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### Information and communication technologies for development

## Communication for development programmes in the United Nations system

### Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General hereby transmits the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution [50/130](#).

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\* [A/69/150](#).



## **Report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [50/130](#)**

### *Summary*

In its resolution [50/130](#), the General Assembly recognized the important role of communication for development programmes in the United Nations system to enhance the transparency of system-wide coordination, and emphasized the need further to facilitate inter-agency cooperation to maximize the impact of the development programmes. The present report provides an analysis of the multiple platforms that currently exist to strengthen the sharing of experience and the elaboration of joint activities among United Nations system organizations and within United Nations country teams. Policy coherence, capacity-building and monitoring and evaluation may demonstrate the core value of sustainable communication in any development intervention.

## I. Introduction

1. The present report is prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), with inputs from other United Nations system agencies, including FAO, UNICEF, UNIDO and WHO. It is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [50/130](#), in which the Assembly recognized the important role of communication for development programmes in the United Nations system, and the need further to facilitate inter-agency cooperation and to maximize the impact of the development programmes.
2. In its resolution [51/172](#), the General Assembly stressed, among other things, the need to support two-way communication systems that enable dialogue and that allow communities to speak out, express their aspirations and concerns, and participate in the decisions that relate to their development.
3. UNESCO recognizes the paradigm shift as regards citizen's involvement in new media, which enables increased interaction and engagement in public debates, as well as accelerated information flow between and among wide ranging populations. This includes issues concerning the safety of journalists, media workers and social media producers who generate significant journalistic content. In particular, the Internet and other digital platforms become increasingly valuable in enabling freedom of expression and media pluralism, and make a contribution to the development goals of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.
4. Also in resolution [51/172](#), the General Assembly, recognized the relevance for concerned actors, policymakers and decision makers to attribute increased importance to communication for development and encouraged its integration as a component of development projects and programmes.
5. UNESCO coordinates the biennial United Nations Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development, which is hosted by a chair on a revolving and voluntary basis. The Thirteenth Round Table is being organized by FAO, from 15 to 17 September 2014 in Rome.

## II. Communication for development in the current United Nations context

6. The principles of communication for development in the United Nations context are pro-poor, people-centred and equity-focused. They significantly support the value of citizen participation, the voice of citizens and enabling environments, all of which are essential in democratic governance and which have contributed to relevant actions related to the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.
7. According to the report *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development*,<sup>1</sup> traditional economic and organizational structures in the news media, legal and regulatory frameworks, journalism practices and media consumption and production habits have been impacted by technology.

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO, *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development*, (Paris, 2014).

8. The United Nations Group on the Information Society endorses that information and communications technologies (ICTs) provide a platform to better integrate and accelerate delivery on all three pillars of sustainable development — economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. While ICTs should be fully recognized as tools that can help to empower people and enable wider exercise of human rights, it is also necessary to consider that ICTs by themselves cannot guarantee the achievement of development goals. Among others, an enabling media environment and other media and communication channels are critical to ensure that the potential of ICTs can be fully harnessed in favour of sustainable development.

9. The statement of the first World Summit on the Information Society ten-year review<sup>2</sup> underlined that knowledge societies should seek to promote freedom of expression and life-long learning, and recognize indigenous and traditional knowledge, and cultural diversity.

10. An enabling environment for free, independent and pluralistic media is the cornerstone for people-centred, democratic and sustainable development. As media actors old and new introduce the use of applications or online services to shape public opinion and policy, it is important to support policy frameworks that guarantee inclusive and non-discriminating approaches in order to: facilitate the implementation of international standards on freedom of expression; underline and stress increased accountability; promote participation and empowerment of citizens; advance the commitment towards the safety of journalists; accord community and public service media presence on all digital platforms; promote gender equality and mainstreaming in all forms of media, and facilitate media and information literacy for all.

11. Communication has always been a strategic tool for WHO in its efforts to improve people's health. The WHO Constitution, written in 1946, states that "informed opinion and active cooperation on the part of the public are of the utmost importance in the improvement of the health of the people".

12. WHO, as in the case of other agencies, engages with wide-ranging stakeholders (individuals, communities, health workers, policymakers, governments, and civil society) and uses a variety of terms to describe its engagement: health promotion, health education, social mobilization, communications for behaviour change, risk communications and translational communication. These approaches have adapted to new forms of communications channels over the past six decades. The goal is to use the medium that is most appropriate to the context and those best suited for communications through engagement and dialogue. These range from face-to-face dialogue through local radio to the latest social media platforms.

13. In all cases, the approach of WHO to communication for development uses public health research and evidence to inform communication.<sup>3</sup> Dialogue with communities and individuals, listening to people's perceptions, beliefs and fears;

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<sup>2</sup> UNESCO, *Towards Knowledge Societies for Peace and Sustainable Development: First WSIS+10 Review Event* (Paris, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from FAO, International Labour Organization (ILO), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNESCO and WHO "Communication for development — strengthening the effectiveness of the United Nations"; (UNDP, 2011).

strengthening the capacity of countries and of ownership to communicate health issues and risks to health effectively; and communicating transparently so that people can take informed decisions to protect themselves and their loved ones is all part of the strategy. This approach is evident in many WHO initiatives and achievements during the current period.

