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**RE: General Assembly Resolution 72/175 on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity –  
Response of Canada**

The safety of journalists and the issue of impunity are key elements of Canada's advocacy to strengthen the rules-based international order. They are one of the key obstacles to the full implementation of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. In this regard, Canada is committed to ensuring that its initiatives align with the UN Plan of Action and are consistent with its overall objective. Below is a non-exhaustive list of areas where Canada is supporting multilateral efforts.

Global Conference for Media Freedom

Canada's engagement on this issue has increased through its role as co-host of the Global Conference for Media Freedom, which took place in London, UK in July 2019. During the two-day conference ministers, heads of international institutions, and more than 1000 members of the press, academics and civil society organizations addressed issues related to media freedom and its advancement and protection worldwide.

Canada and the United Kingdom presented a Global Pledge on Media Freedom that commits like-minded countries to working together on identifying and acting on violations and abuses of the rights of members of the press. Canada also announced a \$1 million contribution to the new Global Media Defence Fund, housed at UNESCO.

It was announced that Canada will host the conference in 2020.

UNESCO International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC)

Canada is an elected member of the Intergovernmental Council of the UNESCO International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). The IPDC is the UNESCO Intergovernmental Programme responsible for Freedom of the Press and Safety of Journalists (see attachment for description of their action). Ambassador Elaine Ayotte, a former journalist, is Canada's representative on the Council.

At its last meeting on 21-22 November 2018, Canada supported actively the adoption of a resolution by the Intergovernmental Council endorsing the UNESCO Director-General on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity and requesting the Director-General of UNESCO to continue to collect information on actions taken by Member States to promote the safety of journalists and to combat impunity, including action taken to monitor and tackle gender-specific risks, as a way to share good practices; and to continue to strengthen a gender-sensitive analysis in order to highlight the specific risks faced by women journalists in the exercise of their work.

SDG Monitoring

Canada is hosting in Montreal the UNESCO's Institute of Statistics (UIS) which provides statistics and develop indicators for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the overall reporting on SDG 16.10.1 on the safety of journalists.

UNESCO is developing with the UIS a mechanism that could involve and support UNESCO Member States in data-collection and reporting on SDG indicator 16.10.2 on access to information.

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### UNESCO Group of friends for the safety of journalists

Canada's Mission to UNESCO is an active member of the UNESCO Group of friends for the safety of journalists. The Group of friends is organizing yearly events to promote safety of journalists.

On 18 June 2019 a seminar entitled "Standing up against online harassment of women journalists – What works?" took place at UNESCO. The event aimed to raise awareness of the global problem of safety of women journalists, with a focus on online harassment that is often paired with offline threats, intimidation and attacks; in this regard, it also explored the impact of such harassment on the work of women journalists, and how victims themselves deal with and resist these attacks. The event explored practical and concrete ways to enhance the safety of women journalists online, through legislation, capacity building, education and training, including for the judiciary and the police; awareness raising and other safety and support measures, such as protective measures by media owners and managers, and journalistic peer support networks or other resources for victims of online abuse. The event brought together different stakeholders, including female journalists who have been targets of online harassment sharing their experience, journalists associations, media houses, the judiciary and social media platforms, to discuss ways to tackle the issue of online harassment of women journalists from various angles, across regions and as part of the different roles and responsibilities of actors called upon to ensure the safety of journalists.

The UNESCO Group of Friends of the Safety of Journalists organized an event on "National Initiatives on the Safety of Journalists – What works?" on 12 December 2017. Canada was highly visible during this event with the participation of M. Benoit Suire, Senior Manager, High Risk Deployments, French Services, CBC/Radio-Canada who presented CBC's strategy to prepare journalists covering high risk areas and the tools developed by CBC/Radio-Canada, in particular for women journalists. The Canadian Commission for UNESCO was recognized for supporting financially the participation of panelists from developing countries. Furthermore, Ambassador Ayotte hosted a working lunch which fostered fruitful exchanges between the panelists and Permanent Delegates interested in the issue of safety of journalists and impunity. As an elected member of the UNESCO International Programme for the Development of Communications (IPDC), it is particularly important for PESCO to be seen as proactively supporting UNESCO's efforts in favour of the safety of journalists and in the fight against impunity. The event on 12 December 2017 provided an excellent opportunity to demonstrate how Canada can be a valuable actor in this area.

### Extra-budgetary Funding to UNESCO projects in favour of safety of journalists

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO is supporting financially some activities in favour of freedom of expression and safety of journalist. For example, CCU is financing the creation of training materials on "Terrorism and the Media: A Handbook for Journalists" as well as curriculum for journalists schools (see attachment).

Canada - through its Counter Terrorism Capacity Building Programme - is supporting UNESCO and UNCCT on a project focused on the prevention of violent extremism through youth empowerment in Jordan, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. The following activities are implemented through the UNESCO IPDC: 1- Strengthening media capacity: training of young journalists and media trainers on conflict-sensitive reporting and cross-cultural/cross-religious dialogue, and production of online and offline training materials for media professionals to counter hate speech. 2- Amplifying new narratives through

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youth: creation of improved curricula in journalism schools, focused on the development of new narratives by youth, and new media spaces for youth building upon the alternative narratives. This project has a high profile at UNESCO and in the four countries.

#### Freedom on Line Coalition

Canada is an active member of the UNESCO local group of the Freedom on Line Coalition. The Group has supported the adoption of the UNESCO's Internet Universality Indicators.

#### OSCE

In 2018 the OSCE Ministerial Council reached consensus on a decision on Safety of Journalists (attached), the first decision on the topic since 1994 in the OSCE. Canada played an active role in achieving success with the decision and making important steps forward for the OSCE context (please see attached report for additional details). Furthermore, in 2018 Canada joined the OSCE Informal Group of Friends on Safety of Journalists (16 participating States total), to look at ways our delegations can further promote the protection of journalists within the OSCE-context. In addition to promoting an MC decision in 2018, the group works with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media's office, as well as non-governmental organizations like the International Press Institute (here is a visit made by the group on World Press Freedom Day: <https://ipi.media/wpfd-2019-osce-group-of-friends-on-safety-of-journalists-visit-ipi-to-mark-world-press-freedom-day/>)

#### Leadership on Freedom of Opinion and Expression at the Human Rights Council

Canada, with the support of the Netherlands, has also advanced its leadership role of Freedom of Opinion and Expression at the Human Rights Council. Joint Statements were delivered in March and July 2019 and demonstrate a commitment to once again put this issue on the agenda of the Council.