



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Decisions taken by the 31st Council Session of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC)

21-22 November 2018

Room X, UNESCO HQ

1. IPDC Council Decision on the Director-General's Report on IPDC activities since the 30th session

The Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC:

- Takes note with interest and satisfaction of the status report and the results of activities, and encourages continual engagement by the IPDC in line with the C/5 and the IPDC approved priorities with a view to contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- Encourages the Bureau to approve projects in the balanced framework of all priorities of the Programme;
- Requests the Bureau and the Secretariat to reinforce the current IPDC rapid response mechanism for providing support in countries in situation of post-disasters;
- Urges Member States to continue supporting the IPDC through non-earmarked and earmarked financial contributions and through FIT.

2. IPDC Council Decision on Defining Internet Universality Indicators (IUIs)

The Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC:

- Welcomes the Internet Universality indicators framework;
- Endorses the use of this tool on a voluntary basis as a useful resource available for Member States;
- Encourages interested Member States and all stakeholders, on voluntary basis, to support and conduct national assessments of Internet development with the Internet Universality indicators;
- Encourages interested Member States and all stakeholders to use the research findings for evidence-based policy discussions and recommendations;
- Encourages Member States and stakeholders to provide financial and institutional support for IPDC secretariat to implement the national assessments using the Internet Universality indicators in interested countries which lack the resources to conduct such an assessment.

3. IPDC Council Decision on the Director-General's Report on the safety of journalists and the danger of impunity submitted to the Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC at its 31st Session

The Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC,

Welcoming the sixth biennial Director-General's Report on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity,

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Articles 19 and 29, and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 19,

Also recalling the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions A/RES/68/163 (2013) and A/RES/72/175 (2017); the Human Rights Council Resolutions A/HRC/33/2 (2016), and A/HRC/RES/38/7 (2018) and A/HRC/RES/39/6 (2018); as well as UNESCO General Conference Resolution 39 C/39 (2017); and Executive Board Decisions 201 EX/SR.10 (April 2017) and 202 EX/50 (October 2017) on the killing of journalists, media workers and social media producers who are engaged in journalistic activities,

Also recalling UNESCO's role in leading the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, which inter alia encourages the development of global, regional and national processes and mechanisms involving all stakeholders to achieve an environment for the safe exercise of free expression,

Acknowledging that the Director-General's Report has been recognized by the UN Statistical Commission as a contribution towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, Target 10, as one of the resources for monitoring the safety of journalists and the danger of impunity.

Noting the forthcoming UN High Level Political Forum to be held in New York in June 2019¹ and the importance that Voluntary National Reports (VNRs) on SDG 16 include analysis based on Indicator 16.10.1, among other important indicators,

¹ The agreed date is now 9 to 18 July – IPDC Secretariat.

Welcoming IPDC's action to support projects aiming at strengthening capacity at national levels to monitor and report on the safety of journalists, empowering local actors to use SDG indicator 16.10.1 (*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*) to measure progress towards SDG 16, as well as local projects submitted by local organizations via IPDC's annual project cycle aiming to promote the safety of media professionals,

Deeply disturbed by the high number of killings recorded in 2016-2017, despite a slight decrease in the number of fatalities compared to the previous two-year period covered by the Report,

Also noting the increase in the number of journalists killed outside of armed conflict zones in the last few years, many of whom were working on issues related to corruption, trafficking, and political wrongdoing, noting that a significant number of journalists was killed in the armed conflict zones,

Regretting a decrease in this year's response rate of Member States to the Director-General's request for information on the judicial follow-up to killings of journalists, and concerned with the continued high rate of legal impunity for perpetrators, as reflected in the Director-General's Report, and the signal which this sends, namely that violence against journalists can go unpunished,

Welcoming the information provided by Member States on positive measures taken to address the safety of journalists and impunity and the gender-sensitive analysis included in the Director-General's Report as a follow-up to IPDC Council Resolution CI-16/COUNCIL-30/4,

