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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

**Address by Irina Bokova,
Director-General of UNESCO**

**on the occasion of the Opening Ceremony of *World Press
Freedom Day***

Jakarta, 3 May 2017

Excellency Mr Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, Vice-President of
Indonesia,

Excellency Mr José Ramos-Horta, Former President of Timor-
Leste and Nobel Peace Prize laureate,

Ms Agnés Callamard, *United Nations Special Rapporteur on
Extra-Judicial summary or arbitrary Executions*,

Mr Joseph Cannataci, *United Nations Special Rapporteur on the
right to Privacy*,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to be with you on *World Press Freedom Day*.

It is a special pleasure to be in Indonesia, one of the world's
largest democracies.

Thank you, Mr Vice-President, for the leadership of Indonesia and this initiative, highlighting once again your commitment to freedom of expression.

UNESCO and Indonesia have long worked together, most notably in shaping the 1999 Press Law, and, today, Indonesia is leading by example with its media law, its access to information law and independent Press Council.

I recall well the *Bali Road Map* adopted three years ago during the *Global Media Forum*, championed by the Government of Indonesia, *and rest assured UNESCO will stand with Indonesia as it continues to strengthen freedom of expression and press freedom.*

I am grateful also to Mr José Ramos-Horta, Former President of Timor-Leste, Nobel Peace Prize laureate, for his presence, which reflects his lifelong championship of rights.

We meet today in Jakarta to celebrate a freedom at the heart of all freedoms.

This freedom is essential to empowering women and men, to bolstering good governance, to strengthening healthy societies, to advancing sustainable development and peace.

We meet also at a time of revolutionary change.

This is opening vast new horizons for expression, for sharing information, for dialogue.

It is also giving rise to new challenges that combine worryingly with old threats.

The media business is being shaken to the core with the emergence of digital networks.

New actors are emerging, including citizen journalists, redrawing the boundaries of journalism.

Online journalism is blurring the lines between advertising and editorial material.

Private actors are emerging as key intermediaries, accompanied by new forms of 'private censorship.'

At the same time, violence remains tragically strong.

Women journalists endure particular forms of harassment.

Too many journalists are in prison for the wrong reasons ... too many are forced to flee their countries.

Murder is still the most terrible form of censorship...

Over the last decade, one journalist or media worker was killed on the job *every four days*....

...and the killers are walking free ... in more than nine out of ten cases, perpetrators go unpunished.

These challenges combine with deeper social transformations.

The Oxford Dictionaries Word of the Year for 2016 was “*post-truth.*”

Combined with the concept of “*fake news,*” we see the rise of new forms of propaganda, even disinformation, raising questions that go to the heart of free, independent and professional journalism.

In such times, I believe we must remain true to a clear moral compass.

Human rights and fundamental freedoms must stand at the heart of all societies, as standards, as goals.

UNESCO is the United Nations agency with the mandate to promote freedom of expression, to defend journalists and their safety.

This mission is inscribed in the UNESCO Constitution, to “*promote the free flow of ideas by word and image*” for mutual understanding, dialogue and peace.

As Director-General, I stand up every time a journalist is killed and call for justice.

UNESCO is spearheading the *United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.*

In Iraq, Nepal, Pakistan, and South Sudan, UNESCO is working with Governments, professional associations, to create national mechanisms, to train journalists.

In South America, UNESCO is supporting the training of judges, to sharpen the work of law enforcement, to defend freedom of expression.

Across the world, UNESCO supports journalism schools, through syllabi, modules, massive online courses.

In all this, the Organization is relentless and outspoken.

This is why I appointed Ms Christiane Amanpour, CNN Chief International Correspondent, as *UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Freedom of Expression and Journalist Safety*.

This is why the Organization awards the *UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize* every year to a courageous journalist on *World Press Freedom Day*, as well later today.

This is why UNESCO is leading the fight against impunity – spearheading the *International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists*, every year on 2 November.

This is why also UNESCO is promoting the Internet as rights-based, open, accessible and multi-stakeholder-driven, to bolster freedom of expression, tackle hate speech and violent extremism.

This is UNESCO's mandate, and it has never been so vital.

In all this, education is key, and this relates to the theme of this year's celebration...

Critical Minds for Critical Times.

Critical minds grasp the importance of press freedom for inclusion, for gender equality, to protect the planet.

Critical minds see the difference between falsehoods and information.

Critical minds understand how to counter intolerance and violent extremism, to defend human rights and the values we share.

Critical minds grasp the global stakes of challenges, the need for new forms of solidarity.

This is importance of UNESCO's work to advance global citizenship education, cultural literacy, media and information literacy -- to empower young women and men, especially, to think critically, to stand up for human rights and peace.

All this is vital to shape peaceful, inclusive societies, through access to justice, through effective, accountable and inclusive institutions -- embodied in Sustainable Development Goal 16 of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

For this, a free, independent and pluralistic media is essential.

It is essential for individual rights.

It is essential for inclusive societies.

It is essential for democracy and the rule of law.

It is essential for sustainable development and peace.

In this spirit, I wish to thank once again the Government of Indonesia and the Press Council of Indonesia.

I thank everyone here today for standing with UNESCO for the rights we share and the freedoms we hold dear.