14. UNICEF and FAO maintain their track record as leaders in communication for development. UNICEF has an extensive, trained field resource network and places greater emphasis on the use of innovative approaches. This is inspired by a programme implementation strategy that integrates communication for development throughout the planning cycle based on technical standards, norms and capacity. UNICEF is also supporting capacity enhancement of governments and civil society actors within the areas of its mandate. FAO focuses on enhancing the communication for development capacities of partner institutions, communication networks and practitioners supporting knowledge-sharing, cooperation and networking, and promoting rural communication services for agricultural and rural development.

15. The new strategic framework of FAO has introduced the Office for Partnerships, Advocacy and Capacity Development to allow more focus on cross-disciplinary teamwork and greater impact through external partnerships. The priorities are focused on the implementation of communication for development and advocacy, strategies in support of FAO strategic objectives, regional initiatives and country programmes through direct advice; as well as servicing decentralized offices with guidelines and tools that facilitate partnerships across regions. FAO continues to support member countries in developing communication for development approaches, research and extension capacities, communication centres and networks, development programmes and institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), farmers and indigenous people's organizations. This support, delivered through major global and regional programmes, including the Communication for Sustainable Development Initiative and Food Security through the Commercialization of Agriculture, also provided direct technical assistance to member countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

16. UNICEF has also always used communication as a strategic tool. It defines communication for development as "a systematic, planned and evidence-based process to promote positive and measurable changes in individual behaviour and social and political processes, as an integral part of development programmes and humanitarian work". It uses research and consultation to promote human rights and equity, mobilize leadership, enable citizen participation, build community resilience, influence norms and attitudes and support the behaviours of those who have an impact on the well-being of children, their families and communities, especially the most marginalized or hard-to-reach. The communication for development function within UNICEF is distinct from its communications/external relations function.

17. Over the past two years, UNICEF shifted focus towards increased programmatic support and engagement at the global, regional and country levels, and a greater emphasis on the use of innovative approaches in communication for development. The strategic focus includes: (a) mapping of priority areas; (b) identification of entry points; and (c) joint planning and implementation with regional and country-level counterparts. The main areas of technical support include (a) capacity development of government and civil society partners; (b) strengthening

the research, monitoring and evaluation components of communication for development; and (c) support to regional and subregional programmatic priorities (i.e., maternal and child health, violence against children).

18. Strengthening the role of communication for development across programmes remains a high priority for UNICEF. During the next four years, there will be an increased emphasis on capacity development through a two-tier approach. First, strengthening the capacity of counterparts — government and civil society — through a systemic, long-term approach that is critical to ensuring sustainable interventions and results. Secondly, through UNICEF-supported field interventions that will continue to emphasize the empowerment of local communities, families and children for increased social accountability of duty-bearers.

19. Identifying entry points to integrate communication for development in national plans and strengthening institutional commitment to communication for development for accelerated results in line with the Millennium Development Goals and international development goals has been the focus of United Nations system organizations since the Tenth Round Table on Communication for Development, hosted by UNESCO in Addis Ababa in 2010.

20. Independent measures have been taken by respective organizations in accordance with their specific mandates.<sup>3</sup> Some achievements have been obtained as a result of the focused approach applied by the respective United Nations system agencies, including through country teams that have honed into priorities of a given context. Details are provided in the section III below.

21. UNESCO advanced its work to facilitate effective media systems at the country level and to increase pluralism. A number of platforms and tools have been created to increase United Nations inter-agency collaboration through a more targeted and focused approach that is bearing concrete results. This indicates that the advocacy work of the Inter-Agency Round Tables on Communication for Development has been positive and has inspired stakeholders to plan and design independent mechanisms, including the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. Developments related to the role of UNESCO in catalysing the Global Alliance of Partnerships on Media and Information Literacy, as well as the Global Alliance on Gender and Media, are signalling the need to build partnerships that are specific, time-bound, benchmarked and results-oriented.

22. Furthermore, the UNESCO International Programme for the Development of Communication launched the Knowledge-Driven Media Development initiative in March 2013, the aim of which includes producing research-based outputs on the correlations between free, independent and pluralistic media and sustainable development, taking into account the evolving post-2015 development agenda.

23. In its resolution [68/163](#) on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity, the General Assembly welcomed the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, which is led by UNESCO and which complements a series of related activities undertaken by the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations during the past three years. The adoption of the resolution constitutes a significant recent step towards ensuring the safe and unimpeded exercise of journalism and highlights the urgent need to combat impunity of crimes against press representatives. In addition, in the resolution, the

Assembly declared November 2 as the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists.

24. UNICEF has implemented knowledge-sharing on communication for development and humanitarian action in West and Central Africa (with regard to the polio, cholera and measles response) and in South Sudan and Liberia (with regard to peacebuilding and reconciliation). It has provided technical support to Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam (on national communication plans, prevention and control of pneumonia and diarrhoea). In line with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the formulation of national guidelines on the implementation of adolescent-friendly health services in Brazil was informed by children as in the case of a policy for indigenous people, which was mobilized largely using communication for development approaches.

25. By facilitating consultations with young people through the Mozambique Participatory Child Rights Media Network and similar initiatives in Central Asia and Eastern Europe, UNICEF has been able to provide a platform for the opinions of children on issues such as violence, stigma and disability discrimination.

26. In its *Global Report on Opening New Avenues for Empowerment: ICTs to Access Information and Knowledge for Persons with Disabilities*<sup>4</sup> UNESCO echoed expert observations that innovative ICTs can significantly empower people with disabilities through effective local interventions. This will accelerate life-long learning opportunities and contribute to the knowledge society.

27. UNIDO has taken the task of establishing a knowledge management concept that will support developing countries in acquiring and adapting knowledge to their specific contexts and development needs, and to enhance knowledge capacities of the United Nations systems.

