", the side-event was co-organised by Lithuanian and Latvian permanent delegations to the United Nations, and marked the IPDC's cooperation with governments actively working to push for the inclusion of media issues in the SDG framework.
  - c) Finally, the IPDC published a new book titled *Teaching Journalism for Sustainable Development: New Syllabi*. It was launched in October during the annual conference of ORBICOM (the network of UNESCO Chairs in Communication) held in Mexico. It is currently being translated into Farsi and Spanish, with support from field offices in Tehran and Mexico City.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The IPDC will continue to draw upon its knowledge base as well as strategic intra-UN and other partnerships to lobby for the inclusion of media-related indicators with regard to Target 16.10 of the SDGs. This is even more important given that there is a proposal to extend the work of the IAEG-SDGs for another year, so that they can, among other things:

- Agree on the global reporting mechanism, including identifying entities responsible for compiling data for global reporting; and
- Establish procedures for the methodological review of indicators, including approval mechanisms of needed revisions.

### 4. BUREAU ACTION

The Bureau, having discussed this document, may wish to:

- Welcome the status report and encourage continual engagement by the IPDC in monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including by lobbying Member States to support the IPDC's work in promoting the safety of journalists through the DG's Report on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity.