



M20 JOHANNESBURG SUMMIT REPORT

THE FUTURE OF JOURNALISM

1-2 SEPTEMBER 2025
South Africa

Report compiled by Janet Smith



Main cover image: After the M20 Summit, President Cyril Ramaphosa invited the M20 Secretariat to handover the M20 Johannesburg Declaration.



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MEDIA
MONITORING
AFRICA



A two-day conference on **media and information integrity** running on the sidelines of the G20 programme under the South African presidency

The M20 was organised as an independent initiative by the **South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF)** and **Media Monitoring Africa (now known as Moxii Africa)**

The **M20 initiative** highlights media, journalism and information integrity issues relevant to the G20 process

It mirrors official G20 engagement groups for business, think-tanks and civil society, among others

The **initiative** includes:

- The publication of Policy Briefs.
- Hosting webinars and other events.
- Lobbying the G20.
- The M20 Summit.
- Working with global partners in the M20 Advisory Group.

Watch M20 Summit live [here](#) or scan the QR code below.



M20 
MEDIA INTEGRITY

M20 SUMMIT
01 - 02 SEPTEMBER

SABC NEWS  **SABC PLUS** 

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The Summit amplifies the voices of African and other media **stakeholders** in exploring **actionable proposals** that align with the priorities of the **G20** and unique challenges faced by developing nations

The Summit’s focus was on the role of **media and journalism**, to foster

01 information integrity as a cornerstone for human rights

02 effective governance

03 international cooperation

04 the public trust needed for social and economic development





THE SUMMIT RESULTED IN THE M20 JOHANNESBURG DECLARATION, ADOPTED ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2025

More than 50 global organisations committed to the inaugural M20 Johannesburg Declaration by the close of the gathering.

The Declaration aims to prioritise information integrity for the public good, among the key issues covered.

Delegates, who met over two days in South Africa, contributed towards key principles of the Johannesburg Declaration that they aimed to present to the G20 leaders.

The M20 Summit was organised by the South African National Editors' Forum and Media Monitoring Africa (now known as Moxii Africa), ahead of the 2025 South African G20 Summit meeting on 22 to 23 November 2025, which would be taking place against alarming threats to independent journalism, media viability and an avalanche of physical and online harms.

The Summit sought especially to uphold the rights of women and children.

It was unapologetic in calling all stakeholders, media organisations, civil society, technology companies and policymakers to continue prioritising the issues mentioned in the Declaration.

In this context, the Summit identified critical elements that must be prioritised to address the media landscape's multifaceted challenges:

1. Information Integrity

As the world faces a staggering increase in mis- and disinformation, the Summit believes that independent media must reinforce the highest standards of journalistic ethics and develop robust mechanisms to uncover and counter disinformation campaigns, including those fuelled by AI.

Our integrity hinges on our commitment to deliver credible information to the public, particularly regarding climate sustainability and environmental protection.

2. Safety of Journalists

The relentless persecution of journalists worldwide, especially in war-torn Gaza, saw the Summit advancing that this must be condemned, with a call for an end to impunity for those who attack journalists during armed conflicts.

We stress the urgency of solidarity in addressing not only physical violence, but also the rising tide of online threats, especially those targeting women journalists.

A global campaign must be initiated to demand justice for journalists whose lives and work are compromised by violence, intimidation, harassment and authoritarian repression.

3. Artificial Intelligence

The convergence of media and technology necessitates urgent dialogue on AI's implications for journalism.

The Summit hereby advocates for ethical frameworks and policies that ensure fair compensation for journalists whose work feeds AI systems, alongside a commitment to transparency and accountability from technology companies in their usage of journalistic content. This is especially vital for the Global South, where vulnerabilities in technology deployment are most pronounced.

4. Media Viability and Freedom

The delegates noted the media ecosystem faces an era defined by the financial crisis of journalism and mounting threats to media freedom.

They believe that G20 nations must take decisive steps towards establishing sustainable funding models for independent media that prioritise public interest journalism.





They emphasised that the media's viability is not merely an economic issue; it is foundational to democratic health and preservation of free societies.

It also included specific input on:

5. Children's Rights in the Digital Environment, Women in Media, and responding to the climate crisis, such as noting:

- the importance of children's and young people's rights. There is an urgent need for policies that prioritise their safety, safeguard their voices in digital governance and guarantee their access to accurate information free from exploitation.
- **That modern AI technologies should be designed and regulated with children's rights at the forefront.**
- the unique experiences of women journalists regarding online and offline harassment, and the forms of gendered harms and structural inequalities they contend with.
- the importance of access to free, effective, understandable, accessible information, from pluralistic information sources, on climate change and environmental issues.

The conversation on information integrity underscored that independent journalism is a public good, essential for a functioning society.

Panellists emphasised the importance of credible information in addressing global challenges, such as climate sustainability and the energy transition, where misinformation can have devastating consequences. **The focus on the safety of journalists was more than a condemnation of violence; it was a powerful call for solidarity.**

Discussions emphasised the need for an institutional response to the global crisis of journalist persecution and the rise of online threats, with a specific focus on the unique challenges faced by women journalists.

These conversations reminded the delegates that the state of the media cannot be divorced from broader themes of human rights, democratic governance, and climate action.

As the world looks ahead to the G20 meeting in November, the Summit urged G20 leaders to integrate the vital elements from the Declaration into their deliberations and final global Declarations.

Tackling the crisis of information integrity should be prioritised in all major agendas, as it has the potential to safeguard our democracies and foster global solidarity, equality and sustainable development.

To this end, the Summit proposed establishing a Media Integrity Monitoring Framework to track progress on G20 and M20 commitments concerning information integrity, media viability, journalist safety, and a safer, more inclusive, digital world. The delegates envisioned this framework as a key tool for accountability and continuous improvement. The Summit accepted that the challenges may be considerable but regarded its resolve as unwavering.

Together acting in solidarity, the delegates said they will endeavour to safeguard the future of independent journalism as a public good and ensure a sustainable, equitable, credible and truthful information ecosystem.





THE JOHANNESBURG DECLARATION

Preamble

Global and local representatives of the media attending the M20 Summit, convened in Johannesburg by the South African National Editors' Forum and Media Monitoring Africa, have come together during the 2025 South African presidency of the G20, to sound an acute alarm.

We are responding to a moment of profound global crisis in the integrity of information, peace and respect for human rights, including environmental rights. We hereby alert our media colleagues, the G20 and the wider public: the crisis is intensifying as the spaces for independent news media and civic engagement contract.

Democratic societies grow through the supply of reliable information in a timely manner. Yet today, we witness widescale erosion of our sources of knowledge.

Our conviction is that independent journalism is a vital public good, and fundamental to people's right of access to information and to the sustenance of peace and democratic governance.

We affirm that information integrity is essential to sustaining democracy and advancing the G20's 2025 goals of international solidarity, equality and sustainable development.

Our call is an injunction to everyone to do more to protect press freedom and support the role of journalism and a human rights- based media ecosystem in its contribution to the public good.

We call for significant steps to ensure that independent journalism and media pluralism are strengthened, and information integrity is secured. Inaction and a 'business-as-usual' approach will not only allow current troubling trends to persist, but will also cause them to worsen, especially in a world heading towards more armed conflict, authoritarianism, and a climate emergency.

Failing to prioritise media freedom and viability, as well as information integrity, can lead to an erasure of information ecosystems, creating drastic threats to economic, safety and overall civil stability.

The challenge

The dramatic shrinkage in the media landscape, linked to the decline in financial viability and weakening democratic credentials in many countries, leaves space for disinformation, including harmful content generated with artificial intelligence.

This phenomenon creates doubts, hinders policy actions and divides society.

Mis- and disinformation are being amplified by AI platform algorithms and reintegrated as training data for new AI models, further perpetuating a downward spiral in the quality of information.

This wider content environment exacerbates other intensifying challenges to information integrity.

The world already suffers the effects of media censorship and political interference, lawfare, as well as assaults, killings and persecution of journalists.

We're seeing the consequences in declining international cooperation, in the disempowering of younger people (teenagers and children), the erosion of women's right to equality and in a failure to invest in media and information.

Our context and our opportunity

The M20 is a parallel, independent initiative to the G20. As a broad alliance, we have come together to promote journalism as a public good, as a key to information integrity and G20 goals.



To this end, M20 participants compiled a set of Policy Briefs and convened in Johannesburg on 1 and 2 September 2025 to build consensus and a common voice around broad fundamentals.

These steps follow previous media initiatives during G20 processes hosted in Brazil (2024) and India (2023).

The official G20 baton is to be handed to the United States in 2026.

This M20 Declaration is a result of a collaborative global discussion and a foundation for further information-sharing to ensure that the G20 integrates information integrity, press freedom and media sustainability into a broader development financing architecture.

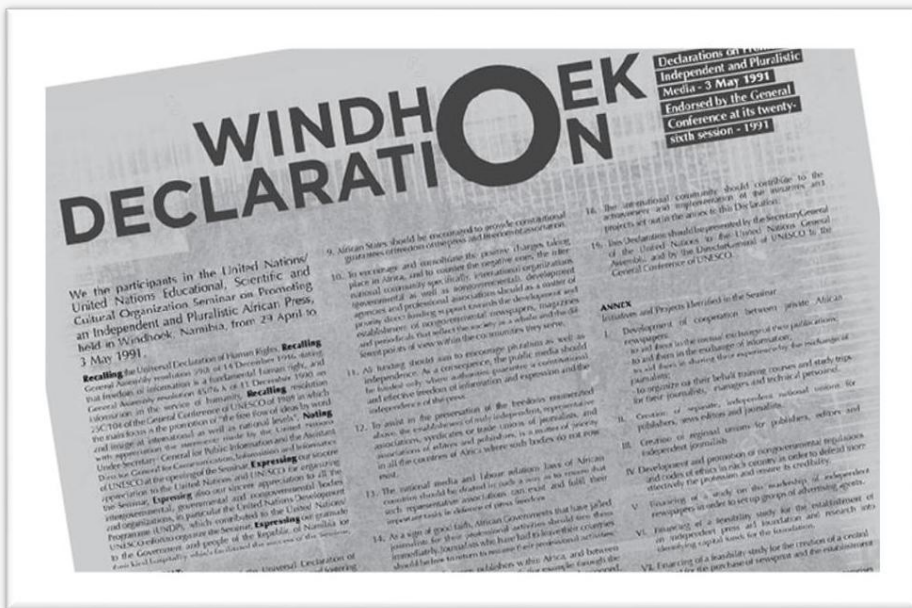
This Declaration builds on and supports existing global frameworks, including the Windhoek Declaration of 1991 on a Free, Pluralistic and Independent African Media and the Windhoek +30 Declaration of 2021 on Information as a Public Good.

It is aligned to the United Nations’ Global Principles for Information Integrity, which recognise an independent, free and pluralistic media as one of five pillars.

It welcomes the focus on information Integrity in the G20 2024 Digital Economy Working Group Maceio Ministerial Declaration and encourages the 2025 G20 to continue giving attention to this priority subject.

Our Declaration calls upon media and partners, and then upon G20 leaders, to take urgent steps to respond to the information integrity crisis.

Our call on media and civil society – as well as other stakeholders such as independent information regulatory bodies and business entities, to act on:



Information integrity, to

- Commit to reinforcing the highest standards of journalism ethics to act as a counterbalance to attacks against information integrity.
- Uncover disinformation campaigns, including AI mistakes and deepfakes, and provide access to reliable information to the public.
- Raise the issues of accountability of technology companies for the design of their AI tools, including fixing flaws and responding to user feedback, especially when it relates to harmful content towards the journalism community.
- Empower, celebrate, promote, and spotlight independent media by supporting and raising awareness around key annual events:
 - **World News Day and the International Day for Universal Access to Information on 28 September**



- **The Global Week for Media and Information Literacy from 24 to 31 October, and**
- **World Press Freedom Day on 3 May**
- Share solutions to the ‘perfect storm’ of the challenges ranging across information integrity, media capture and capitulation, journalists’ safety, media viability, platforms and AI, children’s and young people’s rights and the climate emergency.
- Recognise that coordinated disinformation campaigns are amplified across multiple languages and diaspora networks, often State- sponsored, requiring targeted cross-border and multilingual responses. Addressing these threats demands inclusive digital governance consistent with the Global Digital Compact, including connectivity, prevention of internet fragmentation, and protection of data privacy.

Our call is also for stakeholders to act on:

Artificial Intelligence, to

- Unite to call for clear copyright and fair compensation rules for the use of journalistic content by AI companies and develop common criteria for calculating fair value.
- Reframe AI as a story about power, not just technology and hype: keeping tabs on who controls and deploys AI systems, how decisions are made, and what impacts result.
- Promote AI literacy that is grounded in rights-based, intersectional and ethical perspectives.
- Follow the money and data, including examining how gaps in African and Global South affect AI development.
- Adopt and promote cross-regional AI frameworks grounded in human rights, democratic values and accountability.
- Ensure that AI frameworks support linguistic and cultural diversity, including low-resource and indigenous languages, and invest in open-source models and local datasets so that smaller nations and island states are not excluded from AI development. These measures should be complemented by AI governance principles set out in the Global Digital Compact.

Our call is also for stakeholders to act on:

Media viability, to

- Inform and engage audiences to strengthen trust and willingness to support media viability.
- Report on the growth in news wastelands in order to raise awareness about the impact on access to information and how the dominant digital services, including AI ‘answers’ and ‘community notes’, are not a substitute for verified, up-to-date reporting.
- Recognise that the collapse of journalism revenue models is not solvable by innovation alone, as important as this is. It is symptomatic of broader market failure and disruption due to platform dominance, unchecked data extraction and algorithmic bias, which require policy responses.
- Call on G20 states to pursue competition law reform to deal with market dominance, oligarchic control and equitable taxation of digital platforms and ensure ways to redistribute value to sustain public interest media.

Our call is also for stakeholders to act on:

Safety, to

- Campaign to stop physical and online violence and intimidation against journalists all over





the world, and demand justice for targeted colleagues

- Call for an end to the deliberate targeting of journalists during armed conflict, and specifically express solidarity with Palestinian colleagues targeted by the Israeli military, and demand immediate fulfillment of the UN Security Council Resolution 2222 which was co-sponsored by Israel in 2015, and which insists on an end to impunity for those who attack journalists during armed conflicts. **further insist that Israel immediately allow foreign media access to Gaza.**
- Condemn cases in all countries where there is persistent impunity for the killings of media workers, targeting of independent media, and state-sponsored online harassment of journalists.
- Support the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists on 2 November, as an occasion to demand safety for media workers and justice.
- Demand an end to online violations of human rights and build pressure on tech companies to be held accountable where they do not take meaningful measures in their actions, tools, products and services.
- Help ensure, in the case of news media companies, the safety of journalists and to develop gender-awareness safety protocols in newsrooms to respond to online violence.
- Support exiled journalists, including opposing the surveillance of this community.
- Support a global ban on the use of spyware against journalists and an end to the use of criminal charges and lawsuits against journalists.

Our call is also for stakeholders to act subjects affecting:

Women and media, to

- Adopt and implement the by 2024 Kigali Declaration on the Elimination of Gender Violence in and through Media in Africa.
- Address and counter technology facilitated gender-based violence experienced disproportionately by women and LGBTQ+ journalists.
- Open the space for more representation of women in leadership roles in the media industry, and fund women-led independent media organisations.

Our call is also for stakeholders to act for:

Children, young people (teenagers) and marginalised groups, and to commit to

- Increase ethical coverage of children's and young people's issues, especially as regards their exploitation on and by digital platforms. Cater to younger audiences and promote human rights standards that protect and empower them
 - **Recognise children's and young people's rights to accurate information by strengthening media and information literacy, amplifying child voices**
 - Advocate for the urgent safeguards for AI technologies to ensure they are accountable, transparent, and developed with children's and young people's voices, cultural contexts and rights at the centre. Empower children and young people to navigate the digital media space
 - Advocate for AI systems and content to prioritise children's rights, safety, privacy, and developmental needs, with special attention to inclusivity for children with disabilities and meaningful inclusion of children's voices in AI design, development, and regulation
- 



Our call on G20 leaders to include in their final Declarations to act on:

Information integrity

For the Heads of State declaration, wording that recognises that:

- Integrity is damaged by coordinated disinformation campaigns, AI errors, biases, and undisclosed deepfakes.
- A supportive environment for journalism can help counter such risks by exposing problems and producing reliable, quality content, and recognising that independent journalism and public interest media are essential to ensuring access to relevant, timely, local, multilingual, and fact-based information. To that end, strengthening their independence and sustainability must be a key priority in order to preserve their vital role, in line with the commitments 35(b) and (c) of the Global Digital Compact.
- Severe threats to trust and the digital economy arise when information integrity is damaged by coordinated disinformation campaigns, AI errors, biases, and undisclosed deepfakes
- Sustainable systems are needed for compensation for media content feeding AI systems and platforms' business models, and that the G20 will build on its 2024 acknowledgement of intellectual property issues
- The Compact's broader commitments to universal connectivity, data privacy, and the prevention of internet fragmentation are digital foundations which directly shape the integrity of the information ecosystem

For the Digital Ministers' declaration: wording that recognises that:

- News media can play a critical role in exposing disinformation and in producing information of high integrity and promoting societies' access to information.
- Journalism and independent media are key in exposing illicit financial flows, as outlined in the FFD4 Seville Commitment, and promote transparency, accountability and public engagement in development financing, while securing the resources required to carry out such investigative reporting work
- In times of increased AI-generated content, there is value in fostering free and independent public-interest journalism as a critical resource for information integrity
- Because AI companies scrape news media content, it is essential to ensure fair compensation for the value added to these businesses and to digital distribution platforms

Artificial Intelligence:

For the G20 Heads of State declaration, wording that recognises the need to:

- Support and fund independent reviews of AI systems for their impact on news and information integrity.
- Invest in Global South innovation, including media-led efforts to develop culturally and linguistically inclusive AI tools tailored to local needs.

For the declaration by G20 Digital Ministers, and the declaration of ministers in the G20 Artificial Intelligence, Data Governance and Innovation for Sustainable Development, wording that recognises:

- The role of independent media in monitoring AI governance and corporate practices, and that stronger transparency mechanisms can help to enable public-interest media scrutiny of these systems in both public and private sectors..
- Access to information laws need to be fit for purpose and apply to data in both public and private sectors where public interest considerations apply and where protection of





relevant rights like privacy and intellectual property are respected

AI in Africa

Wording by appropriate G20 actors that recognises that:

- Sustainable AI development in Africa requires robust accountability mechanisms that prevent the entrenchment of technological dependencies, and the need to support initiatives that enhance African media organisations' capacity for quality coverage of AI governance and corporate behaviour.
- AI developers and deployers should consider high-quality contemporary data and linguistic and cultural diversity and commit to supporting AI systems that serve African languages and contexts, rather than marginalising them

Media viability and media freedom

For the Heads of State Declaration, wording that recognises the importance of:

- Public interest journalism and information integrity as essential public goods. Independent, economically viable media are indispensable to sustainable development and to safeguarding societies against misinformation and disinformation.
- Accordingly, the Declaration should commit to the creation of public funding models for journalism, comparable to those that support other public goods, while ensuring strong guarantees of editorial independence and universal access to reliable information. Supporting media viability in this way is not optional — it is foundational to the health of our democracies and economies.
- Protecting intellectual property rights to ensure fair compensation supporting independent media through a legal, fair, transparent and equitable basis, and with safeguards against real or perceived ways of influencing editorial content.
- Supporting independent media through a legal, fair, transparent, and equitable basis, and with safeguards against real or perceived ways of influencing editorial content.
- Safeguarding the editorial independence of public media institutions and preventing capture of regulatory bodies, funding mechanisms and public advertising systems.
- Protecting journalists and media workers from violence, harassment and undue legal or economic pressure, including robust protection of journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in situations of armed conflicts, in line with the decision 35(f) in the Pact for the Future.
- Promoting environments where free, plural and independent media can thrive, thereby reinforcing democratic governance, fostering economic growth, promoting social cohesion and building peaceful societies.

Climate crisis and information integrity

For the Heads of State Declaration, wording that recognises:

- The importance of access to free, effective, understandable, accessible information, and from pluralistic information sources, on climate change and environmental issues.
- The need to bolster efforts to ensure the safety of environmental journalists, access to scientific and evidence-based information online and to address the root causes of climate disinformation and climate change denialism.

For the Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group Ministerial Declaration, wording that recognises that:

- Timely access to high-quality, trustworthy, evidence-based and accessible information is essential to promote climate and environmental sustainability
- 



- In times of coordinated and well-financed climate disinformation and attacks, there is a need to promote safety for environmental journalists

Safety

For the Heads of State Declaration, wording that recognises:

- Deep concern at the unprecedented rise in physical and online assaults on journalists, and condemnation of these acts as violations of international law and fundamental human rights
- The need to strengthen and enhance efforts to ensure the safety and protection of journalists, uphold media independence and foster an environment where media professionals can carry out their vital work without fear or intimidation, let alone being targeted in war and subjected to generalised starvation (the internationally-agreed framework is set out in the 2012 UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and its guidance on creating multistakeholder mechanisms to protect the press)
- The need to call on governments to recognise and respond to the global commemoration of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists and support international mechanisms designed to secure accountability
- The need to combat the use of SLAPPs and other forms of legal harassment aimed at silencing journalists, whistleblowers and watchdogs
- Support for measures to prevent misuse of legal systems to suppress public interest journalism
- Special attention must be given to countries where journalist killings, digital lawfare, and coordinated troll harassment campaigns are rising. Governments should be urged to give institutional support to the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.

For the Digital Ministers' Declaration: wording that recognises:

- The need to develop and implement robust regulatory and safety frameworks that require digital platforms to undertake human rights diligence of their tools, products and services.

Rights of Women Journalists

For the Heads of States Declaration, wording that recognises the importance of:

- Supporting independent media in creating enabling environments for its women media workers, including the development and implementation of gender policies.
- Learning from the forms of technology-facilitated gender-based violence experienced by women journalists, to ensure these are not replicated and further exacerbated through AI, taking on the responsibility, alongside the tech platforms to actively work towards prevention of this.
- The unique experiences of women journalists regarding online and offline harassment and the forms of gendered harms and structural inequalities they contend with.

For the Digital Ministers' Declaration: wording that recognises:

- The need to proactively regulate and place the onus on tech platforms to protect women journalists from technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

#Rights of children and young people

For the Heads of States Declaration, wording that recognises:

- Vulnerabilities faced by children and teenagers in the digital environment, and a commitment to promoting formal mechanisms for their participation in digital policy-





making processes.

