UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL
ORGANIZATION

Speech by

Representative of the Director-General

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on the occasion of the 25th session of the

Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the

Development of Communication (IPDC)

UNESCO, Paris

21 March 2006

Monsieur le Président,

Honorables membres du Conseil

Mesdames, Messieurs,

Au nom du Directeur général de l'UNESCO, j'ai le plezir et lonneur de vous accueillir à cette vingt-cinquième session du Conseil intergouvernemental du Programme international pour le Développement de la Communication.

The two phases of the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva (December 2003) and Tunis (November 2005) was the result of a five-year process, bringing together governments, specialized UN agencies and other intergovernmental organizations, media professionals, civil society and the private sector.

Four resolutions were adopted in Geneva and Tunis, encompassing the principles, fields of action and recommendations on the methods of implementation : The Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action, and the Tunis Commitment and the Agenda for the Information Society.

UNESCO's role in the process

UNESCO's distinctive contribution for WSIS has been the elaboration of the concept of building Knowledge Societies, qualified by four key principles: freedom of expression; universal access to information and knowledge; respect for cultural and linguistic diversity; and quality education for all. Media plays a cross-cutting role on all the four principles from freedom of expression to education.

Results for UNESCO

For UNESCO, the overall result of the World Summit on Information Society is very positive, as illustrated by the reference to UNESCO in the Tunis documents which also struck an appropriate balance on issues of concern to the Organization. UNESCO's input contributed to the international dialogue, establishing frameworks for collaborative actions, creating awareness of the potential of ICT for development, and shifting the debate from technology to content.

WSIS Implementation framework

One of the essential outcomes of the WSIS was the establishment of a framework for implementation. Overall, the Summit decided that WSIS implementation and follow-up must be an integral part of the UN integrated follow-up to major UN conferences, and must contribute to

the achievement of internationally-agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals.

WSIS Action Line 9: Media

UNESCO's main responsibility in the post-WSIS phase is to facilitate, alone or together with partner organizations, the implementation of the 11 Action Lines of the Geneva Plan of Action falling within its areas of competence:

One of the two key Action lines for which UNESCO alone is responsible for facilitation and moderation is the **Action line 9: Media.**

The role of facilitators/moderators includes, inter alia, "*information exchange, creation of knowledge, sharing of best practices, and assistance in developing multi-stakeholder and public/private partnerships*"

Media Action Line and IPDC

This facilitation role on media as agreed upon by the international community is indeed a reconfirmation of UNESCO's mission to promote free flow of information, its uncompromising stand on freedom of expression and vast experience in media development issues of which IPDC plays a pivotal role.

The Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC has to take a serious note of this responsibility. Significantly, the conclusions of the recent

independent evaluation on IPDC reforms conducted by Prof Rønning and Kristine Orgeret, of the Department of Media and Communication, University of Oslo, confirms that that the IPDC is the most suitable international instrument to facilitate media development.

The evaluation conducted noted that *"Significant and impressive changes have taken place within the IPDC since the 2002 evaluation. All the recommendations that were proposed have been implemented. It is our impression that the IPDC has taken the 2002 recommendations very seriously and has put a remarkable effort in implementing the reforms of the working methods."*

In spite of the progress we have made and our continued optimism, I entirely agree with the evaluators' conclusion that *"the IPDC can never be more than what the donors decide it to be, and what they are willing to invest in it. "*

I will not dwell much on the evaluation as there is a separate item on this matter**.** Suffice to say that we have completed the reforms, now it is the turn of our Member States to increase their support for the Programme.

In this connection I wish to recall the UN General Assembly resolution 59/126 of December 2004 and the UNESCO resolution 33 C/58 adopted by the last General Conference calling on Member States and

in particular the developed countries to reinforce their financial support for the IPDC so that it continues to serve as a major forum in the United Nations system to develop free and pluralistic media with a global approach to democratic development.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates

The Global approach to media development

Over the years, through its projects, IPDC has contributed to sustain a global network of media professionals and organizations working under difficult conditions to promote free and pluralistic media in their countries and regions. The IPDC has been a source of inspiration for their work. It has contributed significantly to building confidence among media professionals of their ability to receive support from the international community. Though the funds provided are moderate, the reiterative support each year has contributed to strengthen and expand this important network and endogenous efforts to build democracies. It is important that the international community reassures its commitment and provides sufficient funds and resources for media development through this important multilateral programme.

IPDC's projects are the *raison d'être* of the Programme and in the last biennium the Programme supported 120 projects in 85 countries, for a total of over 3 million US dollars.

Some notable IPDC projects of 2004-2005

I would now like to present to you some examples of the notable projects that have been implemented with IPDC's support during the last biennium, on which you can find more detailed information in the implementation reports that have been submitted to the Council. These projects were selected according to the Programme's four priorities, namely:

(i) promotion of freedom of expression and media pluralism;

(ii) development of community media;

(iii) human resource development; and

(iv) promotion of international partnership.

The **promotion of freedom of expression and media pluralism** lies at the very heart of IPDC's mandate.

In Africa, the movement for media pluralism and press freedom has steadily increased since the UNESCO Windhoek Conference in 1991, which gave it both legitimacy and needed international impetus. In

2004-2005, IPDC assisted the Media Foundation for West Africa in initiating a **Network of African Freedom of Expression Organizations** that will contribute to advance democracy and help protect journalists on the Continent from attacks and abuses. The Programme also helped the press freedom organization, "**Journaliste en Danger**" (JED), extend its monitoring and lobbying activities to all countries in Central Africa.