28. UNIDO recognizes the impact of knowledge management and network governance in development cooperation, and aims to solidify knowledge networks for policymakers to achieve economic and other development goals.

29. Organizations such as ILO have been present at the round-table discussions on communication for development while reflecting on the approach that best defines their role. The World Intellectual Property Organization is following the round-table discussions closely and is also exploring the manner in which it may define its approach.

30. Internal changes in agencies such as the International Telecommunication Union, UNAIDS and UNDP have affected contributions from those agencies to the report as well as to the round-table process.

31. The World Bank remains actively engaged in discussions concerning the round table.

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<sup>4</sup> UNESCO, *Global Report on Opening New Avenues for Empowerment: ICTs to Access Information and Knowledge for Persons with Disabilities*, (Paris, 2013).

### III. United Nations country teams and communication for development

32. Communication for development is generally a welcome terminology among Resident Coordinators and United Nations country teams. Nevertheless, it also requires explanation and very often necessitates workshops for country team staff. While communication for development facilitates openness and leads to a targeted discussion on communication issues that are tightly related to programmes as opposed to public relations, the lack of benchmarked objectives and resources both in terms of trained experts and financial inputs constrains long-term effectiveness.

33. Academically, the term is often referenced in line with the origins of development assistance that are superseded today by a wide range of methods and approaches. Through their involvement in the communication for development round-table process, June Lennie and Jo Tacchi of RMIT<sup>5</sup> University (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology), Australia have mapped and documented those that are widely used by the United Nations system organizations in the publication *Evaluating Communication for Development: A Framework for Social Change*.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Strengthening grass-roots communication capabilities**

34. UNESCO continues to encourage media actors in developing countries to exercise accountability in the interest of the public and facilitates platforms and exercises for the integration of a communication for development focus in national plans. UNESCO Advisers for Communication and Information have hosted thematic activities that invite closer working relations within the respective United Nations country team and between the country team and relevant stakeholders, including grass-roots community-based media organizations. Such initiatives have been conducted, with support from the Government of Sweden, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, to strengthen the capacity of 32 local and community radio stations in delivering humanitarian and disaster risk reduction information and to advance their involvement in inclusive initiatives. Upgrading the ICT capacity of the radio stations has proved to facilitate interaction with listeners and the formation of local radio correspondents. This has strengthened local content production in line with audience needs. Interaction has also been strengthened between radio stations, local authorities and government. In addition, a United Nations country team round table on communication for development has also been conducted in Kingston, Jamaica.

35. The examples cited above highlight one of many approaches applied by UNESCO to strengthen communication capacities. At the same time, it is worth reflecting upon the further impact that such actions offer to enhance active networking and the dissemination of information. For example, in Kenya, the communication for development project introduced United Nations country team members and specifically the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and the United Nations information centre to six community radio

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<sup>5</sup> University of information technology and design, with campuses in Australia and Viet Nam and a centre in Barcelona, Spain.

<sup>6</sup> June Lennie and Jo Tacchi, *Evaluating Communication for Development: A Framework for Social Change* (Routledge: Abington, United Kingdom, and New York, 2013).



stations that have an interest in disaster risk reduction because of the direct benefits it brings to their communities. The project introduced the community broadcasters to the national broadcaster's governance structure and guidelines on journalistic ethics in situations of disaster. Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, the national broadcaster, was able to appreciate the efficiency of community broadcasters and expressed its awareness that a stronger national network is required to meet the country's disaster risk reduction needs in an inclusive manner. International development organizations invited to the round table underlined the importance of engagement with community media. The information flows that are created by this type of activity offer legitimacy to radio stations that are serving marginalized communities. Their capacity to amplify grass-roots opinion is matched by the timely delivery of accurate and useful information to people who are directly affected by disasters and is thereby in accordance with international standards.

36. UNESCO continues to invite the participation of United Nations country teams in initiatives that employ participatory methodologies to strengthen the capacity of community radio, including through World Radio Day commemorations and initiatives with a focus on gender and media. Radio station staff are trained to prioritize information according to relevance by sourcing additional information, and to network and present humanitarian and disaster relief information, as and when needed. The Organization has also taken steps to ensure that new media technologies are integrated radio stations participating in the relevant project and observes that gender equality is a mainstreamed focus. More examples underlining participatory and communication-oriented processes can be drawn from other projects that promote gender equality in the media, media and information literacy, young people and radio and so forth.

#### **Supporting national agriculture sectors with communication capacity**

37. FAO is supporting the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica in the development of information and communication local plans and national strategies for agricultural disaster risk management. The Organization is also supporting Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire and the Congo in implementing the World Census of Agriculture in Africa using specific channels tailored to context and focusing on the importance of collaboration with local populations. Participatory monitoring and evaluation systems and communication strategies ensure regular feedback from all stakeholders.

38. Examples of communication for development resources produced by FAO include: the Agricultural Disaster Risk Management Communication Toolkit, a guide for planning and implementing communication activities with a series of training modules on basic communication skills. It can be used to enhance planning, implementation and result monitoring and ensuring multi-stakeholder dialogue and participation through appropriate communication for development activities, and the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries, a teaching kit containing guidelines for teachers, fish rulers and a workbook and other accessories to increase the knowledge of pupils in fishing communities about responsible fisheries. The teaching kit has been tested in two countries in West Africa and was presented to the FAO Committee on Fisheries in June 2014. Along with the sensitization to children at their level, a promotional video has been produced to advocate for extra funding and to raise awareness among donors about advanced scientific research on marine ecosystems and the effects of human activities on them.