- The need to prioritise children's and young people's rights and participation frameworks to ensure alignment with international human rights standards, as well as legal and regulatory measures to ensure accountability.

For the Digital Ministers' Declaration, wording that recognises:

- The urgent need to promote and support digital platforms' adoption of child-rights based safety standards, which include age-appropriate child safety by design, transparent moderation, algorithmic accountability, accessible reporting tools, and clear measures taken to prohibit predictive profiling of minors. Media and information literacy must be integrated into educational systems, especially for low-income countries and communities. Take urgent, coordinated action to ensure digital environments are safe for children and young people globally, by adopting globally aligned legislation and standards grounded in safety-by-design principles and informed by the lived experiences of survivors and children to ensure proactive, not reactive, protections.

Moving forward

This inaugural M20 Declaration champions the value of journalism as a public good.

We highlight that information integrity is at a critical juncture, and that what happens in journalism can be of decisive significance.

We affirm that immediate and impactful actions are essential to reverse the decline and seize opportunities.

We propose establishing a Media Integrity Monitoring Framework to track annual G20 commitments on information integrity, journalist safety, and media viability.

An M20-linked Integrity Index would help institutions benchmark progress and promote accountability.

Our call is to all who share this broad perspective to reinforce their efforts to uphold free, independent and viable journalism as a condition for societal progress, and to continue M20 networking beyond 2025.

The M20 Johannesburg Declaration was compiled by Sanef and MMA with input from partners, drawing extensively from Policy Briefs published as part of the M20 process and which culminated in the endorsement of the Declaration at the M20 Summit on 1 and 2 September 2025.





The **Declaration** is endorsed **by the following organisations:**

- the South African National Editors’ Forum (SANEF)
- Media Monitoring Africa (MMA)
- the GIBS Media Leadership Think Tank
- The Africa Editors’ Forum (TAEF)
- African Women in Media (AWiM)
- the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD)
- the Indonesian Cyber Media Association (AMSI)
- the Wits Centre for Journalism, Wits University
- the Henry Nxumalo Foundation
- Impress: the independent monitor for the press (UK)
- Mtoto News International
- the Eastern Africa Editors Society
- the Forum on Information and Democracy (FID)
- the Press Council of South Africa
- Initiative18
- the Centre for Innovation and Technology
- the Panos Institute Southern Africa
- the NMT Media Foundation
- the International Fund for Public Interest Media
- the Campaign for Free Expression
- Fondation Hirondelle
- the Freedom of Expression Institute
- BBC Media Action
- the AmaBhungane Centre for Investigative Journalism
- Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC)
- RNW Media
- the Africa Freedom of Information Centre (AFIC)
- the Kenyan Editors Guild
- the fraymedia Foundation
- All Protocol Observed, publisher of *The Continent*
- International Media Support (IMS)
- The Brave Movement
- the West Africa Editors Society
- SABC Channel Africa
- MISA Lesotho
- *Daily Maverick*
- North West University, Journalism and Media Studies
- the West Africa Editors Society
- the Media Institute of Southern Africa
- Momentum – Journalism and Tech Task Force
- *The Wire* (India)
- the South African Information Regulator
- Technology Policy & Innovation (TPI) Concentration, Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs
- the Association of Independent Publishers (AIP)
- the Freedom Forum, Nepal
- Develop AI
- Campaign on Digital Ethics (CODE)
- the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC)
- SOS Support Public Broadcasting Coalition
- ICT Africa
- the Association for Progressive Communications (APC)
- The International Center for Journalists (ICJFJ+)
- Decode Communications
- Code for Africa
- the Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA)
- the Editors’ Forum of Namibia (EFN)
- the Southern African Editors’ Forum
- the Media Career Development Network
- Illuminate Nigeria Development Network
- Yellow Bloom Consulting
- The Private Newspapers and Online News Publishers Association of Ghana (PRINPAG)
- Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association (CamboJA)
- IBI News Portal
- Journalism.co.uk
- Centre for Information Integrity in Africa
- African Centre for Media Excellence, Kampala, Uganda

See the full text and list of endorsements on the M20 website [here](#).



***Organisations can contact the M20 Secretariat,
m20support@altadvisory.africa, to add their names to the list of
endorsements***





BACKGROUND TO THE SUMMIT

Policy Briefs

The **Summit** topics covered the issues raised in the **M20 Policy Briefs** published on the [M20 website](#).

- #1 Information integrity is a public good – and it's at risk
- #2 AI's impact on the intellectual property rights of journalists
- #3 Information integrity on climate change must be an integral pillar of the G20 agenda
- #4 Power, politics and economics – AI, Africa and the G20
- #5 Children's rights should not be sidelined in the digital environment
- #6 Fuelling democracy and growth through viable media – an urgent G20 call to action
- #7 Escalating assaults on journalists' safety are a threat to democracy
- #8 The vanishing lifeline – policy solutions for media funding challenge

Thanks to the M20 knowledge partners:

The Global Forum for Media Development UNESCO	The Center for News and Technology Innovation Deutsche Welle Akademie	African Women in Media Research ICT Africa
Reporters Without Borders	The GIBS Media Leadership Think Tank the Press Council of South Africa	Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs the Committee to Protect Journalists
Forum on Information and Democracy The International Fund for Public Interest Media	Momentum – Journalism & Tech Task Force	Decode Communications
International Media Support	The African Editors' Forum	The Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa The International Press Institute

Policy Briefs authors

- #2 Dr Anya **Schiffrin**, Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs: *AI in a world of Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability*
- #3 Katharina **Zuegel**, Policy Director at the Forum on Information and Democracy: *Information integrity on climate change must be an integral pillar of the G20 agenda*
- #4 Scott **Timcke** and Zara **Schroeder**, Research ICT Africa: *Power, politics and economics – AI, Africa and the G20*
- #5 Phakamile **Khumalo**, Public and Media Skills Development Manager, Media Monitoring Africa (Moxii Africa): *Children’s rights should not be sidelined in the digital environment*
- #6 Martin **Scott**, Professor of Media and Global Development, University of East Anglia, with additional inputs from the Media Viability Manifesto Core Group (UNESCO, DW Akademie, IMS): *Fuelling democracy and growth through viable media – an urgent G20 call to action*
- #7 Glenda **Daniels**, Associate Professor, Media Studies, Wits University; Secretary-General, South African National Editors’ Forum: *Escalating assaults on journalists’ safety are a threat to democracy*
- #8 Pierre **Dagard** and Sadibou **Marong**: Reporters Without Borders: *The Vanishing Lifeline – policy solutions for media funding challenges*

M20 substance team

Crafted the policy briefs and shaped the conference topics



Janet Heard:
Editor of the 2025
M20 Policy Briefs



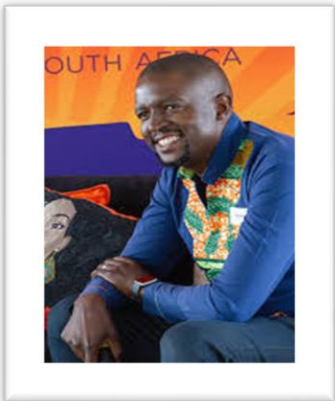
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Izak Minnaar:
Digital rights and
media expert



William Bird:
Director of Media
Monitoring Africa



Reggy Moalusi:
Executive Director South
African Editors' Forum



Michael Markovitz:
Heads the Gordon Institute
of Business Science Media
Leadership Think Tank

M20 international advisory group



Siddarth Varadarajan
The Wire, India



Amy Mitchell
Center for News,
Technology & Innovation



Paula Miraglia
Momentum –
Journalism & Tech
Task Force



Juliet Nanfuka
Collaboration on International ICT
Policy for East and Southern Africa



Amy Brouillette
International Press
Institute



Antoine Bernard
Reporters Without Borders



Zoé Titus
Namibia Media Trust



Churchill Otieno
The African Editors' Forum



Khadija Patel
International Fund
for Public Interest
Media





Dr Laura Moore
Deutsche Welle Akademie



Camille Grenier
Forum on Information
and Democracy



Dr Yemisi Akinbobola
African Women in Media



Dr Anya Schiffrin
School of International and
Public Affairs at Columbia
University in New York



Jesper Højberg
International Media
Support



Saorla McCabe
UNESCO



Prof Herman Wasserman
Centre for Information Integrity in
Africa at Stellenbosch University



Mira Milosevic
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M20 summit organising team



Latiefa Mobara



Dzudzie Netshisaulu:
South African National
Editors' Forum



Noor Ahmad:
Media
Monitoring Africa



Sophie Smit:
ALT Advisory



Jessie Rashid:
ALT Advisory



Janet Smith





The Summit in numbers

14

sessions

70

speakers

39 women, **31** men

11 speakers from
Africa

Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana,
Kenya, Mauritius,
Namibia, Nigeria, South
Africa, Senegal, Uganda
and Zimbabwe

speakers from
19 countries

and nearly **200** delegates attended from many more
countries





M20 SUMMIT, DAY 1

Opening: Sbu Ngalwa (SANEF and TAEF).

Keynote address: Minister Solly Malatsi (SA Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies).

Panel 1 on the M20 origins and agenda.

Panel 2: Scene setter Global developments on information integrity, media viability and the future of journalism.

Panel 3 on information integrity, reflecting on [M20 Policy Briefs 1 and 3](#).

Panel 4 on media viability, reflecting on [M20 Policy Brief 6](#).

Panel 5 on AI and news media, reflecting on [M20 Policy Brief 4](#).





Opening address **Sbu Ngalwa**

Treasurer-General of the South African National Editors' Forum and The African Editors Forum

Ngalwa began with a tribute to one of South Africa's most prominent political journalists, Tshidi Madia, who passed away on 27 August 2025 after a short illness.

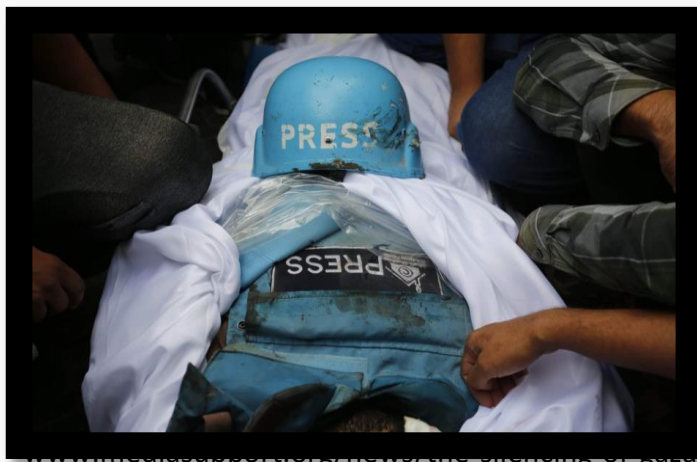
He also urged the gathering to not forget colleagues who have been slaughtered in Gaza by the brutal Israeli regime, leading to an unprecedented number of journalists losing their lives.

He said this serves as a stark reminder of the immense risks our colleagues face daily in their pursuit of the truth.

Ngalwa further encouraged those present to remember the journalists on the front lines on the African continent, who continue to hold power to account and inform the people.



The delegates observed a moment of silence in their honour.



Ngalwa was proud to announce that this Summit was the first in-person M20 event, and a round of applause followed.

He noted that India, Brazil, Indonesia, southern Africa, east Africa, west Africa, central Africa, north Africa and Europe – in particular, France – were well-represented.

Ngalwa explained that the M20 is a parallel, independent initiative to the G20. It is not a new concept, originating out of a desire to bring media issues to the forefront of the global agenda, specifically within the G20 framework.