Also welcoming the contribution of the Group of Friends on the Protection of Journalists in promotion of safety of journalists and the danger of impunity,

Emphasizing the relevance of the Decisions on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity adopted in the previous decisions by the Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC which urge Member States to continue "to inform the Director-General of UNESCO, on a voluntary basis, on the status of the judicial inquiries conducted on each of the killings condemned by the Director-General":

1. Appreciates the efforts of the Member States that have provided information to the Director-General on the status of the judicial investigations of killings of journalists; and strongly encourages Member States that have not yet replied to the Director-General's requests to provide information to UNESCO, on a voluntary basis, concerning the judicial investigations of killings of journalists;
2. Further encourages Member States on a voluntary basis to authorize UNESCO to make the information on judicial follow-up publically available on the dedicated UNESCO webpage, for the purposes of transparency, in line with the Decision on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity adopted by the Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC at its 28th session;
3. Requests the Director-General of UNESCO to continue to provide to the Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC an analytical report on the killing of journalists, media workers and social media producers who are engaged in journalistic activities based on the Director-General's condemnations; including information on the judicial inquiries which is based on the information provided by Member States on a voluntary basis;
4. Invites the Director-General to further reinforce this analytical report by:
 - a. Continuing to collect information on actions taken by Member States to promote the safety of journalists and to combat impunity, including action taken to monitor and tackle gender-specific risks, as a way to share good practices;
 - b. Continuing to strengthen a gender-sensitive analysis in order to highlight the specific risks faced by women journalists in the exercise of their work;
 - c. Enhancing current monitoring in collaboration with UNESCO's Institute of Statistics (UIS) as appropriate, in order to align and reinforce synergies with the methodology of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the overall reporting on SDG 16.10.1;
5. Encourages Member States who have not done so, to appoint a focal point on the issue of safety of journalists and impunity with the remit to coordinate the monitoring of the safety of journalists as part of Member States' fulfillment of SDG 16, Target 10, and to report nationally and internationally through the appropriate channels and in collaboration with relevant national authorities;

6. Encourages UNESCO to continue to support Member States in their reporting and monitoring mechanisms on journalists' safety and the issue of impunity;
7. Invites the Bureau of the intergovernmental Council of the IPDC to continue supporting projects that further the objectives of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, in line with the 39 C/5 relevant decisions of the UNESCO's General Conference;
8. Urges the Director-General and the Member States to increase their efforts in mobilizing additional extra-budgetary funding for UNESCO's work in the area of safety of journalists and the issue of impunity.

4. IPDC Council Decision on the Thematic Debate: Monitoring SDG indicator 16.10.2 (access to information)

The Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC:

- Encourages the IPDC Secretariat, Council and Bureau to keep supporting grass-roots projects that will help Member States in data-collection and reporting on SDG indicator 16.10.2 on access to information;
- Encourages the IPDC Secretariat, in cooperation with UNESCO's Information For All Programme, to develop a mechanism that could involve and support UNESCO Member States in data-collection and reporting on SDG indicator 16.10.2 on access to information;
- Invites the IPDC Secretariat to explore the possibility of publishing, in cooperation with UNESCO's Information For All Programme, a biennial report on worldwide progress towards SDG indicator 16.10.2 on access to information, with a view to giving visibility to national efforts to monitor and report on access to information and to further sensitizing relevant stakeholders on the important role played by access to information in achieving development goals;
- Encourages Member States to monitor and report progress on SDG indicator 16.10.2 on access to information, through 2019 Voluntary National Reviews on SDG 16 and/or other processes, as part of their commitments to advance the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda;
- Requests the IPDC Secretariat to report to the IPDC Bureau in 2019 and Council in 2020, taking into account the results of the UN High Level Political Forum which will be held in New York, July 2019, about the progress made on the above.

5. IPDC Council Decision on the External evaluation of the IPDC and follow-up to its recommendations

The Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC:

- Takes note with satisfaction of the evidence of the important outcomes achieved by the Programme as reported by the External Evaluation.