39. The FAO Dimitra community listeners' clubs are organized in a network through which they share and build on experiences at the community, national and international levels. A local NGO is usually in charge of the project, with technical support provided by FAO-Dimitra. Partnerships with community radios, civil society organizations, United Nations bodies, government services or other development partners, which are at the core of the approach. In Mauritania, the Niger and Senegal, the project is centred on a methodological alliance with the FAO Farmer Field Schools. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Province Orientale), the clubs collaborate with the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the national Government and civil society organizations. In the Niger, synergies have been developed with UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Food Programme and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

40. The Dimitra clubs encourage their members and the communities to play an active role in development by promoting social mobilization and the participation of rural people in the economic, political and social life of their community. The process strengthens transparency, local governance and the social fabric. The clubs strengthen the capacities of their members, including organization, analysis and synthesis, listening and expression, collective action and networking. The approach improves members' self-confidence and contributes to the socioeconomic and political empowerment of women and men. Behaviour changes in agricultural practices, dietary habits, nutrition, health, education, housing and so on, have been observed in all aspects of daily life, for individuals, households and communities. The dynamics of the listeners' clubs help women and men to become aware of gender inequalities and take action to address them, especially regarding roles and responsibilities in households and the community. The clubs give everyone a voice, especially women, thus improving their self-confidence. This process helps them to become more involved in collective bodies, to express themselves and to take on leadership roles. Club members and their communities are better informed on the topics that interest them. Above all, they are able to develop their knowledge on these issues through exchanges and discussions, taking ownership of them and bringing them to life.

### **Preventing non-communicable disease and humanitarian crises**

41. Hundreds of public health events with the potential to make people sick or die, or to disrupt travel and trade, and damage economies, are reported to WHO every day.<sup>7</sup> Some of these events grow into disease outbreaks. Detecting, verifying and responding to these events all involve communication for development approaches.

42. In 2014, Ebola outbreaks were reported for the first time in several countries in West Africa. Ebola virus disease (formerly known as Ebola haemorrhagic fever) is a severe, often fatal illness, killing as many as 9 out of 10 people who have the disease. Severely ill patients require intensive supportive care. Ebola virus disease outbreaks can devastate families and communities, but the infection can be controlled through the use of recommended protective measures in clinics and hospitals, at community gatherings, or at home.

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<sup>7</sup> See WHO International Health Regulations (2005), which provide a framework for WHO epidemic alert and rapid response activities.

43. WHO and its partners embraced communication for development approaches from the onset of the Ebola outbreak. Social mobilization helped in engaging health workers, volunteers, medical students, civil society groups and communities to visit villages and communities to educate, engage and communicate about this much-feared disease. Media communications were important, in particular radio, which, according to limited surveys,<sup>8</sup> was the most trusted source of information in countries such as Liberia. Community volunteers going from village to village helped to spread health messages with megaphones. Community members who feared the disease even attacked treatment centres in the false belief that health personnel working there had brought the disease to their country. Communication for development approaches had to be used to gain trust, establish open dialogue and help communities to start taking protective measures. Risk communications uses all the approaches and techniques encompassed by communication for development.

44. UNICEF is an active member of the United Nations Inter-agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases, led by the WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases 2013-2020, with a specific output related to its advocacy publication, *Facts for Life* and NCD Child conferences. Notably, the second NCD Child conference was held in Trinidad and Tobago in 2014, bringing together researchers, practitioners, international agencies, civil society organizations and national government actors. The President and First Lady of Trinidad and Tobago opened the conference with a reaffirmation of their country's political commitment to work with and for children on addressing the epidemic of non-communicable diseases.

45. In the Niger, the World Bank is using the UNICEF community-based approach to promote the essential family practices package to roll out the conditional cash transfer component of the country's social protection scheme. The eight practices of the UNICEF package include: (a) recognizing signs of malnutrition and referring malnourished children to health services; (b) talking to infants and toddlers to help them develop; (c) encouraging child stimulation through play; (d) making children feel valued; (e) avoiding harmful discipline; (g) registering child birth; (g) preparing children for school; and (h) family planning. This initiative will reach 80,000 beneficiary households (560,000 individuals) by 2017, at a cost of nearly \$62 million, financed largely by the World Bank.

46. UNICEF attributes the communication and social mobilization network for the successful polio-free certification in India. Several organizations contributed to this historic achievement that addressed misperceptions and rumours held by families and communities that refused polio vaccines. The hardest-to-reach children were reached and have eventually been vaccinated.

47. WHO notes that a communication for development approach has been vital to the success of the Expanded Programme on Immunization, established by WHO in 1974, which has been implemented jointly with Governments and other partners, notably UNICEF. At the onset, only about 5 per cent of the world's children were protected from six diseases (polio, diphtheria, tuberculosis, pertussis, measles, and tetanus) targeted by four vaccines. Today, that figure is 83 per cent, with some low-income countries reaching 99 per cent immunization coverage. Currently, WHO

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<sup>8</sup> International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Liberia, May 2014.

estimates that immunization programmes save the lives of 2.5 million people each year and protect many millions more from illness and disability. With the certification of the WHO South-East Asia Region as polio-free, 80 per cent of the world's population now lives in a country where polio has been eradicated.<sup>9</sup>

48. A partnership between several agencies and organizations, including WHO and UNICEF, is using communication for development approaches in health emergencies and humanitarian crises alongside organizations such as IFRC and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The expected output is to establish a field-collaboration mechanism to incorporate and execute communication for development principles, for which a field toolkit is being prepared. Rapid monitoring and evaluation tools for emergency and humanitarian contexts were developed with IFRC. Partnership with the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network brings together United Nations system agencies, media and communication organizations, and relief agencies, in support of advocacy, capacity development and knowledge-sharing for greater engagement of affected communities in humanitarian action work.