The M20, a broad alliance that has come together to promote journalism as a public good, emerged in 2023 when media organisations in India began conversations around such an initiative to coincide with India's G20 Presidency.

Following this, the baton was passed to Brazil in 2024 and now it is with South Africa, with the intention of passing it on to American colleagues for the 2026 G20.

Ngalwa noted that, with this in-person summit in Johannesburg, our media is building on the work and momentum of our predecessors to ensure a collective, sustained voice for media issues within the G20 process.

That said, the media landscape today is more complex than ever. Globally, and across the G20 and African nations, we are grappling with issues of disinformation, shrinking newsrooms and the economic viability of our industry.

Ngalwa said we also face a significant crisis of an erosion of public trust. Meanwhile, the safety of journalists is increasingly threatened by physical and digital attacks.





In Africa, these challenges are compounded by governments that restrict media freedom, often through legislation and internet shutdowns.

Ngalwa stated that this Summit aimed to tackle some of these critical challenges head-on.

He said the objectives for the next few days were clear:

Information integrity:

How do we combat the flood of **misinformation and disinformation** that threatens to erode public trust?

Media sustainability:

How can we build sustainable business models that **allow journalism to thrive** in the digital age and support G20 economies?

Safety of journalists:

What concrete steps can we take to **protect our colleagues** who are increasingly targeted for their work?

The future of journalism:

How do we innovate and adapt to **remain relevant and essential** to a functioning democratic society?





Keynote address

Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies, **Solly Malatsi**



His roles in Parliament have included Official Opposition whip for the Parliamentary caucus. He was previously spokesperson for the mayor of Cape Town and national spokesperson for the Democratic Alliance

In 1976, a single photograph in South Africa changed the course of history. A news image of 12-year-old Hector Pieterse, fatally wounded during the Soweto uprising, was splashed across front pages around the globe.

Suddenly the world could no longer ignore the horrors of apartheid. International opinion hardened almost overnight against the regime, galvanising sanctions and emboldening our own freedom movement.

That moment from our past stands as powerful testimony. Truthful information, courageously reported and widely shared, can topple injustices and uphold human dignity.

It shows that news and information are not mere commodities or optional extras. They are a public good in the truest sense, essential to society's progress.

Today, as we gather at the M20, the lesson endures. Information integrity matters profoundly for all of us. It is the invisible infrastructure of democracy, the lifeblood of informed economies and the glue of social cohesion. We ignore this at our peril.

Information integrity is the cornerstone of democratic society. Democracy itself rests on truth. Citizens can only make sound decisions and hold leaders accountable when they are informed by facts, not falsehoods.

Free and fair elections, in particular, depend on an electorate able to independently form opinions free from manipulation. When disinformation pollutes the public sphere, it undermines voters' ability to choose based on accurate information, posing a direct threat to the legitimacy of the democratic process.

We have already witnessed this across the world and South Africa is not immune. During the 2024 election campaign, generative AI was misused to produce deepfake videos, including a fabricated clip of then-US President Joe Biden, threatening sanctions on our country if a certain party won.

Such incidents remind us that the speed and scale of digital falsehoods can mislead. And yet, there is cause for confidence. Robust institutions and vigilant media can protect democracy against the virus of disinformation.

A recent study of South Africa's 2024 election found that despite fears, AI-driven fake content had only limited impact, with most information still coming from traditional sources. Strong media structures helped blunt the worst effects.

But we cannot be complacent. As United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres warns, 'threats to information integrity are proliferating and expanding with unprecedented speed on digital platforms, supercharged by AI technologies'.

This places science, facts, public health and human rights under attack. If lies spread faster than truth, if hate speech and rumor outrun verified news, the results can be catastrophic for democracies, for social harmony and even for development.





The economy also relies on truth. Markets function on trust and transparency; fraudulent information can disrupt financial systems and erode investor confidence.

Free, independent journalism is essential for the economy to function transparently, supporting anti-corruption efforts, fair markets and informed policymaking.

No major challenge – from healthcare to climate change – can be solved without fact-based, independent information at its core. Truth in information is a public good that underpins all other public goods.

If information integrity is the foundation of democracy and development, then independent, media are its foremost guardians. A free press, broadcasting a range of voices and perspectives, is not a luxury – it is a necessity.

We must emphasise here at the G20's M20 forum that media freedom and diversity are essential safeguards of truth, not optional extras for society. South Africa's own journey underscores this fact.

From the brave reporters who exposed apartheid's atrocities decades ago, to today's investigative journalists rooting out corruption, we know that when the media can operate freely and professionally, accountability and progress follow.

Yet around the world, the very media institutions we rely on to uphold truth are under severe strain. In too many countries, journalists face censorship, harassment or violence. But even where overt repression is absent, news media struggle to survive.

A crisis of media viability is unfolding globally. According to the 2025 World Press Freedom Index, media outlets in 160 out of 180 countries report achieving financial stability only 'with difficulty' or 'not at all'. The economic model that sustained independent news is collapsing in many places, especially at local levels.

This is a massive problem. When media outlets cannot sustain themselves, society loses its watchdogs. Vacuums emerge, giving space for the inflow of rumours, propaganda and unchecked falsehoods.

A free and viable media sector is as important to democratic society as clean water is to public health.

So, we must work together as governments and the private sector to support sustainable models for independent media.

This could include innovative funding mechanisms, fair competition policies and ensuring that dominant tech platforms do not unfairly siphon away advertising revenues that journalism depends on.

Even as we defend the traditional pillars of journalism, we face new 21st-Century challenges to information integrity.

The digital revolution has profoundly democratised information creation and distribution, with benefits and risks on a global scale.

On the one hand, more voices than ever can be heard. On the other, false content and harmful narratives can spread like wildfire across borders and platforms.

The business models of social media and search platforms have often rewarded virality over veracity. In practice, this means sensationalism and misinformation can get boosted, while credible journalism struggles to reach audiences.

We must urge greater platform accountability. More transparency about how information is curated. Stronger action against demonstrably false or hateful content. We need to elevate factual information rather than suppress it.

Another urgent challenge is the rise of AI-generated content. We are entering an era when a single individual with a laptop can manufacture realistic fake videos, images or audio at the click of a button.

Deepfakes can be deployed by malicious actors to mislead citizens or manipulate narratives at

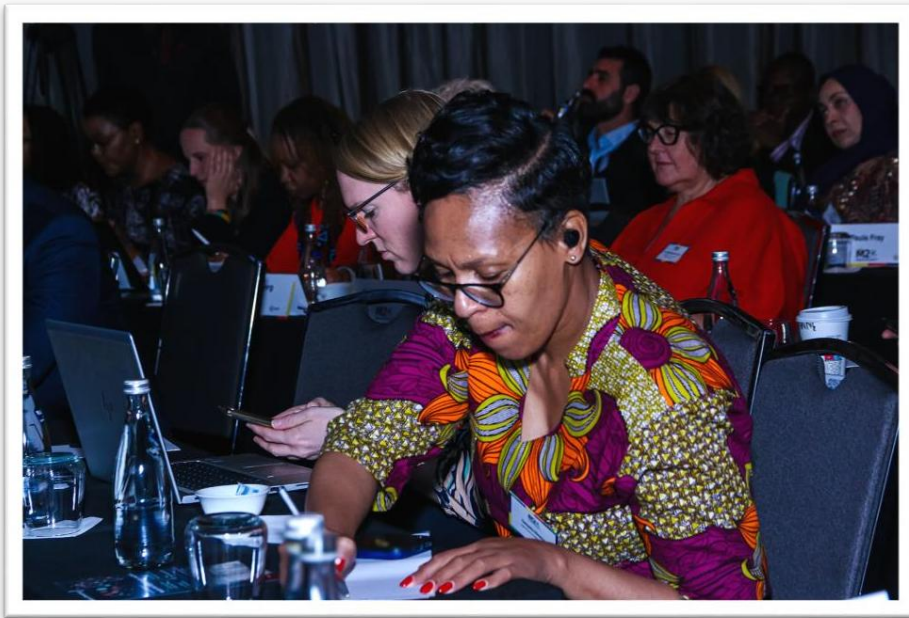




unprecedented scale and speed.

The challenge for all of us in the G20 is to harness the benefits of AI while staunchly guarding against its misuse in the information sphere. We need responsible AI governance and ethical AI guidelines that ensure these technologies are not weaponised to undermine truth.

Information integrity is not a local issue. It is global and it demands global cooperation. And so, under South Africa's G20 Presidency in 2025, we carry forward this vital agenda.



South Africa's message to the G20 is one of partnership and resolve. We will not table new commitments lightly and rather seek to implement and amplify the consensus already in place.

We will work closely with the United Nations and other international bodies, reinforcing initiatives like the UN Code of Conduct for Information Integrity on digital platforms and UNESCO's programmes on media freedom and digital literacy.

Above all, we will listen to and involve the independent media voices themselves. We're taking a multi-stakeholder approach. Governments can't solve these problems alone. But with enlightened policies, we can enable solutions.

In doing so, we tread carefully to protect freedom of expression. Information integrity cannot be an excuse for censorship; it must be about empowerment.

Empowering citizens to receive accurate information and diverse views, empowering journalists to do their work safely and empowering technology to elevate truth over falsehood.

Today, we reaffirm that independent media is the beating heart of our societies. Let us treat information as the public good it is, investing in it, protecting it and making sure it benefits everyone.

And let us commit that in this digital century, we will not allow the tools of progress to become weapons against truth. Instead, we will harness innovation, cooperation and our shared values to ensure that news and information serve humanity.

In doing so, we uphold the very foundations of democracy and development for generations.

South African Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies, Solly Malatsi



PANEL 1: REFLECTING ON THE PAST AND FUTURE OF THE M20 AGENDA

Moderator:

William Bird Media Monitoring Africa



Panellists:



**Siddharth
Varadarajan (India)**

Founder-editor of *The Wire*, India's largest independent digital news and analysis platform



Paula Miraglia (Brazil)

Founder and CEO of Momentum – Journalism & Tech Task Force



Izak Minnaar (SA)

Digital rights and media expert; member of the South African National Editors' Forum and the Press Council of South Africa

Summary

This session drew together representatives of the three nations which have last held G20 Presidency: India, Brazil and South Africa.

Media Monitoring Africa director William Bird introduced the conference to the concepts underpinning the M20, and its history which, although short, is determined to be embedded in the G20 legacy.

Siddharth Varadarajan began by affirming the work of all three M20s, and set its origins against the backdrop of frail press freedoms in India. He said his country's reputation as a Constitutional republic means that people around the world 'most often do not realise' that journalists are under attack there, and that an ongoing use of criminal law to silence reporters in India extends also to shutting down news platforms.

'It was essentially in response to this occupational hazard that's been visible for the past five or six years, that in 2023, when India was president of the G20, and there was a lot of PR in India going on, on behalf of the government, as to how India is the mother of democracy, that we decided we (the media) should have a conversation.'

Varadarajan said 'none of the world's problems can be solved if the media is not free, if journalists are not free to do the work they are supposed to do'. It is out of that position that the idea of an M20 came about, the G20 process having already spawned other parallel civil



society conversations.

‘We felt we could do something as independent media to kickstart this’, and the first M20 arrived as a one-day virtual event to which editors were invited.

Varadarajan said press freedom is not the only challenge faced by the media worldwide. Others include fake news, AI, business models.

