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The Role of Media in Building Bridges of Understanding Between Nations

Intervention by H.E. Ambassador Katalin Annamaria Bogyay,

Permanent Representative of Hungary

Your Excellencies,

High Representative, Mr. Al-Nasser,

Under-Secretary-General Cristina Gallach,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a former TV broadcaster and journalist I want to stress, first of all, the responsibility of journalists, media workers, the owners of printed or electronic media.

To make profit is one thing. To sell tabloids about scandals, fabricated stories, is another thing. But to be able to broadcast and produce unbiased, balanced stories is the approach what we are looking for in current affairs, political journalism.

We just know too well how different political and economic interests try to or influence the work of journalists and broadcasters.

I want to stress the importance of the ethical aspect of media as such consciousness of the journalists. We have to educate journalists; we have to prepare them for their responsible job. And we have to protect them, too.

Because media can create an imaginary world, give hope, and also help us understand the world. But media can poison thin political, cultural, social relations too.

I want us to remember, that media is capable of conveying norms not only for societies, but between societies. In this context, media has an important role in the socialization of the members of the society. Media develops the cohesive force between societies and it tries to encourage their members to actively engage in public live and global issues.

Media has another important role: integration. Media provides opportunity for the members of the society to get to know each other, and builds social cooperation based on shared mutual benefits.

This function relates to the motivation of citizens by building consensus, as media and freedom of expression can contribute to reaching consensus on questions of public interest by disseminating information necessary to make decisions.

Mr President, Excellencies,

Hungary aligns itself with the remarks delivered by the European Union.

The media has an instrumental role in the promotion of dialogue among cultures. Building trust, understanding and dialogue is a basic tool of the media.

Communicating across cultural differences has become an important challenge in today's interconnected world.

A free and vibrant media is vital to advancing mutual understanding among peoples, cultures and nations.

Hungary shares the view that intercultural dialogue, and the role of media in promoting this dialogue, has become more important than ever before. We share the conviction that the media can play a mediating role in the dialogue among different cultures. Just think about what we see on the screen shapes our vision about other human beings.

The media has a huge potential to fight violent extremism by targeting the youth with messages of tolerance and respect for cultural diversity. By challenging stereotypes and xenophobic attitudes, the media can influence the perceptions and cultural

identity of our youth and eliminate the ignorance that breeds extremism and violence. But we have to be able to build up protection against poison!

Terrorist groups, like ISIS, have developed elaborate communication strategies to lure marginalized young people with their propaganda. The hate speech spread by extremist groups across the world with the help of modern communication technologies poses a serious challenge for the international community.

In our fights against extremists, we must make sure that the freedom of the media is protected and devise strategies that promote and celebrate cultural diversity.

Hungary believes that media workers and journalists should be protected and we have co-sponsored the recent resolution of the Security Council on this topic.

We believe that the Alliance of Civilizations' annual Plural+ Video Festival, which invites the world's youth to submit creative videos focusing on diversity, is a good example in this regard and encourage the Alliance to continue to rely on social media in its efforts to spread the messages of tolerance, diversity and inclusion.

I want to congratulate the Alliance of Civilizations, I salute High Representative Al-Nasser and thank Under-Secretary-General Gallach for putting this important topic on our agenda.

The UN, UNESCO and the UN System can help and should help media workers and governments in highlighting the importance of education, clear-cut communication, in order to shape the right understanding about the worlds. The media can and should help celebrating cultural diversity. Because cultural diversity is not a burden, but a real source of inspiration.

Thank you.