49. UNICEF supported the development of communication for development plans in more than 30 municipalities in the light of the recovery process following the impact of typhoon *Yolanda* in Tacloban, Philippines. The plans seek to address the psychosocial and development issues of local communities through the use of multiple communication strategies.

50. Social media is an effective platform for applied principles of communication for development. It is increasingly effective for listening to public concerns, engaging them in conversations about risks to health, and discussing actions people can take to protect themselves and their loved ones. WHO has 1.3 million followers on Twitter, 915,000 on Facebook, 808,000 on Google+ and 19,000 on Instagram. For example, on World Toilet Day, on 19 November 2013, WHO asked people to tweet photos of a toilet where they are with hashtag #Toilets4All. Staff tweeted facts, such as “more people have access to mobile phones than to toilets; women and girls risking their lives, rape and abuse looking for place to defecate”. In just one day, 3,300 tweets were received from 2,300 Twitter users. Some people expressed disgust at the images of toilets from around the world sent in by the public. But as more facts were tweeted, many came back later saying they realized the importance of the campaign.

51. According to UNICEF, communication for development interventions contributed, in Bangladesh, to a decrease in child marriage, an increase in school re-enrolment and in health-seeking behaviours that include the treatment of pneumonia in children under two years of age. In Montenegro, stigma and discrimination against children lacking parental care was reduced. In Viet Nam, communication for development methodologies are applied to reduce intergenerational poverty. Innovative youth media platforms such as U-report, a Short Message Service (SMS)-based platform combined with radio, television and local media and community components has successfully been implemented in Uganda and is now replicated in Nigeria and Zambia. In Uganda, it has allowed more than 250,000 children and youth to express their views on a range of

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<sup>9</sup> Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General of WHO, “Beyond expectations: 40 years of EPI” *The Lancet*, vol. 383, No. 9930 (17 May 2014).

development topics, including issues that affect them and their communities, and provide an alternative for social accountability. U-report also provides a tremendous opportunity for rapid programme planning as a result of feedback provided by youth across thousands of communities.

52. One in five children worldwide remains unimmunized. Communication for development has an important role to play in ensuring that those children get the vaccines they need to remain healthy. To overcome “vaccine hesitancy”, WHO and its partners work with communities to develop strategies to engage with people and address fears and rumours. To help countries do this systematically, the WHO Regional Office for Europe produced several guides and tools in 2013.<sup>10</sup>

### **Knowledge-sharing and capacity-building**

53. Knowledge-sharing is translated through several field-level initiatives by UNIDO. Through the Industrial Knowledge Bank, the organization promotes the exchange of knowledge and expertise for advancing industrial and productive capacities in Latin America and the Caribbean within the framework of South-South cooperation. UNIDO plays an active role in matching knowledge donors with recipients to support strategic knowledge transfer and ultimately reduce the cost of development. Knowledge management is also a key feature of the global network for resource efficient and cleaner production (RECPnet), which contributes to the implementation of sustainable development commitments.

54. The Networks for Prosperity initiative, managed by UNIDO, builds on international cooperation and sustainable economic development and involves private sector development. This initiative provides insights into the functioning of knowledge networks and platforms based on empirical findings and analysis. Through the Networks for Prosperity Reports, UNIDO and the Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies (KU Leuven, Belgium) provide a basis for policy considerations related to development while incorporating knowledge management. Three reports have been launched so far that have introduced the Connectedness Index, aimed at capturing the degree to which countries are networked both internally as well as internationally (see [www.unido.org/mdgf.html](http://www.unido.org/mdgf.html)). The Index is an empirical tool to explore the relationship between the degree to which countries are networked and development, measured in economic (gross domestic product and industrial development) and institutional (government effectiveness) terms. The Index shows the importance of being connected and offers support for the UNIDO argument that network governance is important for development.

55. The Green Industry Platform is a joint initiative by UNIDO and the United Nations Environment Programme, aiming to connect stakeholders from the public sector, private enterprise and civil society to mainstream efforts and actions towards improving the environmental performance of existing industries and creating new industries delivering environmental goods and services. The Platform underlines the promotion by UNIDO of the importance of knowledge networks for development. By becoming a member of the Green Industry Platform, organizations and businesses indicate their willingness to pursue and promote core sustainability

<sup>10</sup> “The Guide to Tailoring Immunization Programmes: Increasing coverage of infant and child vaccination in the WHO European Region” and “Vaccine Safety Events: managing the communications response — a guide for Ministry of Health EPI Managers and Health Promotion Units”.

policies and practices. The initiative functions also as a knowledge platform that pools together information and examples of best practice to be used by governments, businesses and others to support environmentally sustainable industrial development.

56. In Azerbaijan, UNICEF partnered with the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, to deliver short- and long-term academic courses for State civil servants and students studying in the Academy to gain knowledge and skills for better planning and implementation of public awareness and social advocacy programmes aimed at improving attitudes and practices on child survival, protection, development and participation in country. In support of the Call to Action — Child Survival and Development for Every Child in India, UNICEF strengthened the capacity of State governments to develop communication strategies for social and behaviour change in support of acceleration of efforts to achieve Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5, and developed a communication for development curriculum, in collaboration with 10 leading Indian universities, with a view to developing a cadre of highly qualified communication for development professionals.

