



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

IPDC THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME
FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION

The future of media development

A celebration of the 40th Anniversary of UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) 1980-2020

Tuesday 24 November 2020

9.30 a.m. - 12.00 p.m. (Paris/Central European Time)

Link for streaming: <https://www.youtube.com/user/unesco>

Concept:

This year marks the 40th anniversary of a singular and unique inter-governmental programme in the UN system that is dedicated to supporting independent media through training, research, capacity-building, support to law reform and more. This is UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC).

The Programme over four decades has supported more than 2,000 media development projects with grants of more than 120 million USD in 140 developing countries. Mostly via supporting grassroots initiatives, but also by setting standards and frameworks, the IPDC has accompanied decades of media development and related policy reforms, with the proliferation of media options for citizens and advancement of journalism education. This has helped the evolution from an era of one/few controlled voice(s) towards one of media pluralism and enhanced expertise of journalists.

It is therefore a harsh irony that IPDC's 40th anniversary now coincides with unprecedented challenges to the economic viability of media organisations. COVID-19 has hugely intensified the sustainability problems already presented by the rise of Internet communications companies. The effect now poses major question-marks under many of the achievements of media development to date. For example, efforts to train journalists in burning topics like how to cover vaccines, are undercut when many of these professionals are on the edge of unemployment. Strengthen the safety of journalists remains critical, but their media houses also now face an existential threat. On current trends, governments and civil society face the prospect of convening press conferences with very few reporters in attendance.

There is also a disturbing context to the economic threat to the very future of sustainability of professional, independent, and pluralistic media sectors. It is that the crisis is occurring at the very time that rampant disinformation is contaminating the information ecosystem. At stake in all this is whether humanity can achieve the holistic 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda of which "public access to information and fundamental freedoms" is an integral and enabling component.

As IPDC contributed to media development over the years, so too can it rise to the challenge of the latest situation. The question is: How might IPDC help re-invent media development, especially the challenge of economic viability? The answers by this unique part of the UN will complement a range of other initiatives around the world seeking solutions in this direction.

The current crisis therefore calls out for IPDC and others to find new ways to ensure media development. This moment is an opportunity to recognize journalism as a public good – i.e. as an

essential element of our lives and societies. The recognition follows that is imperative to strengthen professional news media now and in the years come. Solutions are needed in order to benefit from their contribution to moving beyond repercussions of COVID-19, and getting back on track for development and democracy worldwide.

IPDC has a role to play in policy changes in regard to states, donors and potential donors, and the media itself. As an intergovernmental initiative, the Programme is well placed to engage the debate about media viability and the policy options on the table. This is the theme of IPDC's 40th anniversary celebration, which builds on the past to consider the future, and provides dynamic discussions that can help point the way forward.

Programme

Master of ceremony: Mr. Guy Berger, Secretary of IPDC

9.30 a.m.

Opening message: Forty years fostering media development for democracy, peace and sustainable development – UNESCO's Director-General, Ms. Audrey Azoulay

Welcome remarks: Ambassador Anna Brandt, IPDC Chair

9.50 a.m.

Screening of IPDC's 40th Anniversary Film

10.00 a.m. Reflections on the role of media in development

Message from former president of Ghana, H.E. John Kufour

Message from Nobel Prize Winner: Mr. Joseph Stiglitz: journalism as a public good

10.15 a.m: Interactive panel

The future of media development – new ways and means to stand up for viable, free and independent media

Presenter: Ms. Georja Calvin-Smith, TV news presenter, France 24

- Professor Peter Greste, UNESCO Chair in Journalism and Communication (Australia)
- Ms. Mijal Iastrebnier, co-founder and managing director of Sembramedia (Argentina)
- Ms. Zukiswa Potye, Chief Executive Officer, Media Development and Diversity Agency, (South Africa)
- Mr. Christophe Deloire, Secretary-General, Reporters without Borders (RSF), Chair of the Forum on Information and Democracy
- Mr. Madhav Chinnappa, Director of News Ecosystem, Google

11.15-11.45 a.m.

What can IPDC do? A brainstorm with questions and comments from the audience

11.45 a.m.

Co-operations with UNESCO on media viability:

- Forum on Information and Democracy initiative, Harlem Désir, Executive Director
- Launch of partnership with WAN/IFRA (World Newspaper Association), President, Mr. Fernando de Yarza López-Madrado

12.00 pm

Closing: Mr. Guy Berger, IPDC Secretary