

THE 19 POINTS OF THE AMMAN CONFERENCE 2005

Defining the Field

1. Media development should be viewed by practitioners, donors, and policymakers as a legitimate sector to be recognised in its own right within the broader framework of economic, political, and social development efforts supported by the international community, and not dealt with piecemeal as a subcomponent of other sectors.
2. The creation and development of independent media are vital precursors for all facets of human development, including those covered in the millennium development goals.
3. Media assistance and information support—particularly in emergency, conflict or post-conflict situations—needs to be recognized as something as important as the provision of shelter, health and other basic needs.
4. Media development and media for development are complementary and interlinked strategies, and media engagement in development issues works best within the context of a strong independent media environment.

Professional Challenges

5. Mainstream and commercial media are not covering development concerns effectively. This does not mean that journalists should become social activists, but that they should understand their role in giving voice to people and holding governments and other parties to account.
6. A necessary condition for independent media is the existence of a diverse and commercially autonomous sector that is sustainable in the absence of long-term donor support.

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7. Strengthening commercially-driven media is insufficient on its own. Strengthening of the journalists' profession should be a specific objective of any media development strategy.
8. New technologies and non-traditional media, including community media as well as blogs, news services using mobile technology or citizen journalism initiatives, have an important role to play in circumventing the political, economic, educational, and technical obstacles to access to information. Such nontraditional media can facilitate a shift away from large national and international outlets toward the local.
9. Establishing greater media literacy amongst general audiences, civil society and the donor agency community is vitally important so that all these groups understand the role of journalists in giving people voice and in making governments and other power-holders more accountable.
10. Governments and donor agencies must recognise that support for media development must be made directly or through local, regional or international organizations supporting such development and not incorporated through budget support to recipient country governments.
11. Media development should be approached holistically, going beyond journalism training to encompass the broad set of issues—legal, regulatory, economic, political, infrastructural that influence the development of independent media within the specific context of each country.

Approach and Structure

12. The community of practitioners represented at the Amman conference should work more effectively together to argue collectively the case for the recognition of the media development sector, and that investments in media development are investments in human development.

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13. GFMD participants agreed virtually unanimously that the work of the GFMD should be carried forward beyond the present conference. The GFMD Steering Committee should study other models of association and networks—such as the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX)—to look at the best of ways to structuring the GFMD to meet the needs of the media development sector whilst complementing other networks and organizations.
14. As the GFMD process develops it needs to recognise the different and competing interests and needs of journalists, of media owners, of the media development community and of political interests. To do this effectively, it needs to directly engage the mainstream media and working journalist community and to ensure that journalist unions participate at the global and regional levels.
15. As an effective means of doing this, GFMD participants also agreed in principle to establish regional media development forums that would help to lead and coordinate such development in ways that would strengthen the legitimacy of the GFMD and ensure responsiveness to regional and local needs. These regional forums might be established in sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East & North Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America & the Caribbean, Eurasia, and North America and the EU.
16. Any ongoing GFMD process at either the regional or global level should reinforce rather than undermine the primacy of national and local needs and national and local impact in media development terms. The process should also take into account the trend within the international donor community to regionalize and localize decision-making.
17. An international community of media law scholars and advocates should be gathered together to advise the GFMD community of practitioners on legal defense, protections and reforms of laws such as criminal libel, and others that limit the freedom of journalists.

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18. The GFMD should create a means for media development organizations to exchange information at the global level on best practices and experiences, media law, means of cooperation regionally and training materials. Any initiatives emerging from the GFMD—be they in facilitating knowledge-sharing platforms or the creation of an ongoing advocacy process—should complement other existing initiatives such as, for instance, the IJNET, the Communication Initiative, and the Partnership for Communication in Africa.

Evidence

19. The impact and credibility of the entire media development sector will be greatly reinforced by collaborative work that defines better empirical measurements to monitor and evaluate projects within the field and impact on the entire media landscape in any given country or region. It is imperative not to limit this work to statistical correlations but to accommodate appropriate qualitative measures as well. This work should also take up the challenge of developing indicators and mechanisms to measure the linkage between media development and the overall development process at the country level.

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