57. UNICEF intensified efforts to strengthen the evidence base of communication for development through key initiatives on research, evaluation and knowledge management. Chief among them was the collaboration with the United States Agency for International Development, the National Institutes of Health and several other partners to conduct a population-level behaviour change evidence review on child survival and development, the first of its kind. This review involved the participation of more than 200 researchers, academics and practitioners, who, using rigorous criteria, examined existing evidence across several categories, including interventions that address gender equality, stigma and discrimination; the role of caregivers and providers; community-based interventions; and new media and technology interventions. Findings from this review provided critical pieces of compelling evidence across all areas that will support policymaking and will be integrated into national communication plans for maternal and child health.

58. Similar reviews were conducted on violence against children, as well as for peacebuilding in support of country-level strategies. In Jamaica, where national data show corporal punishment as highly prevalent, UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Education on the reduction of corporal punishment and the promotion of alternative methods of discipline, or “positive parenting”. In South Sudan and 10 other countries, the Government of the Netherlands funded a peacebuilding, education and advocacy project, entitled “Theatre for development”, which is being used to facilitate community dialogue and reconciliation.

59. UNESCO is working to support inclusive information and knowledge societies, in which society will benefit from the broader and expanded role that media play in the evolving media landscape. In particular, it acknowledges that the Internet and other digital platforms become increasingly valuable in enabling freedom of expression, and make a contribution to the development goals of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. This is evidenced in a number of projects, including “Empowering radio through ICTs”, funded by Sweden, the annual “Women Make the News” campaign, the World Summit on Sustainable Development 10-year review process, among others.

## **IV. Collaborative action of the United Nations system organizations with civil society**

60. Civil society organizations are mindful that greater Internet use and access; legislative and constitutional guarantees of public access to public information; media freedom, and progress towards effective national media systems facilitate communication for development. Adequate planning, good governance, monitoring, accountability and transparency are key elements for success. Above all, people-centred and participatory approaches are necessary. The following paragraphs take a closer look at how the United Nations system organizations work with civil society to meet such objectives.

### **Media development and freedom of expression**

61. In line with its medium-term strategy to build inclusive knowledge societies, and its biennial implementation priorities — to promote freedom of expression and information and foster capacities for universal access to knowledge and bridge the digital divide — UNESCO focused its work on supporting environments to facilitate independent and pluralistic media for democratic and sustainable development.

62. The Paris Declaration of the World Press Freedom Day International Conference on the theme “Media freedom for a better future: shaping the post-2015 development agenda” (UNESCO headquarters, 5-6 May 2014), was adopted by civil society actors in freedom of expression. They called for five levels of action from wide ranging actors, namely (a) multiple stakeholders including civil society; (b) the United Nations Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals; (c) Member States; (d) intergovernmental organizations; and (e) journalism professionals/associations, media outlets, Internet intermediaries, and social media practitioners.

63. Notably, the recommendations request recognition to be accorded, by aid programmes, to diverse and professional journalism practitioners, and free and pluralistic media, for their contribution towards sustainable development. In addition, due attention has been called for the integration of freedom of expression, press freedom, independent media and the right of access to information as an integral part of specific targets in the sustainable development goals, namely governance. Enhancing knowledge in media development and the correlation between free, independent and pluralistic media and sustainable human rights-centred development was considered essential.

64. UNESCO is increasingly exercising a decentralized approach to implement United Nations Inter-Agency Round Table recommendations on communication for development. In line with its constitutional mandate, it places emphasis on supporting capabilities to communicate and continues to facilitate the assessment of national media environments.

65. Since 2011, UNESCO has, in collaboration with credible independent national research institutions or groups of media experts, successfully conducted national media assessments in 11 countries (Bhutan, Croatia, Ecuador, Egypt, Gabon, Maldives, Mozambique, Nepal, State of Palestine, Timor-Leste and Tunisia). In addition, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire, Curaçao, the Dominican Republic, Iraq, Liberia, Mongolia, Myanmar, South Sudan, Togo, Uganda and Uruguay are currently carrying out assessments. The outcome

contributes to baseline knowledge and offers the premise for prioritizing media development needs. The exercise informs and facilitates the formulation of sound media policies and defines a framework within which the media can best contribute to, and benefit from, good governance and sustainable, democratic development. UNESCO has collaborated with UNDP for several of these assessments and welcomes the possibility of new partnerships with other relevant United Nations organizations.

66. UNESCO highlights that media pluralism is not complete without a sector that prioritizes community participation. In this regard, work is done to support policy and practice around community media. This media sector serves vulnerable, marginalized and indigenous people, and is important in contributing to disaster risk reduction, and creating locally relevant content and solutions.

67. World Radio Day, 13 February 2014, succeeded in putting UNESCO concerns in the media agenda across the world. The media was covering the issue of gender equality in radio in 155 locations. The Day helped in raising the salience of issues in media content in playing an agenda-setting role and in generating better knowledge of gender equality in the media. A total of 248 celebrations throughout the world registered on the UNESCO World Radio Day Crowdmap. The campaign generated a widely-embraced social media movement, raising UNESCO for the second consecutive year to “world trending topic” in Twitter. Other media statistics for the Day include: 15,864 YouTube plays, 2,401 SoundCloud plays, 2,941 infographics views, 85,986 website page views and 59 media interviews by UNESCO staff the world over. Eleven United Nations system organizations joined the UNESCO campaign or staged independent events to commemorate the Day.

