



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

IPDC THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION

Agenda item for discussion UNESCO/IPDC's Journalists' Safety Indicators and further research

INFORMATION NOTE

SUMMARY CONTENT OF DOCUMENT

The IPDC Secretariat has developed Journalists' Safety Indicators, as per outcome of the 57th IPDC Bureau meeting in 2013. This document reports on the implementation and sets out additional steps in the area.

UNESCO/IPDC's Journalists' Safety Indicators and further research (February 7, 2014)

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1. BACKGROUND

In the framework of the UNESCO/IPDC Media Development Indicators (MDIs), as endorsed by the IPDC Intergovernmental Council in 2008, a subset of indicators specific to journalists' safety has been developed. The work was completed under a special allocation set aside at the 57th Bureau meeting in 2013. These indicators strengthen the monitoring mandate provided for in the UNESCO Work Plan on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity (adopted by the 191st Session of the Executive Board). It also articulates with the wider UNESCO-coordinated UN Action Plan on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, of which the UN General Assembly took note with appreciation in December 2013.¹

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the JSI indicators is to pinpoint significant matters that reflect, or impact upon, the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity. They allow for a mapping of key features that can help assess the extent to which journalists are or are not able to exercise their work under safe conditions, and determine whether

¹ UN Resolution A/C.3/68/L.40/Rev.1 adopted by the General Assembly at its 68th session on 18 December 2013.

adequate follow-up is given to crimes committed against them. The JSIs serve to identify the actions that are taken by the various relevant stakeholders in four major categories: (i) the UN and other intergovernmental bodies operating directly in a country; (ii) State and political actors, (iii) civil society and academia, and (iv) media and intermediaries.

The JSIs especially serve as a basis against which changes can be systematically registered over time. Tracking changes is a way to periodically assess progress and to identify gaps. They will especially assist UNESCO and other relevant UN agencies to assess on a periodic basis the extent to which the implementation of the *UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity* has contributed to improving the security of journalists.

3. METHODOLOGY

The JSIs were developed in consultation with major organizations dealing with safety internationally and discussed at a workshop dedicated to this initiative at the World Press Freedom Day Celebrations in Costa Rica on 2 – 4 May 2013.

The outcome of these consultations was a set of three documents:

- JSIs - International level (designed to assess progress in the implementation of the UN Plan of Action at regional and international levels)
- JSIs - National level (designed to assess progress at national level)
- A Practical Guidebook for assisting researchers in applying the JSIs

The JSIs follow the same structure as the MDI framework, building around three main elements: indicators, means of verification and potential data sources. They provide a more detailed elaboration of the general safety indicators as set out in the MDI framework, paras 3.13 and 3.14.

4. APPLICATION

UNESCO has recently launched pilot assessments based on the JSIs in Guatemala, Honduras and Pakistan, and these studies will be replicated in other regions, with a particular focus on countries which have been selected to pilot the first phase of implementation of the *UN Plan of Action on Safety* (Iraq, Nepal and South Sudan). The Secretariat has secured support from the Helsingin Sanomat Foundation in Finland to support a research fellow who will provide expertise and oversight for the JSI applications.

5. ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

In 2013, UNESCO proposed to the Council of Europe a joint research project on the safety of journalists as a possible indicator of development. If agreed, this initiative will investigate correlations between fragility of a state and the safety of journalists. The findings could show whether the safety of journalists is an indicator of emerging fragility, the tip of a submerged iceberg. If evidence shows that increased attacks on journalists are a warning sign of growing fragility of a society more broadly, it may also be the case that improved safety of journalists represents a step towards stability and development. In this way, freedom of expression, and especially journalistic safety, could be better integrated into post-2015 development thinking. The outcome in turn could be increased support for media development as a field that is critical to wider development objectives.

6. SAFETY STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

During 2013, the IPDC FIT project for Tunisia enabled UNESCO to embark on pioneering work with that country's security forces, in which more than 700 cadets were trained on freedom of expression standards as regards their dealings with journalists in the field. Trainers at two police colleges were also trained. During

2014, UNESCO will publish the handbook “Défi démocratique des forces de sécurité : Maintien de l'ordre et respect de la liberté d'expression”. Building on this, the next step could entail developing international standards that provide guidance for police in relation to reporters. These would be gender-sensitive and structured to include police conduct in conflict, post-conflict and transition contexts.

7. CONCLUSION

IPDC continues to work in the area of standards, developing these in relation to the particular topic of the safety of journalists. This builds on existing achievements, and constitutes a further contribution that fulfils UNESCO's wider role as standard-setter worldwide. It dovetails with the IPDC's mandate and the 37 C/5 and 37 C/4, and is of value to a significant number of Member States.

8. BUREAU ACTION

The Bureau, having discussed this document and any amendments, may wish to:

- *Agree* to set aside the sum of \$25 000 to continue with these activities.
- *Request* that progress be reported on at the 30th session of the IPDC Intergovernmental Council.