



JOINT MESSAGE FROM
MR. BAN KI-MOON, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS
AND MS. IRINA BOKOVA, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UNESCO
ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

3 May 2014

“Media Freedom for a Better Future: Shaping the Post-2015 Development Agenda”

This year, the international community has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to prepare a long-term agenda for sustainable development to succeed the Millennium Development Goals when they end in 2015. Successfully implementing that agenda will require that all populations enjoy the fundamental rights of freedom of opinion and expression. These rights are essential to democracy, transparency, accountability and the rule of law. They are vital for human dignity, social progress and inclusive, development.

World Press Freedom Day highlights the importance of independent, free and pluralistic media to protecting and promoting these rights. Journalism provides a platform for informed discussion across a wide range of development issues – from environmental challenges and scientific progress to gender equality, youth engagement and peacebuilding. Only when journalists are at liberty to monitor, investigate and criticize policies and actions can good governance exist.

Even as we look beyond 2015, we must confront current grave threats to press freedom around the world. In many countries journalists and other media workers face systematic obstacles to reporting the truth, ranging from censorship, arrest and imprisonment to intimidation, attacks and even assassination. These outrageous abuses show that press freedom and the human rights it underpins are extremely fragile and must be actively defended.

The United Nations General Assembly has unequivocally condemned all attacks and violence against journalists and media workers. Governments and all those with influence must now act on this condemnation by protecting journalists and other media workers. The United Nations stands ready to do its part. UN bodies are already working together and with other partners under the leadership of UNESCO to create a free and safe environment for journalists and media workers around the world.

On this *World Press Freedom Day*, we call on all States, societies and individuals to actively defend freedom of expression and press freedom as fundamental rights and as critical contributions to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and advancing the post-2015 development agenda.

BAN Ki-moon

Irina Bokova