68. UNESCO works also to empower citizens with Media and information literacy. Owing to the growing impact and convergence of information, media and ICTs in society, UNESCO applies a joint approach that brings together media literacy and information literacy with ICT and digital skills as central components. The organization has carried out years of research in the subject area, including through several global consultations.

69. Media and information literacy is promoted through three major pillars, namely capacity-building centred on application of the Media and Information Literacy Curriculum, the Global Media and Information Literacy Assessment Framework and the Media and Information Literacy Policy and Strategy Guidelines; networking through the Global Alliance for Partnerships on Media and Information Literacy; and research through the university network Cooperation Programme on Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue. More details can be seen in the Global Alliance for Partnerships on Media and Information Literacy Global Framework and Action Plan. Partners include UNICEF, the Alliance of Civilizations, other international development partners, civil society and the academe.

70. In a recent study published by UNESCO, *Tuning into development: an international comparative survey of community broadcasting regulation*,<sup>11</sup> it was found that there is no universal, standard-setter that is relevant to community radio outside of general international normative standards. Those standards that are

<sup>11</sup> UNESCO, *Tuning into development: an international comparative survey of community broadcasting regulation* (Paris, 2013).



applied are exercised randomly rather than methodically or systemically. In part, this is because community radio governance and practice is inadequately regulated in terms of empowering the sector. This is also in part because this medium demands voluntary participation and relies on unsophisticated approaches, locally tailored methods and local language. Also, standard development practice has often neglected its inclusion in national development plans. UNESCO supports civil society that work to legitimize community radio and supports Governments that are ready to advance with enabling regulatory and policy measures for the sector.

### **Media and gender**

71. UNESCO pursues a series of actions to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in media operations and content, including the application of Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media, a diagnostic tool for identifying and prioritizing gender equality actions by media houses, international and regional broadcasting organizations and media training institutions. Gender balance is promoted in various ways, including through journalism education and training curricula.

72. Women's involvement in communication platforms centres around conflict resolution, peace building, and reconstruction. Media and information competencies are provided to enhance access to information and strengthen information exchange capabilities in all types of governance mechanisms. The safety of women journalists in conflict and post-conflict situations is also promoted.

73. UNESCO works with UN-Women, UNDP, the World Meteorological Organization, the Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization and other key partners to develop a global follow-up mechanism for Strategic Objective J of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, namely women and the media. The mechanism, the Global Alliance on Media and Gender, is comprised of a multi-stakeholder and civil society following. A number of actions detailed in its Global Framework and Action Plan include the implementation of the UNESCO Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media, actions to stimulate citizens' media dialogue, and support to Member States to integrate media in governance processes in line with the international standards set by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The annual online campaign Women Make the News continues to be implemented.

74. The UNESCO Bureau of the International Programme for the Development of Communication observes gender equality as a key criterion for project approval. Particular attention is paid to address the needs and requirements of both men and women; all training activities are required to ensure the balanced participation of women and men.

### **Strengthening rural communication capacities**

75. FAO and the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters have joined efforts through the "Communication and community media action to advance family farming" initiative, which advocates the role of community media as drivers for social change and development in rural areas. An awareness campaign to inform farmers' organizations and rural populations about the importance of family farming, communication and community media is being implemented through the Association's 4,000 member-strong worldwide community radio network in more than 150 countries. The campaign consists of a mini radio series based on the

outcomes of regional consultations, dialogues and conferences organized by FAO and the Association in preparation for the International Year of Family Farming.

76. In 2012, FAO launched the Collaborative Change Communication initiative to increase learning and networking opportunities for rural development and communication practitioners worldwide. A web-based platform ([www.ccomdev.org](http://www.ccomdev.org)) facilitates the exchange of experiences, methodologies and learning resources for the creation of a global community of practice in communication for sustainable rural development.

77. In collaboration with the College of Development Communication, University of the Philippines Los Baños, FAO developed a “Communication for rural development sourcebook” that provides communication practitioners, development professionals and field workers with a comprehensive set of guidelines, illustrative experiences and learning tools to apply communication in agriculture and rural development initiatives.

78. FAO also developed a set of “Communication for rural development guidelines for planning and project formulation” to orient managers on how to concretely include communication in project planning for increased effectiveness and sustainability.

79. Regional communication for development platforms have been launched in partnership with universities, communication centres and networks worldwide to share knowledge and experiences among development, communication and community media professionals, to promote a regional agenda and partnerships in support of rural development initiatives. These are: Onda Rural: promoting the use of community rural radio in Latin America; ComDev Asia: documenting good communication for development practices in Asia and the Pacific; and YenKasa Africa: facilitating dialogue in the region.

### **Media for rural development**

80. Implemented by FAO in seven West African countries, the Food Security through Commercialization of Agriculture programme increased the technical knowledge base and skills of rural radio in production, value addition, marketing and group management. Several information and educational programmes were broadcast based on participatory needs assessments of farmers and their organizations. They highlighted the concepts of value chains and the importance of the diversification of agricultural products as a means to contributing to food security.

81. Participatory video was critical in promoting and engaging a wide range of stakeholders in the Food Security through Commercialization of Agriculture programme. It was used as a hands-on training tool to help media practitioners and community facilitators to raise awareness about the project’s objectives and challenges. The impact of participatory video has been impressive: hundreds of people gathered at the “playback” of the videos, shared their own points of view, learned from each other and developed a strong sense of ownership of the projects’ activities. FAO has strengthened the use of participatory video in support of the Food Security programme projects. Participatory video is an accessible, inclusive methodology that aims at facilitating communication among community members or different communities. In participatory video, the process is often more important

than the product itself and the concerned people are in control of the production process from the very start.

