

WEDNESDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2008 (09.00am – 10.30am)

Workshop 8 : Safety in quality news coverage

PELLA, LEVEL 1, English

Workshop Title: Safety in quality news coverage

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Language: (Please mark one) English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic

Workshop description:

1. What are the main points you want to raise in the workshop?

Sustainable development and poverty alleviation cannot happen without a free press. And there can be no free press where journalists are forced to work in fear of their lives.

We need to discuss practical government support for free media and, within the industry, safety principles, training, advice and guidance, journalists helping one another and how to persuade news organisations to support the safety ethic and provide adequate resources to protect journalists and other news professionals.

2. Give some background information to the issue you want to raise.

More than 1,000 news media staff have died trying to cover the news around the world in the past decade. Most were not international war correspondents but local journalists working in their own countries in peacetime. The United Nations and its bodies such as UNESCO/IPDC as well as the Council of Europe have raised concerns and called for greater safety for journalists and practical measures to ensure this. But to little effect – the death toll continues to mount. Many individual countries continue to ignore the pleas of international bodies and journalist support groups and many employers do not live up to their duty of care. Most media development programmes ignore the safety issue when for relatively little cost the situation could be vastly improved.

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2. List three key questions you want the workshop to address.

a) How do we persuade governments to commit to practical safety measures and meet their obligations under media development strategies?

b) How do we persuade employers to commit to their duties of care in this regard and help provide adequate training and equipment?

c) How can individual journalists and their support groups such as unions help one another and save lives?

3. What would be the main desired outcome of the workshop?

A call to/commitment by governments to fund regional and international programmes aimed at implementing practical measures, such as safety training, to protect journalists and other news professionals in hostile environments

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