

**WSIS draft Action Plan and Draft Declaration**  
Position of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)  
on Role of Media

The IFJ welcomes the changes introduced by the drafting committee in the Declaration and Draft Action Plan following the Preparatory Committee II for the WSIS. However, the IFJ believes the text fails to take full account of the role of media, the needs of creative workers and the importance of quality services and editorial independence in the creation of an Information Society. The IFJ is also concerned that although the reference to freedom of expression, respect for recognised human rights and “unhindered access (...) to information sources” is strongly reaffirmed in point 10 of the draft Declaration, there is only a vague mention of the media in the draft Action plan. We ask that the Draft Declaration and Action Plan be amended in the following way:

- **Draft Declaration**

- 1) The right to communicate should not be added to the list of Fundamental Human Rights as suggested in paragraph 21 A of the Draft Declaration. There are serious doubts about the scope, intention and impact of this right and the IFJ believes the objectives of this right can be obtained through application of existing rights. Therefore, the IFJ would only support the inclusion of this right in the context of the existing Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, always provided this does not create any obstacle to freedom of expression and press freedom. The WSIS should, in all areas, respect and build upon the framework of existing rights rather than seeking to create new rights. Freedom of information laws and access to information should be adopted by all states.

- 2) There must be limits to media concentration, in all areas, including those involving information and communication technologies. These should be subject to special anti-monopoly scrutiny and laws, which take particular account of the social, cultural and democratic value of media products in the information society. We do not accept, as the Draft Declaration (paragraph 51) suggests, that monopolies and excessive concentration of the media should be subject to general anti-monopoly laws. The IFJ insists that information available for public consumption is exceptional and not like other economic goods and merchandise and should not be subject to “general” anti-monopoly laws. On the contrary, paragraph 51 should reflect that there should be targeted laws on media concentration that take into account the specific nature of media services.
- 3) Paragraph 51 of the Draft Declaration should contain a reference to the *“recognition of the traditional role of radio and television, including public broadcasting, in creating a set of public service values in the delivery of quality content and information to the benefit of all”*.

- **Draft Action Plan**

- 4) The draft action plan should encourage the recognition and application of fundamental rights and core labour standards of all workers in the information society. Paragraph 40 should reflect that *“e-workers must enjoy conditions of work that are in line with international labour standards, including recognition of rights to freedom of association, equality of opportunity and decent standards of work”*. The proposals for new labour law should be strengthened. Where information services are subject to content rules they must not be intrusive, or go beyond existing laws.
- 5) There is a need to grant a fair remuneration to authors for the use of their work. The draft Action Plan rightly suggests that authors must be encouraged to retain ownership of their authors’ rights and not to automatically transfer rights to publishers or other intermediaries. Paragraph 34 should reflect that *“authors’ rights exemptions should be limited and that there must be clear entitlement of right holders to fair remuneration”*.
- 6) Open access should take into account the specificities of authors’ rights protected works. According to article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights authors have a right of protection of the moral and material interests of their work. Therefore, an authors’ rights protected work either in digital or analogue format should not be made available for free as suggested in paragraph 12.

- 7) The IFJ welcomes the support of the plurality of the media in paragraph 44 of the Draft Action plan. It would however suggest the addition of a reference to the *“need to remove obstacles to media coverage of events of interest to the public which is an added value to the plurality, independence and quality of the media. Independent and pluralistic media should be supported and respected by specific laws that guarantee the protection of the journalists and limit the concentration of media ownership”*.

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For more information <http://www.ifj.org/working/issues/infosoc/wsis03.html>