82. FAO assisted the Ministry of Agriculture in Bangladesh to establish the country's first farm radio. "My radio, my voice" is the slogan of *Krishi Radio*. It started broadcasting in 2012 from Amtali, Barguna, and obtained a listenership estimated at 40,000 people in the first year. Community ownership is key to its sustainability: community members, local authorities, cultural groups and NGOs participate in the radio management committees, while a team of trained volunteers perform daily production and broadcasting tasks.

83. *Krishi Radio* programmes offer expert advice on agriculture, fishery, livestock, disaster preparedness, youth, women, health and nutrition. Farmers tune in mainly using mobile phones and call in to ask questions and provide their feedback on the programmes. The radio has become so popular that community members spontaneously formed listeners groups to regularly meet and participate in live discussions. When cyclone Mahasen struck the southern coast of Bangladesh in May 2013, *Krishi Radio* transmitted information about cyclone shelters, crop harvesting and other disaster preparedness measures contributing to the safeguarding of people's lives and assets.

#### **Advancing primary health through partnerships**

84. Partnership with faith-based organizations in Kenya, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and others across Africa is critical for promoting family practices for child survival and polio eradication. Engagement with these organizations remains a pillar of UNICEF efforts to address bottlenecks and reach the most marginalized for child survival and development efforts.

85. UNICEF and the University of Witwatersrand School of Public Health (South Africa) delivered the field component of a flagship communication for development learning course. Technical support in research, evaluation and training is conducted in partnership with the Global Network for C4D and Social Change (ØRECOMMNetwork for C4D and Social Change Global Change), Malmoe University, Sweden, and Roskilde University, Denmark.

86. WHO applies a people-centred approach to the delivery of health systems services that involves regular health promotion using a wide range of communication tools. It promotes health information systems as being critical for reaching universal health coverage as well as vital for decision-making, planning, monitoring and evaluation.

## **V. Conclusions and recommendations**

87. **In the light of preparations for the post-2015 development agenda, UNESCO emphasizes within communication for development that the role of freedom of expression and its corollary of press freedom and freedom of information is fundamental in promoting sustainable development that is people-centred, pro-poor and equity-based. Those elements need to be recognized as fundamental enablers of goals relevant to the post-2015 development agenda, particularly in the areas of good governance and the fight against impunity.**

88. The use of new technologies for the social, ecological and economic dimensions of sustainable development cannot be underestimated within discussions of the 2015 agenda and goals. While technologies are everywhere today, with such examples as mobile subscriptions reaching close to 7 billion in 2014, the ability of people to use them for development remains largely ignored and taken for granted.<sup>12</sup> If not addressed, the digital divide risks to further deepen, at an even higher pace. The use of technologies to foster universal access to, the creation, sharing and preservation of information and knowledge are of pivotal importance for sustainable development.

89. Communication for development practice by United Nations system organizations is applied according to respective mandates. Common to all United Nations system organizations is the principle that communication for development is pro-poor, people-centred, equity-focused and process-oriented. It is not public relations or marketing. General Assembly resolutions [50/130](#) and [51/172](#) and the Rome Consensus of the World Congress on Communication for Development provide clear and relevant references.

90. Member States will benefit from consulting with multiple stakeholders, including audiences, and methodically assessing broadcaster capacities in order to strengthen and reposition their relevance as partners in sustainable development. Community media in particular merits attention.

91. The UNESCO Media Development Indicators are available for such purpose. A number of additional tools are available for Member States to exploit. Those tools are wide-ranging and can inform decision-making in planning resource allocation for outcomes relating to communication for development.

92. The following recommendations are directed to Member States, United Nations system organizations, and multiple stakeholders in the light of the ongoing dialogue and debate centred on the post-2015 global development agenda.

93. Taking into account the increasing number of actors in favour of communication for development, particularly at the country level, Member States are invited to map relevant initiatives and explore opportunities to scale up good practice, introduce policies and strengthen relevant legislative and regulatory frameworks.

94. United Nations system organizations are urged to participate in mapping initiatives and facilitate technical and capacity support to strengthen communication capabilities that are inclusive, democratic, equity-focused and people-centred. The participation of civil society and academic partners is imperative and this merits recognition.

95. United Nations system organizations are urged to support the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, including through observing the newly declared International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, each 2 November.

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<sup>12</sup> UNESCO Executive Board document 194/EX/14.INF.2.

96. The broadcasting sector, enriched and more efficient with new technologies, is increasingly accessible through digital forms, mobile and the Internet and is increasingly reaching marginalized communities. Strengthening inclusive broadcast programming and enabling policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks, including to make digital platforms accessible to community media are preliminary steps that can be taken into account, particularly for progress in developing and least developed countries. A specific focus on mainstreaming gender in the media should be a priority for Member States.

97. Donor countries are encouraged to observe the dearth of broadcasting research within some regions, for instance in sub-Saharan Africa, in relation to adolescents as well as gender. Broadcasters are part of an active national development resource that can meet public interest in line with international standards. The UNESCO Media and Gender, and Media and Information Literacy global alliances can be engaged with in this regard.

98. United Nations information centres are urged to include communication for development tools and resources in their libraries and make these easily available to United Nations country teams, line ministries, civil society and researchers.

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