‘But we felt, by having a common conversation, not only would we be able to learn from each other’s experiences, we could also send a signal to governments that are increasingly hostile to the media that you are going to face opposition not only from the media at home but the media, in solidarity, across the world.’

That was the spirit in which the first M20 happened. Varadarajan said he was ‘blown away and astonished and humbled by South African colleagues taking something unformed into something that could be a vibrant platform for media around the world’.

Paula Miraglia reflected on her experience of creating two outlets in Brazil ‘in a very concentrated media market’ in which challenges imposed by technology now also concentrate a lot of power in media distribution.

‘Brazil has a very strong human rights community who have been discussing the Internet for a very long period.’

The country already had pioneering legislation – ‘strong governance legislation’ – regarding the Internet in the Marco Civil da Internet (Law No. 12,965/2014), which sets principles for user rights, privacy and network neutrality, ‘but disinformation has played a role in our country even in terms of public health during COVID, and a coup attempt via social media platforms’.

Attempts to regulate the industry face ‘strong lobbying’, Miraglia said, but ‘grounds have been created for discussion’ through the Global Initiative for Information Integrity on Climate Change, a joint effort of the Brazilian government, UNESCO and the United Nations to strengthen research and measures to address disinformation seeking to delay and derail climate action.

The Initiative was launched in November 2024 at the G20 Leaders’ Summit in Rio de Janeiro. Brazil’s Supreme Court has since delivered its conclusion on Article 19 of the Marco Civil da Internet, finding it partially unconstitutional, and concluding it did not sufficiently protect fundamental rights and democracy.

The decision in June 2025 established new liability parameters for Internet application providers, shifting from a general notice and takedown to the inclusion of a Duty of Care which expands liability in cases of serious illegal content.

Miraglia said this provoked ‘a strong reaction’.

She also pointed to the BRICS Summit in Brazil in July 2025 where leaders signed a Declaration outlining guidelines that ensure access to artificial intelligence is fair, equitable, inclusive and accessible to all countries, regardless of their level of economic development.

‘We need a balanced approach, including [for] copyright and data extraction.’ To this end, Miraglia noted Brazil’s Senate had approved Bill PL 2628/2022 in August 2025, establishing one of the world’s most comprehensive digital child protection frameworks.

‘This opens a road for us to discuss big tech and journalism,’ she said. Miraglia said such legislation has put the government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, better known as Lula, on a collision course with platforms and the United States. It has also brought about discussions on sovereignty and protection of democracy.

She pointed to the cooperation between Global South countries which ‘presents a great opportunity because we are now talking about the world’, ‘sharing knowledge about regulation efforts’ and ‘developing common solutions and alternatives’.

Izak Minnaar, who worked tirelessly with the South African National Editors’ Forum and Media Monitoring Africa to see the M20 take place in Johannesburg in 2025, noted it was after Sanef and MMA saw the South African government’s presidency agenda for G20 that the





organisations were driven to push for an M20.

‘We couldn’t understand why they did not take on some of the gains made in Brazil around information integrity and other progressive issues, for the G20 to recognise the role of media that came from the Brazil experience.’

Initially, the organisations tried to engage with government within the G20 framework, ‘but that did not really work, so we decided to do it independently as a parallel process’.

That meant the M20 could determine its own agenda and concentrate on information integrity, media development and the future of journalism, including the safety of journalists. There was ‘tremendous support’ internationally.

Bird noted that it is because of this commitment to democracy that there was sufficient consensus to push forward on some of the critical issues that we’re facing, warning that ‘if we sit still, the dark forces are going to take control and destroy us’.

Minnaar noted that at a dinner organised by the M20 on the eve of the Summit, South Africa’s Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies Solly Malatsi and the B20 had promised to take the M20 discussions and its outcomes, forward.



Izak Minnaar spoke from a South African perspective in the first session



PANEL 2: SCENE SETTER GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS ON INFORMATION INTEGRITY, MEDIA VIABILITY AND THE FUTURE OF JOURNALISM

Framing the discussion



Dr Anya Schiffrin

Director of the Technology, Media, and Communications specialisation at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs

Moderator:

Zoé Titus

Executive director of the Namibia Media Trust and the chairperson of the Global Forum for Media Development



Panellists



Leslie Richer

Serves the African Union Commission in the capacity of director of information and communications for the African Union



Jesper Højberg

Executive Director of International Media Support, an international, Denmark-based organisation



Anriette Esterhuysen

Senior advisor on global and regional internet governance to the Association for Progressive Communications



Framing the discussion

Dr Anya Schiffrin

Dr Schiffrin was teaching and not able to be at the Summit in person. She was however glad that colleagues from the media would be there 'all together, as together, we will come up with solutions for some of the most pressing problems we are facing'.

She began by observing that 'this has been a shocking year, even for those of us who've been involved in media and media development for decades' as the work that had been done 'for so long to bolster the information ecosystem and promote quality information and quality news is being undermined on many levels'.

'In the US, we're seeing the growth of media capture and the fact that the main gatekeepers and distributors of news, the tech platforms, have now chosen to align themselves with the Trump administration.'

Schiffrin said this 'is having enormous effects on the entire world and has increased the problem of mis- and disinformation and made it so much harder for policymakers to pursue sound policies because there is so much confusion about what is true and what is not'.

This makes the role of journalism even more important.

'At the same time as the attacks on journalism and on disinformation researchers have been stepped up, so we're seeing journalists under pressure all over the world and of course being killed in warzones such as Gaza.'

Schiffrin said there is deep concern about 'staunch opposition' from the Trump administration to attempts to regulate tech, 'and so, many of the things we've been pushing for, like digital taxes, bargaining codes, platform remuneration or the respect of intellectual property from the AI companies, are in danger – they're in jeopardy'.

She noted how the Trump administration 'is going around the world telling governments they will retaliate with higher tariffs if those governments try to regulate or tax the large tech companies'.

But, she thought governments 'have started to realise that threats by platforms' that they will exit a territory when they're asked to pay taxes or remunerate creators 'has led to an understanding that regulation will need to be even tougher'.

'We're in a place where some of the proposals are not what we would have wanted but seem to be the only possible options at this moment. I'm thinking of things like "must carry on platforms" – making news visible – and requests for that sort of thing which would have been unthinkable years ago. They're now on the table.'

Schiffrin drew attention to Ofcom's recent report in the UK in which it asked whether or not YouTube should be required to carry quality information.

'So, I think that governments are starting to realise that the big tech companies and AI companies aren't really playing fair, and realising they probably need to do more to regulate them'.

'This leads to all sorts of questions, including free speech questions and control over information, so it's a worrisome development, but perhaps even more worrisome is that the [Trump] administration is completely opposed to many of those kinds of regulations, and that affects the policy space for what governments are going to be able to do.'

She said she thought media would 'see a lot of dramatic changes in our world', also since the drastic budgets cuts by the Trump administration and the dismantling of the USAID grants, which 'are naturally affecting many of the outlets in the Global South'.

However, 'it is there where we are seeing period of consolidation where organisations are going to have to merge together and find ways to collaborate and many organisations will probably not make it'.





Schiffrin referred to an article in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* 'about the need to merge and consolidate organisations', saying 'there are only so many profits in each space and will have to combine'.

Another thing is, the policy decisions of each region are going to be very different. In the US, groups like the Rebuild Local News coalition led by Steve Waldman and the policy work being done [there] by Matt Pearce, have doubled down on local legislation.

'They're looking at things like tax credits for local advertising in local news, so that's really a stepping away from trying to get big federal regulation.'

Schiffrin believes 'Europe remains an enormous question mark'. 'How much will they be able to continue doing what they've been doing for the Digital Services Act?'

Meanwhile, 'budgets in Europe are constrained because of the need to spend more money on defence, so that's going to mean less money for journalism and journalism support and things we care about'.

She pointed out the 'usual donors – the Nordics and the Canadians – are being questioned' about whether they can 'put in more money to make up for what the US has cut'. Her view is that 'of course everybody's stepping up and doing what they can, but there's going to be so many other things that need funding, like vaccines and health programmes in the Global South'.

At the same time, 'in Latin America, we're seeing attempts to regulate big tech stymied over and over again' with Brazil a regional leader, 'and we've seen pressure on them from Donald Trump as well, so I think that it's going to be a very bifurcated and fragmented climate for regulation'.

In her view, 'Open AI and the Large Language Models that are killing traffic to the websites will continue to be incredibly important'.

But her wish was not to 'end on a depressing note', and thus, she pointed to 'one great development – that so many of us have been forming informal alliances over the years [meaning] we now have a lot of learning about things like how to set up journalism funds and what are the best ways to regulate big tech and how should we actually charge for news and IP'.

'It's been remarkable in the more than 20 years that I've been working in media development to see how many of us have come together, how we meet regularly at venues like [the M20] and how we share information and best practices and form alliances with each other with other groups and with governments.

'So I do think our community has a lot of the answers.'





Panel Summary

Zoé Titus began the discussion by addressing Leslie Richer about the role of continental bodies in promoting information integrity, especially in the context of digital disruption, election cycles and geopolitical disruptions.

Richer responded with a question: ‘We tend to focus a lot on the technology, but what is the underlying data that is going into this technology?’

‘Even as we’re taking decisions around the continent on AI strategy and digital transformation strategy for Africa, the question is, what is the underpinning information that is going into these platforms and into the knowledge we’re creating?’

Richer then moved on to media literacy, asking how people are being informed while those who are being trained to enter the media industry are exposed to education curricula that is effectively ‘old tech in a new environment’. Her view is media education needs to ‘be more forward thinking and modern’.

Directly after, Richer said, ‘We talk about media viability, but for media personalities, the media industry, there is no business aspect’. Her understanding was that would-be journalists focus too much on politics and too little on developmental journalism ‘that defines a lot of what it is we are talking about’.

She gave the example of reporting on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which, she said, ‘gets less than 2% coverage by African media’. Thereafter, Richer addressed intellectual property law and failures in protecting copyright, saying journalists may not even be aware that there is a legal department in their media houses.

Titus agreed with her that journalists need to take control of their own data and for that, more use of data scientists would be important, too, ‘but we need funding and we need the African Union to step up and consider how we deal with policies and engage in sharing our infrastructure’.

Richer said that in 2023, the AU Member States’ ministers of information and technology decided Members should pursue tech platforms in search of the equitable sharing of revenue. ‘Some companies have already started that – sometimes through tax, sometimes through registration – but what are they doing about sharing businesses on the continent?’

Her example was social media: ‘You may have a million followers in Africa, but you will be paid significantly less [than someone with far fewer] in the Global North, so what does that mean for equitable revenue sharing?’

Richer’s position then shifted to the ‘speed of implementation’ and the ‘need to separate private media and public media’, where private media has a struggle with declining advertising while public media has a struggle with political independence.

In terms of the latter, it may ‘have guaranteed funding, so [its issue] would not [really be about] revenue, but political capture’. ‘How do we make sure we don’t conflate the two?’

Anriette Esterhysen vaunted a view on political journalism being ‘bad for development’, saying that was not true – it is ‘bad politics’ that is the problem.

‘Until we have independent, free media, nothing we do around this will bear fruit. Until we have an end to internet shutdowns and an understanding of media freedom from all African States, no media initiatives emanating from the AU are going to make any difference.’

Further, Esterhysen said ‘it would be fantastic if the AU Commission did what the the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights has done’ with its Resolution 620 on Data Access and Human Rights (which urges States to ensure transparent data practices and default public disclosure of data held by public bodies and private actors where there's public interest).