In the Asia-Pacific region, an IPDC project in **Pakistan** provided training on press freedom issues to some 250 journalists, with a special emphasis on journalists from rural areas. The project has made a permanent contribution to the promotion of freedom of expression in Pakistan. In **Mongolia**, IPDC funded a 'Media for Transparent Governance' project, which has encouraged investigative reporting and strengthened the role of the media in fighting corruption, notably through training activities.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, IPDC helped to establish a national Network for Press Freedom in **Brazil.** In the first year of its creation, this network has been actively recording infringements to freedom of expression and campaigning against impunity for crimes against journalists.

In the area of **community media development**, the IPDC has continued to provide crucial support through the establishment or upgrading of some 25 community media in 2004-2005, and has made an important contribution to the worldwide CMC Programme of UNESCO.

In Africa, the external evaluations carried out on the IPDC-supported Meiganga and Garoua community radio projects in Cameroun describe an experience where IPDC has helped to encourage people to engage in their own development and to participate in keeping alive local cultures. In **Kenya**, a pilot project creating a community multimedia centre in the Bondo district is expected to assist the Government of Kenya in developing a national action plan for the establishment of country-wide community network as a strategy for enhancing universal access to information in remote and disadvantaged areas.

In the Asia-Pacific region, IPDC supported a creative community radio initiative in the small island country of **Fiji**. A mobile community radio unit was set up to provide a dedicated space for women to articulate and exchange their views. In **East Timor**, IPDC supported a vast training programme providing training for 17 community radios in the production of documentary programmes.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, one should mention the innovative project carried out in **Bolivia**, which strengthened the audiovisual production abilities of rural and indigenous communities thanks to a mobile training unit providing on-site training at community TV stations and educational centres.

The development of media is not possible if journalists and media professionals are not equipped with appropriate ethical and professional standards. However, in many developing countries, journalists do not have adequate access to training venues or facilities that would allow them to develop their skills. This is why IPDC's third crucial priority is **<u>human resource development</u>**.

In Africa, a good example of IPDC's efforts in this area during the last biennium was the rehabilitation of Radio Centrafrique in the **Central African Republic** following the political difficulties in the country, which had led to a breakdown of the national media structure, thus cutting off a majority of the national population from news and information sources. Radio Centrafrique now contributes to the transitional process through better quality radio programmes that should boost the restoration of constitutional democracy in the Central African Republic.

In Asia, two regional projects, implemented in cooperation with the **Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union** and the **Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development**, provided training to radio professionals in new technology skills such as digital audio archiving and the configuration of low-cost digital production systems. A total of 86 media professionals from eight countries (Bhutan, Kiribati, LaoPDR, Mongolia, Nepal, Vietnam, Samoa and Thailand) were trained thanks to these two projects.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, IPDC project *Red de Informacion Jaku'eke* in **Paraguay** helped to create a cadre of well-trained young journalists in the country who will be the future torch-bearers for press freedom and freedom of expression. IPDC also assisted the Code Foundation in the creation of a regional **Virtual Training Centre**, that contributes to the Andean region's training resources on new digital technologies. This is an example of IPDC's increasing focus on new information and communication technologies, reflecting the Programme's responsiveness to the changes taking place in the media environment.

In the Arab region, IPDC assisted the **Al-Jazeera training center** in organizing training workshops for Palestinian women journalists in the essentials of journalism, its professional practice, standards and ethics,

taking into account the particular challenges of their working environment.

<u>IPDC support in conflict and post-conflict situations:</u>

Special focus was placed on media in conflict and post-conflict areas during the last biennium, in an effort to address the specific challenges faced by journalists and media organizations in these regions. Thus, in **Afghanistan** alone, four projects received IPDC support, notably for the establishment of a fully equipped professional training centre at National Radio-Television Afghanistan and for the transformation of the State news agency (BIA) into an independent institution producing reliable reporting and information on the country. In **Palestine**, three projects were implemented with IPDC funds. A literary audio library was created to start a tradition of audio books in the country, which will be particularly useful for blind people. IPDC also helped to establish a specialized media centre in Hebron, with a view to empowering the media sector in the area, as tool to building trust between different sectors inside the society. Finally, IPDC assisted in the creation of a studio for children's programmes at the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation, which will help develop in the children self-confidence and positive attitudes.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates

The modality of the international support is as important as the commitment of the international community. UNESCO's experience shows the importance of a multilateral approach to media development.

The multilateral approach does not compromise the integrity and independence of the recipient media organizations which are particularly sensitive to their credibility among the audience/readers. Media organizations and media professionals are very concerned with the source of their support since linking such support to any particular foreign country would provide an opportunity for media critics to question their impartiality and integrity. This is one of the main reasons why media professionals are comfortable with the assistance received through multilateral arrangements such as UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication.

We need to approach media development issues from a more constructive perspective of managing rather than suppressing plurality, by fostering trust, and mutual respect among all groups to build their own democracies, in which freedom of expression is celebrated and plurality of media representing diversity in a civilized manner is well recognized.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the Director General's appeal to support the IPDC with financial means to contribute to this vital task.

I thank you for your kind attention.