



Permanent Mission of Latvia
to the United Nations



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Permanent Mission of Japan
to the United Nations



Side event

Empowering Civil Society in Strengthening Media and Information Literacy – Best practices and pathways for future action

CONTEXT

As UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres underlines in his report “Our Common Agenda”, “now is the time to end the ‘infodemic’ plaguing our world by defending a common, empirically backed consensus around facts, science and knowledge.” Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the international community has deployed unprecedented efforts, including through the “Verified” campaign launched by the UN, to call out and respond to misinformation and disinformation, prompting best practices of multi-stakeholder cooperation both within and between countries.

On 21 March 2021, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the Resolution proclaiming a Global Media and Information Literacy Week (A/75/L.68), from 24 to 31 October every year, which invites all Member States and civil society to raise awareness on disinformation and misinformation. It is also of paramount importance to tackle this scourge while upholding the freedoms of expression, information and thought, as well as the unrestricted access to accurate, scientific and verifiable information. Through this Resolution and beyond, we have called for enhanced collaboration among state institutions, non-state actors, media professionals, academia and youth, and encouraged initiatives in favour of lifelong education to acquire the necessary skills. Civil society organizations, together with the media and social media platforms, play an increasing role in this effort.

THE AIM

This side event aims to illustrate how civil society organizations contribute to preventing or tackling disinformation and misinformation, both online and offline, thus strengthening the resilience of societies, nationally and globally. It will feature speakers representing diverse organisations and viewpoints, from human rights defenders to journalists or online platforms, in a conversation about their respective roles in a rapidly changing political and technological landscape.

Participants from the civil society will share best practices from successful experiences and innovative solutions to foster media and information literacy while fully upholding fundamental rights. The discussion will focus on the key role that citizens, journalists or civil society organizations have been playing – either individually or in organised networks – to respond to disinformation and promote reliable and accessible content. Speakers will also present case-studies of cooperation between governments and civil society, reflect on lessons learned, and explore ways for stakeholders to support each other in advancing media and information literacy.

AGENDA

Moderated by Under Secretary General (USG) for Global Communications Ms. Melissa Fleming

1. Welcoming words by H.E. Ambassador Andrejs Pildegovičs, Permanent Representative of Latvia to the United Nations
2. Opening remarks by H.E. Ambassador Brian Wallace, Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations
3. Introduction by USG Ms. Melissa Fleming
4. Panel discussion
 - a. **Journalists and citizens' role in addressing disinformation and promoting reliable and accessible information online and offline** (5 minutes per speaker)
 - Ms. Keshini Navaratnam, BBC World TV News anchor and editor, founder of Globalnewsmakers and Alexandriteglobal (based in London, United Kingdom)
 - Cristina Tardáguila, journalist and founder of Agência Lupa (based in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)
 - Mina Dennert, journalist and founder of #iamhere international (based in Göteborg, Sweden)
 - Mia Malan, founding editor-in-chief of the Bhekisisa Centre for Health Journalism (based in Johannesburg, South Africa)

Reactions and Q&A from the audience

- b. **Case studies of cooperation between government and civil society organizations** (5 minutes per speaker)
 - Camille Grenier, Operations Manager, Forum on Information and Democracy (based in Paris, France)
 - Nashilongo Gervasius, founder of the Internet Society Namibia Chapter (based in Windhoek, Namibia)
 - Dr. Solvita Denisa-Liepniece, Disinformation Resilience Advisor of the Baltic Centre for Media Excellence (based in Riga, Latvia)
 - Lisa Ginsborg, Acting Secretary General of the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO) (based in Florence, Italy)

Reactions and Q&A from the audience

FORMAT

The discussion will last for **1h30 min** and take place virtually on **October 29, 2021, at 8:00 AM (NYC/EDT)**. The meeting will take place on Zoom and be live-streamed, including on the UN WEB TV, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.

OTHER

The hashtags for communicating on this event would be #GlobalMILWeek and #MediaandInfoLiteracy.