‘As for AFCTFA,’ she said, ‘if they were more transparent and consultative, journalists would write more. Blaming the media for lack of discourse is not sufficient’. Her suggestion was that Member States and intergovernmental institutions should be more ‘encouraging’ in this regard.





Titus agreed. She said journalism ‘is still sidelined’, and asked why that is. Esterhysen replied that there is ‘a lack of information and public engagement on the one hand and either a genuine lack of awareness but often fear’ on the other. Some Member States within the AU fear free speech and free media.

Esterhysen then pointed to the Global Digital Compact (GDC), negotiated by 193 Member States of the UN and informed by global consultations, which is ‘very good’ in terms of its language on media diversity. But when it came to the Zero Draft of the Resolutions of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) meeting in July 2025, there was ‘one tiny paragraph on media and the safety of journalists’.

She said while it was ‘good that it’s there’, it was not connected to harnessing technology for social development.

The GDC is part of the Pact for the Future, discussed and adopted at the UN Summit of the Future in September 2024. The GDC and the WSIS are complementary.

Titus then remarked on how even ‘getting that one reference in there took substantial lobbying’. Esterhysen agreed, thanking UNESCO for its presence in the Zero Draft at all. (The WSIS+20 review will be considered at a UN General Assembly meeting in December 2025.)

Titus introduced Jesper Højberg by commenting how, that morning, Norway was engaging the UK on an arrangement to build warships worth billions – ‘so we can see where the priorities are now’.

This is the geopolitics that has to be considered with shrinking donor support for media and growing platform capture. She asked Højberg what structural and financial shifts are needed to keep public interest media alive and vibrant, especially in conflict areas.

He said when it comes to financing and putting pressure on donor governments to fund public media, ‘it’s about how we are organised’. ‘It takes a very long perspective to make sure that change happens’, but he had ‘optimism’ that the M20 could assist with an ‘action framework’.

The EU is ‘restricted by political priorities at the moment’, Højberg said, ‘but it is still possible to influence them’. However, he strongly felt that ‘the urge should come from organised efforts like the M20’, and referred to the Media Viability Manifesto which is an example of the ‘type of global action framework’ which could bring the issues ‘down to a level where business people can see the importance of investing in independent media’.

The assessment of International Media Support, globally, is that ‘donor support is falling, but blended finance models are also used to ensure and guarantee investment from private sector investors, which is also a local opportunity’.

Further, ‘the strength of the M20 is that it’s based on constituencies’.

‘In India, it’s Siddarth but it’s not only Siddarth. He’s also part of a very strong constituency in India of digital publishers. Also in South Africa and Brazil, Izak and Paul are part of constituencies. And one thing we have learnt is that we cannot just address these issues at a global level. Governments haven’t delivered. We have to deliver as media and civic actors in this field.’

Titus concurred, saying ‘an important gathering’ such as the M20 ‘shouldn’t be the creation of just another institution – it should look at opportunities to best propel our cause’.

Højberg remarked that there are ‘lots of different alliances coming together to do different things’, but ‘we are not working effectively to get these efforts connected and that’s where we need to start’. He reflected on how IFPIM has started a fund in South Africa, and that this is happening elsewhere, but not as effectively as it should be happening.

‘We have some solutions and have to trust them and move forward with them ... We have a lot of policy regulations and frameworks, and we need to move to a level where we act, and we can only do that at a national level.’

Titus turned to the phrase, ‘information integrity’, which has gained traction, ‘but can also be used to justify repression in how some governments apply it’. She asked, ‘how do we reclaim it





and root it in values and public interest media?’

Esterhysen agreed. ‘We need to appropriate and reclaim it because it is open to abuse – and is being abused’.

She referred to Varajanathan’s earlier discussion about the pros and cons of the regulation of platforms, and how we are ‘moving away from the idea that non-liability is an essential ingredient for freedom of expression’.

‘We know that it’s more complicated than that, so talking with governments and having a conversation about how to regulate risk’ is not sufficient, especially in the Global South. There needs to be a collaboration ‘between the digital rights movement, the media sustainability movement and the global human rights movement’.

Esterhysen posited that ‘the geopolitical shift happening at the moment is an opportunity’.

‘When African digital rights organisations got funding via the US State Department, this made it impossible for them to engage their governments at home because there was an immediate assumption that it’s a US agenda.

‘That meant, we couldn’t have a serious conversation about why we need [such] rights in our country.’

Højberg again emphasised the importance of ‘getting organised’, saying ‘we need to accept the agenda has moved, and the Global South needs to be prominently upfront’.

He referred to how the foreign ministers in the EU ‘could not make a joint statement or even decide to respond on the crisis in Gaza’, revealing how ‘they are dysfunctional in many ways’. ‘Strategically, we must be strong as national constituencies. The M20 can be that strategic vision.’

Titus asked Richer how smaller markets could respond when there is so much fragmentation, and many people in media are simply fighting to put out their next edition.

Richer replied by first expressing her disappointment at Esterhysen’s comments about the AU Commission ‘learning from’ the ACHPR, ‘as it is an AU judicial body ... we are one, along with the Court and the AU Advisory Board on Corruption – you can never separate us’.

Then she moved onto answering Titus’s question, taking it broader: ‘We have to ask, how much is opinion and how much is news [nowadays, in media] ... opinion is propagated as news and when the public see media taking political sides, it’s like a divide and rule.’

To her mind, that allows politicians ‘to play the media, because when media takes sides, it’s easy to disrupt their models’.

Her view was that when journalists ‘advocate for everybody, their own rights will also be protected’, and that one of the reasons why ‘citizen journalism is growing, is that citizens are taking over the role of civic education as their view is that “even the media is not speaking for me”.

Richer fervently advocated for revenue to be ‘generated in our markets’; platforms ‘must invest in this continent ... media must produce content where people are consuming it’ in order for digital revenues to ‘come back to us’.



Leslie Richer spoke from an African Union perspective in the second session





Esterhysen offered final thoughts to emphasise how activists in our spaces need to connect.

She said the BRICS statement on AI is ‘very progressive’, but when it comes to the GDC, we may find ‘the [UN] General Assembly passes a Resolution on an AI scientific panel and an AI dialogue, but these will be taking place on the one hand at the Telecommunications Union and on the other, in New York at an SDGs process ‘.

‘[Right now], we’re either digital rights activists or media sustainability people, and if discourse and debate on how to regulate AI is taking place where we are not going to be present, we’ll have fragmentation.

‘If Member States are not making sufficient connections between media sustainability, human rights, social and economic development and justice, and climate change, we are going to have to do that, which is why we need a cross- sector cross-discipline [approach].’



PANEL 3: INFORMATION INTEGRITY

M20 POLICY BRIEFS 1 AND 3

Framing the discussion



Commissioner Ourveena Geereesha Topsy-Sonoo

African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa

Moderator: Churchill Otieno, President of The Africa Editors Forum



Panellists



Katharina Zuegel

Policy Manager at the Forum on Information and Democracy



Phathiswa Magopeni

Chairperson of the Network of Independent Media Councils in Africa and Executive Director of the Press Council of South Africa



Nomsa Chabeli

Group Chief Executive Officer of the SABC and a member of the Global Task Force for Public Media



Giovana Fleck

Policy Advisor Media & Human Rights, RNW Media

M20 Policy Brief 1: Information Integrity is a vital public good – and it's at risk

M20 Policy Brief 3: Information integrity on climate change must be an integral pillar of the G20 agenda



Framing the discussion

Commissioner Ourveena Geereesha Topsy-Sonoo

The Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) was unable to be present in person.

She began her recorded address by explaining the work of the African Commission, which is a quasi-judicial body. Established by the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights to promote and protect human rights on the African continent, the Commission also has as its mandate individual complaints.

It examines country reports and makes recommendations on these. It also monitors human rights across the continent and can issue letters of appeal, letters of recommendation and also adopts resolutions.

The Commissioner said that 'the themes of information integrity, media viability and the role of the media and journalism' particularly speak to her as the Special Rapporteur.

'If we start from the basis that information is a public good and that independent, free, credible information is vital to any society, it allows for informed decision making and democratic participation.' But the future is uncertain.

'Passwords, information integrity, news media and civic space landscapes are shrinking,' said the Commissioner.

'The world is facing many competing threats such as climate change, inequalities as well as dangerous debt levels. There's been a rise in low quality false information. AI threats and deceptive deep fakes are matters that must be urgently addressed.'

And then she addressed the G20 directly, saying it 'needs to be aware that there are efforts that need to be made to support information and integrity, and quite frankly, not enough is being done so far'.

She said 'information integrity' and 'fake news' are, among others, 'terms that have evolved over the years' to assist us in addressing the problems of disinformation and misinformation.

'Information integrity refers to information security and data protection,' she explained. 'The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) states that information integrity is determined by the accuracy, consistency and reliability of information, content, processes and systems to maintain a healthy information ecosystem.'

'The UN's Global Principles for Information Integrity refer to it as a condition and a code where freedom of information is fully enjoyed and where accurate, reliable information, free from discrimination and hate, is available to all in an open, inclusive way.'

The Commissioner noted that 'when you have principles, and there is information integrity and a pluralistic space that champions human rights, you have peaceful societies and a sustainable future'.

'Therefore, the whole media community should be reliable, safe and secure ... and journalists and platforms, which are vectors of information, should remain free and independent', but this means of course that 'media stakeholders have to maintain high professional standards – and be able to express themselves freely'.

She noted that the ACHPR has passed four Resolutions that address these kinds of issues.

'Resolution 620 was passed in November 2024, and it is on the promotion and harnessing of data access as a tool for advancing human rights and sustainable development in the digital age.

'Then we have Resolution 630 dealing with monitoring technology companies in respect of our duty to maintain information integrity for independent fact checking.

'Resolution 631 deals with the assessment of public interest content in this digital era. And finally, Resolution 639, passed in July 2025, mandates me to update the Model Law on Access





to Information.’

The Commissioner said there have been widespread consultations on these Resolutions, except for Resolution 639, ‘and in the coming week, there will be the drafting of the Guidelines for Resolution 602.’

She turned then to speak about AI, which ‘has many positive aspects’. But ‘low value AI is constantly being inserted and reinserted in the information system [which is why] there is a need to recognise the value of credible data – and that credible data has a price’.

‘It took time and effort to be produced, so it cannot be just be taken by companies [without consent]. Taking of news content by AI companies needs to be addressed.’ She motivated for quality data produced by news media.

‘Another major issue is deep fakes where, again, the contribution of credible content companies should be recognised. News media can debunk [fakes].’

The Commissioner urged the recognition of media compensation ‘as key to information integrity’.

Equally, ‘acknowledging intellectual property around AI’, which ‘requires bargaining between digital companies and the news industry’. Further, there should be ‘active measures to support journalists in all their day-to-day activities’.

She closed her address by wishing the M20 ‘very fruitful deliberations’.

Panel summary

Moderator Churchill Otieno began the session by introducing Katharina Zuegel, representing the Forum on Information and Democracy, which has been supporting the M20 initiative since its inception.

Zuegel said it was ‘really great to see where this has taken us’ even as she sought to focus on this occasion on ‘one specific angle of information integrity – notably, on climate change and other environmental issues, which really has to be at the heart of our conversation’.

‘[This topic] illustrates well why information integrity should be so central to G20. Climate change, energy transitions and environmental issues have been topics of the G20 and the negotiations for a long time. But policymakers are [increasingly] targeting public opinion and exploiting divisions in society and polarisations to create doubt and to distort facts with the objective to stop our [activism].

