



## **Global forum calls for UN Special Rapporteur on Protection of Journalists**

A global media forum has called on the United Nations Secretary-General to appoint a Special Rapporteur on the Protection of Journalists in peace and war.

The third World Electronic Media Forum (WEMF3), meeting in Kuala Lumpur, made the call after hearing that 2007 was already the bloodiest year on record for journalists' deaths, with at least 172 news media staff killed so far as a result of their work.

The forum, which brought together broadcasters, journalists, policy makers, academics and others, noted the importance of freedom of expression to human rights.

It urged states to implement in letter and spirit UN Resolution 1738, adopted by the Security Council in December 2006. The resolution calls on states to end impunity for those who kill journalists and other news professionals, to investigate incidents of violence against news media, and to bring the perpetrators to justice.

The forum also called for greater efforts to preserve the world's endangered audiovisual archives.

It urged broadcasters throughout the world to cooperate with the Archives at Risk group, which brings together several leading organisations, and called on industry partners and institutions to sponsor and support archive preservation projects, via the Archives at Risk initiative.

The group on Archives at Risk was created in February 2006 after the second meeting of the World Electronic Forum (WEMF2) in Tunis in November 2005. Its members include the United Nations, UNESCO, the World Broadcasting Unions, the European Broadcasting Union and the International Federation of Television Archives, FIAT/IFTA.

WEMF3 also said broadcasters must maintain their core values and principles in the face of rapid technological change. It was possible to hold on to core values of good journalism such as accuracy, objectivity and ethical reporting in spite of embracing new media technology, the forum said.

Broadcasters should strive to embrace and harness the new media and new technological platforms to benefit fully from all the new opportunities they provided

through increasing flexibility of media consumption, interactivity, participatory communication and access.

In this changing media landscape driven by market forces, it was critical to support and strengthen public service broadcasting and community media which played a crucial role in informing, educating and empowering citizens, the forum said.

Calling for action to bridge the accessibility divide, the forum urged Information & Communications Technology (ICT) regulators around the world to consider having wireless Internet access free, initially in main cities, as a public service.

It called on broadcasters to use innovations in technology to serve the consumers of their services with special needs, such as the sight and hearing impaired and the elderly.

The two-day forum took place at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre and attracted more than 200 participants.

Among the speakers were leading representatives of Aljazeera English, the BBC, Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, Japan's public broadcaster NHK, the Korean Broadcasting System, Radio Netherlands, Young Asia Television and regional broadcasting unions from Africa, the Arab world, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, North America and South America.

WEMF3 was an event of the World Broadcasting Unions and was organised by the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) and the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC). It was supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) as cooperation partners.

The first and second World Electronic Media Forums were held in conjunction with the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) which was held in two phases in Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005).

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#### **About the WBU**

The World Broadcasting Unions (WBU) is the coordinating body for broadcasting unions who represent broadcaster networks across the globe. Members include: Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), African Union of Broadcasters (AUB), Asociación Internacional de Radiodifusión (AIR), Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU), Caribbean Broadcasting Union (CBU), European Broadcasting Union (EBU), North American Broadcasters Association (NABA), and Organización de la Televisión Iberoamericana (OTI). For more information, please see <http://www.nabanet.com/wbuarea/>

#### **About the ABU**

The Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) is a non-profit, non-government, professional association of broadcasting organisations, formed in 1964 to facilitate the

development of broadcasting in the Asia-Pacific region and to organise co-operative activities amongst its members. It currently has over 170 members in 53 countries, with its broadcaster members reaching a potential audience of about 3 billion people. For more information, please visit [www.abu.org.my](http://www.abu.org.my).

#### **About the AIBD**

The Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) is a unique regional inter-governmental organisation servicing countries of the Asia and Pacific region in the field of electronic media development since 1977. It is hosted by the Government of Malaysia. The AIBD is mandated to achieve a vibrant and cohesive electronic media environment in the Asia-Pacific region through policy and resource development. The institute has 26 full members and 53 affiliate members. More information is available at [www.aibd.org.my](http://www.aibd.org.my)

#### **About AMIC**

The Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) is Asia's premier media research, publication and resource centre. For over thirty six years, AMIC has spearheaded the development of Asian media through its wide range of publications, training workshops and events. More information is available at [www.amic.org.sg](http://www.amic.org.sg)

#### **About the SDC**

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is Switzerland's international cooperation agency within the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). In operating with other federal offices concerned, SDC is responsible for the overall coordination of development activities and cooperation with Eastern Europe, as well as for humanitarian aid. SDC employs a staff of around 550 people to carry out its activities in Switzerland and abroad, with an annual budget of CHF 1.3 billion (2006). The Agency undertakes direct actions, supports programmes of multilateral organisations, and helps to finance programmes run by Swiss and international aid organisations in the following areas:

- Bilateral and multilateral development cooperation
- Humanitarian aid
- Cooperation with Eastern Europe

Bilateral development cooperation concentrates on 17 priority countries and eight special programmes in Africa, Asia and Latin America. At multilateral level, SDC collaborates in particular with UN organisations, the World Bank, and the regional development banks. For more information, please visit [www.sdc.admin.ch](http://www.sdc.admin.ch)

#### **About the GKP**

Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) is an international network of over 100 organisations from all sectors – public, private and civil society – bound by the two common principles of sharing knowledge and building partnerships. Members and partners work in concert through the GKP network to promote innovation and advancement in Knowledge for Development (K4D) and Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) in seven operating regions: Africa, Central & Eastern Europe, East Asia, Latin America & the Caribbean, Middle

East & North Africa, Oceania and South Asia. For more information, please visit [www.globalknowledge.org](http://www.globalknowledge.org)