‘Their tactics have evolved. Originally, it was focused on denying the existence of climate change. Nowadays it has moved to creating doubts about specific policy solutions, with the objective to halt climate change action. And we can see this has had some success.’

Zuegel said some political leaders are even shifting away from their country’s international commitments although the negotiations at the G20 are ‘very tough on this topic’. Meanwhile, ‘there are attacks against journalists, particularly against environmental journalists who are harassed, and some are killed for doing their work’.

‘Their work is [becoming] more important, especially in countries where there [is extractive industry]’, where there can be a ‘whole industry of disinformation.’

Zuegel said changing this trajectory requires a variety of actions, ranging from platform regulation to tackling the problem of the absence of big tech accountability, and from promoting transparency to fostering sustainability.

Further, ‘there is a need to create access to reliable information on environmental issues; a need to find sustainable mechanisms to support capacity on environmental reporting, and to support the existence of these kind of journalists’.

To that end, it is also critical to ‘work with media and educators about the meaning of climate change and biodiversity, and how can we protect it’. Public interest media has a particular role





to 'educate the general population and to build resilience on these topics'.

Zuegel's view is that we need 'more global perspectives and that's where G20 can step in as we require international solidarity, where Brazil, the European Union, African countries, can work together to push for accountability'.

'There are things that can be done at the level of nation states, but also by individual media organisations, to promote literacy on these topics.'

Otieno then moved onto panellist Phathiswa Magopeni, who occupies different roles in the African media ecosystem, most prominently at the Summit as the chairperson of the Network of Independent Media Councils in Africa (NIMCA).

Otieno noted that the word, 'regulation', 'is not very popular with some stakeholders, [especially] official platforms, 'but from the lens of press councils or media councils, how effective are councils in that space?'

Magopeni said the role of media councils is 'underestimated' as they represent the interests of the public'. Yet, there is a need to 'deal with the fears of the public that media actors could take over press councils and address the interests of the media instead of the interests of the public'.

Magopeni said the Summit ought to appeal to the G20 and beyond for space for regulatory bodies such as media councils.

'This is about making sure that media rights are not eroded by authoritarian regimes and also that there's protection of a free flow of information which is critical for the public – access to credible information.'

'There's a need for self regulation,' but if you add public representatives [into the picture by way of a media council], 'it's even better because then you have more safeguards'. That said, 'we need to think about how our regulatory environment is configured because in some cases, the public doesn't even know where to go to complain because of different arrangements that we have in the system.'

Magopeni's view is that 'if we were to take a content- based approach to regulating the media, it's would make it easy to develop two codes – one that talks to journalistic content that is transversal, another that covers problems with general content'.

In that situation, 'we will not have the conversation around mechanisms, we will have the conversation around content because the public comes to us [about] content and not [about] the mechanisms we use to disseminate it'.

Otieno asked whether there are 'places where aspects of this are working in an exemplary way, in terms of regulating content?'

'Belgium has a council for ethical journalism,' Magopeni replied. 'That's exactly what it does. So it doesn't deal with either print or broadcast or digital platforms. It regulates all journalistic content that falls within that category. Even within the African continent, Zambia is an example of that with their newly-launched structure.'

'I think Kenya has a similar approach. It doesn't have fragmented regulation, it just has one code that applies to all but depending on content.'

Otieno then turned to Nomsa Chabeli, asking, 'Is there differentiated role for public media [in this sense] – journalism as a public good'. 'Is there a differential drawn for public media as you look at information integrity investments?'

'When we talk about information integrity, what we are really interrogating is credibility and trust – two values no media house, no public broadcaster, can afford to compromise on.

'And if you look at the context of M20 Policy Briefs 1 and 3 [which relate to this session on Information Integrity], what we ask ourselves is: who is threatening information integrity and why does information integrity matter?'

Information integrity is a 'vital public good, which is currently at risk if you just listen to





discussions that have taken place at this Summit today'. Chabeli asked: 'What is the unique responsibility we have as public broadcasters? How do we mitigate the struggle against the challenges that information integrity is facing currently.'

'Unfortunately, we find ourselves more and more having to deal with competing priorities, where our biggest challenge is funding and it does compromise our public mandate.'

Further, said Chabeli, 'we exist in a world where it's all about clicks, it's all about swiping left, and there's more immediacy when it comes to that'. 'What's important for us is still to be about providing independent, credible, universally accessible information that really anchors democratic discourse.'

'Public trust is the foundation that counters misleading narratives that exist, globally. And our role is amplified in the digital era. We still have infrastructure.'

We must still have credible journalists. We must still bring in the talent. We must still have fact-checking. We must still have alliances with scientific research.

'But in the digital era, that is not a requirement for producing. It's more about reach. It's more about immediacy and it's not about ensuring that whatever has been brought out there is credible, resilient and committed to truth.'

Chabeli said public broadcasters 'are also threatened ... living under a threatened environment', and asked, 'how do we ensure that, going forward, we build public broadcasting that is resilient to the changes that are taking place'.

She acknowledged there is 'some potential there between independence and funding', and that 'opportunities exist'. Publics broadcasters have 'to try and surmount' their challenges amid digital platforms which are competing for the same advertising revenue, and thus, 'we really require a regulatory framework that is very clear on funding models for the public broadcaster'.

Chabeli sees a vital role for governments in 'building that integrity, building that resilience, because if you look at a developing nation like South Africa and you take away the public broadcaster, the majority of our people will not have access to information that is important'.

Giovana Fleck then spoke about the work which RNW Media has done on the ground with journalists, which is why she wished to centre their challenges in this conversation. She was emphatic about the importance of the dangers they face.

'I think it's very, very important, especially when we talk about pressing issues such as economic crises, that journalists are losing their lives reporting.' She gave the example of British journalist Dom Phillips and Bruno Pereira, a Brazilian Indigenous expert, who were both killed in the Amazon in June 2022 while 'trying to undercover how the Amazon is being illegally dismantled for profit'.

She pointed to 'voices and perspectives being structurally marginalised', going against 'the original promise of the Internet, which was that we would get this beautiful amount of access towards so many perspectives that we would be connected'.

Instead, we see 'disconnectivity and meaningful engagement captured by interests that only set us apart'.

'Digital spaces have basically grouped together into a black box: algorithms that govern how we see, how we interact and how we engage with information around the world.'

Fleck put it to the delegates that it is 'useful to think about and break down information integrity into what we can actually do', asking, 'What is it worth it to invest in?'

In her view, this would be transparency and provenance of information, how information is shared, tech standards for literacy, engage education, meaningful literacy, privacy and safety, trustworthy information ecosystems centred inside of community, local knowledge as an antidote.

Following Fleck's discussion, the topic moved to the floor for questions, and Richard Gingras – chair of the board at Village Media in the United States and the Center for News, Technology &





Innovation in the US, and formerly Google's longtime vice president for news – took the microphone first.

He said he had 'struggled around the world with the challenge of addressing these highly nuanced issues, specifically misinformation and disinformation, with public policy '.

'Let's also be clear where that information is coming from.

It's coming out of governments and our major news outlets.'

'The challenge of managing it seems to me is this: I look at Section 16 of the South African Constitution and the word, 'truth', isn't there and it's not in the European Charter, nor is it in the First Amendment, inappropriately so. So I think the challenge to us when we talk about trying to manage disinformation with public policy is how do we address it with the appropriate level of detail that it is actually actionable. '

Gingras's view is that 'most of us believe in free expression only to the point that it is expression that we agree with, and that's the challenge in our world today'.

So, 'that's my question to you: how do we apply public policy in a fashion that is actionable, that doesn't apply to just a specific segment like platforms'. 'What does it say about the media? What does it say about the politicians?'

William Baloyi from the Government Information and Communications Services (GCIS) in South Africa made reference to Gingras's comments from the floor.

'We have seen an emergence of the weaponisation of the media. It might be business, it might be an interested group, it might be civil society, it might be governments. And that gives the media a tagline of "silver assassin".'

'If you want to commit whatever you want to commit, firstly brief the media. Pay them and unleash them. Then they will make sure that everything is correct. So that's why now you see the emergence of podcast. As an alternative for getting what is actually the truth.'

Fleck responded first by saying that, 'for a long time there was an expectation [tech] companies would self-regulate and I think that's completely off the table at this moment'.

Further, it is not guaranteed that 'the values that are guiding the discussions here are also part of the values of the companies'. 'The way things have been structured, designed and engineered is with profit in mind ... There are proposals out there that centre human rights, and human rights by design. I think that's a good way to look at a proposition of how new technologies could be developed.'

To that end, Fleck pointed delegates to Brazilian researcher Mariana Valenti's upcoming book *Online Misogyny in Brazil: Law, Internet Governance and the Struggle for Gender Justice* (Springer, publication in December 2025).

'[Valenti] says, pretty simply, racism, say, didn't invent harms, but it did invent a way to monetise it and to make money out of it. I think that's a good way to look through the lens of what regulation can do.

'Demonetise those things to start with. On another hand, there's a lot out there that is put inside algorithms, black boxes, that we don't have control over. I think it's useful for us to look at open protocols, for example, rethink the engineering, who says how we get access to information'.

Otieno then asked Zuegel if she had thoughts on this in terms of the power dynamics.

She said 'the aim is not for regulation of content'. 'We don't want a ministry of truth either in government or platforms, but we need structural changes that make it possible that fact-based journalism and a diversity of viewpoints can get maximum visibility.'

'What are these structural approaches on the one hand that can be linked to algorithms and what kind of accounts are they promoting?'

Zuegel spoke about the European Media Freedom Act that requires 'special treatment of





media’ – ‘media must be identified as media, they have to be part of press councils, they have to adhere to self-regulatory standards’.

‘One way is to establish standards that enable us to identify which are the media that work according to journalistic standards. That means having mechanisms in place to correct wrong information that has been published and to elevate access to this content.

‘This should be linked to what kind of media should get funding and which kind of funding.’

Further, ‘there's the big issue of understanding why certain content gets spread and how it impacts society, and that means we need access to data about what's happening on platforms’. ‘Why do people consume what kind of information? [If we can] study that independently, better policies could be developed on these issues.’

Magopeni responded to the questions from the floor saying that media councils generally are uniquely positioned to balance independence with accountability.

‘Regardless of what happens in the digital world, media ethics don't change, and this is what is going to sustain the credibility of the information system where news media is concerned because we still have to do verification, which is the backbone of journalism.’

Otieno then asked for responses to Baloyi’s statement which, he said, ‘in a different context might certainly make a headline: “Pay them and unleash them” ’.

‘I think Mr Baloyi makes a very interesting statement,’ responded Chabeli. ‘The reality though is if we link it back to Policy Brief 3, one of the recommendations is safeguarding media freedoms and freedom of expression. As public broadcasters, information integrity can’t be used as a weapon to punish independent voices or reward captured media.

‘But we've seen the dangers this can present if we are not paying attention and ensuring the media environment is free of undue pressure, whether commercial or political.

‘It’s very important that journalism is not undermined and that investigative journalism is not compromised.’

In her view, one of the greatest safeguards against this is ‘alliances across the media industry and different engagement groups ... that really will assist us in building the resilience that we need to build’.



Moderator Churchill Otieno, Nomsa Chabeli, Phathiswa Magopeni, Katharina Zuegel and Giovana Fleck



PANEL 4: MEDIA VIABILITY M20 POLICY BRIEFS 6 AND 8

Framing the discussion



Paula Fray

Competition Commission's Media and Digital Platforms Market Inquiry

Moderator: Kate Skinner Association of Independent Publishers



Panellists



Laura Moore

Head of research and evaluation at DW Akademie and the author of the *Media Viability Manifesto*



Khadija Patel

Head of Programmes for the International Fund for Public Interest Media



Styli Charalambous

Co-founder and CEO of *Daily Maverick*



Goolam Ballim

B20 South Africa leader Standard Bank Group Chief Economist

M20 Policy Brief 6: Fuelling democracy and growth through viable media – an urgent G20 call to action

M20 Policy Brief 8: The vanishing lifeline — Policy solutions for media funding challenges



Framing the discussion Paula Fray

Paula Fray took to the M20 podium some 40 years after she first entered the newsroom at *The Star* in Johannesburg. She said that, at the time, it was 'transitioning to computers' and those who were really in the forefront 'had a beeper'.

'In this 40 years, I think the amount of change I see has just accelerated in the last five. And I expect it to continue to accelerate. In fact, in September 2020, when we launched the Competition Commission's Inquiry, AI was one of the focus areas we were looking at. But the AI that we face today is not the AI we were thinking about when we started that process.

'The change we've seen as a result of AI has been exponential.'

She explained that the Competition Commission of South Africa launched the Media and Digital Platforms Market Inquiry 'in response to the financial strain the South African media was facing due to digitalisation'. Its specificities were to 'look at the role of social media, the role of search and the impact of AI and the dominance of active systems'.

Fray said the Commission saw the media in South Africa as 'playing a crucial role in upholding the Constitutional right to freedom of expression' which is provided for in the Bill of Rights. Therefore, it is important to prioritise a strong, independent media. She noted that this is not necessarily 'what is happening in the rest of the world'.

That was also one of the reason why it was vital to have the South African national broadcaster, the SABC, participate as it was regarded as 'crucial for diversity and plurality'.

The Inquiry has been a long process, and Fray said it had to ensure there was sufficient consultation; 'that people are allowed to comment and we are as rigorous as possible'. This was also why public hearings took place 'quite early'.

Reflecting on the hearings, Fray said, 'I think we all knew that we [the media] were fragile and that that media was facing difficult times at the public hearings', but even so, she said the hearings were 'quite an eye opener, just in terms of how the media were experiencing the process'.

'The stories we heard in terms of the decline in print, the revenue crisis, were quite dramatic. And I would urge you, that if you haven't read the provisional report or the subsequent submissions, that you do go to the Competition Commission and download it. It is a really detailed body of work ... and really will inform your thoughts about policy.'

Fray was, however, clear it was not the Commission's job through the Inquiry 'to find a business model for media: that's media's job'. Yet developing new models is more critical than ever, as the Commission's own survey showed.

'It's no surprise to everyone in this room, whether South African or African or from the rest of the globe, that there's been a huge shift online in how people get their news.'

'Eighty-seven percent of South Africans get their news online, most of them via mobile, and social media is a primary news source. Young people actually prefer it. And so, you can already see the disadvantages we have there.'

Fray said one of the big issues is, What is the value of news to social media? She pointed to the high numbers of small media in South Africa who use a Facebook page for their publishing, and who depend on search.

She further noted how important it is to find solutions that are useful for Africa as the online value exchange reflects an imbalance which favours foreign news sources and English content, despite the fact that 'a lot of South Africans consume information in the vernacular'.

'When it came to AI, we acknowledged [at the time] that no African media had signed agreements with AI companies.

'We know that media bargaining has been attempted globally ... and what we really wanted to be able to do is to ensure that whatever we did benefited media across the board, mainstream



communities, and then of course the public broadcaster.'

Fray said the Inquiry is 'seeking a win-win solution', with the infrastructure of media distribution a critical factor. 'Within our proposed remedies is a call to restore referral traffic, for example, in order to support South African news media and reduce the bias towards foreign platforms.'

Fray pointed out that there is a recommendation from the Inquiry for a compensation fund, 'but it is limited, it is a three- to five-year suggestion, and the reason for that is that if all of these other revenues are put in place, then the media would need to be able to generate the income from the boost they get in terms of traffic'.

Further, the Inquiry would like platforms to be held accountable and to help funded fact checking, but 'these are all provisional recommendations'. She added that 'business and government also have a role to play ... and it's really important [to remember] that we're talking about policy'.



Paula Fray (far right) on the panel with moderator Kate Skinner (far left), and panellists Goolam Ballim, Styli Charalambous, Khadija Patel and Laura Moore

Tax breaks and committed advertising spending are crucial, with 'government already having made a commitment of 30% to community media'.

'Business needs to be aggressively in media', and confirm the role of media in a democracy. Also, said Fray, 'we need to be having these conversations with our audiences who must understand what role we play beyond simply breaking news'.

'Until our audiences love us in the good times and the bad, we're really going to struggle with media sustainability because understanding the value of media is part of our challenge.

'Thus, the Competition Commission is the start of the process. It's not the end, but there's a lot of work to be done in terms of media viability. The Competition Commission is only a small component. The provisional report makes it quite clear that that there is a business model that needs to be fixed and it's for the media to be looking at that ... Media must build sustainable models for a future shaped by AI.'



Summary

Moderator Kate Skinner began the panel discussion emphasising Fray's points on business and government and also 'the key issue around audiences and making sure that we as media are thinking about our audiences'.

Laura Moore shed light on the Media Viability Manifesto which was developed under the aegis of the DW Akademie, Germany's leading media development organisation.

Moore also represented the Media Viability Manifesto core group, which is not only a product of the DW Akademie but also International Media Support (IMS), UNESCO and the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD).

Moore said 'we have to be quite self critical in that there have been two problems in the way that we have been trying to tackle the financials'.

'In the past years, first, we have been focusing very strongly on individual media outlets, you know – supporting them with innovation, revenue diversification and business management skills and so on. And this is all very important. But it also became very clear that it's not enough, and that this crisis is a systemic, not only the responsibility of media outlets.

'The second is there has been a lack of clarity when it comes to terms and concepts. The strategies weren't really clear, they were fragmented, they were reactive, they were often short-term. So we didn't really have the results we were hoping for.

'Today, we all know that the crisis affects all of us, all over the world and for a lot of different actors – and that it needs a coordinated and systemic approach involving different stakeholders.'

Moore said 'around two years ago, 13 international media support organisations came together, gathered input from over 150 people from 55 countries, and developed the Manifesto, which ... is the first common framework for joint action ... in the field or to improve media viability'.

It provides 'a common understanding or definitions of what media viability means, it is the first sector-wide strategy with very clear goals and very detailed steps of how to get there, and it has an overview of existing tools and approaches'.

Moore said journalism is in an 'economic crisis', requiring 'business and technical support' – 'the kind of quite traditional media development work of practitioner training, mentoring, analytical assessment tools to improve business management skills, advancing innovation and so on'.



Further, it requires ‘coalitions and partnerships ... peer-to- peer and cross-regional networking’, ‘evidence-based advocacy’, such as ‘supporting fair compensation policies and proposal strategy proposals’, and ‘research and insights’ which would include knowledge of audience behaviour, market factors, industry trends and business model questions.

Today the Manifesto is backed by 22 international and media support organisations organised around three working groups.

Making recommendations to the M20, Moore suggested establishing ‘multi-stakeholder national commissions or task forces to investigate media viability questions ... and propose actionable solutions at policy level’.

‘Spend at least 0.4.1% of GDP on direct domestic support for public interest media, and spend at least 1% of official development assistance (ODA) on direct international support for public interest media,’ said Moore, urging those gathered to concentrate on what is ‘effective and relevant’.

She was in agreement around the ‘full transparency of government advertising’ and ‘fairness, equity and how and to whom it is allocated’. At the same time, developing ‘competition and platform policies that enable journalism to thrive in digital markets’, matters.

Moore pointed delegates to UNESCO’s Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms.

Skinner endorsed the ‘power and potential’ which journalism funds bring, especially ‘in a moment of protracted crisis, not just in South Africa but internationally’.

Khadija Patel said ‘what happens over the next six to 12 months really will determine the future of public interest media, not just in this country but around the world’.

‘Many things are out of our control, but some things are in our control, and one of the things that I think is in our control is the ability to be more collaborative, to establish patterns of working together towards common purposes and common goals.’

Patel explained that IFPIM is a multilateral fund, that ‘an expression of multilateralism is working together towards a common good, bringing diverse actors together towards a common good’.

‘But we have also increasingly been working with initiatives around the world that seek to create funds, whether they’re national funds for media or regional funds and they are all in various stages of infancy.’

But Patel endorsed Miraglia’s position that this is ‘not the solution – you certainly don’t think that national funds or regional funds are the business model, the answer, but I think that they are one mechanism worth exploring’.

‘Therefore, we’re putting quite a bit of energy into trying to understand how they might function and how they might function in diverse markets.’

She said IFPIM is currently working on ‘the very first national fund’, in Sierra Leone, ‘and my colleague, who’s our Africa Director, Makmid Kamara, is Sierra Leonean, so he is much better able to tell you about more recent developments about the fund there’.

Patel pointed out, however, that Sierra Leone ‘is a very different ecosystem’ to South Africa, for example.

‘Advertising has never quite served the media market there, whereas South Africa’s traditional business model, the advertising-driven business model, has basically broken down, and the public interest prerogative of news media is contracting quite visibly in many of the established news brands.’

Patel noted that ‘we’re also seeing [that] thwarted in some of the new initiatives’.

IFPIM’s work meanwhile continues across the world. For example, it is supporting a study for a regional fund across the Arabic-speaking world in Indonesia where it has partners.

‘National funds represent recognition that it’s not business as usual. We must bring in various





competing interests to support the idea that information is a public good and that we have to protect the independence of all the actors within that ecosystem.'

Funds are also one mechanism which is flourishing in that donors 'are able to [see their money] protected, which allows funding to be distributed to small publishers ... at a good pace'.

Patel drew attention to 'the rate of the emergency', saying she was 'astounded at the level of urgency' she had seen at Association of Independent Publishers meetings she had attended, as 'many [small media] organisations are likely to not exist within a couple of months'.

She made reference to 'one of the most amazing things you'll see at this time of the year in South African gardens – the Weaver bird, which constantly has to rebuild its nest until it appeals to its partner'. She said, 'it's quite marvellous watching that act of rebuilding and rebuilding until they get it right'.

Patel's point was that, 'whether it's national funds, whether it's taxation policy ... we have to try everything'.

Skinner then turned to Styli Charalambous, who has expanded upon his position as CEO of *Daily Maverick* to developing possible strategies through alliances for the media sector in South Africa.

'Look at the root cause of the sustainability crisis,' said Charalambous. 'There's so many different variables going on at the same time that it's quite hard to get down to the fundamentals of what is driving it.'

'[Out of] the Government Communications Working Group, to come up with a revitalisation policy, we developed a statement [to attempt to] get to the nuts and bolts [and a] starting point.

'We talk a lot about journalism being a public good and that's great. But the problem is it's not funded like other public goods, and until we address that problem, all these efforts are going to be like plasters on gaping words.

'That's the starting point, and we need to frame it properly. Then we can then go into "how do we fix this", given that what we are experiencing is a market failure.'

Charalambous turned to fellow panellist, B20 South Africa leader Goolam Ballim, to request and query, 'if I get this wrong, please shut me up, but a truism of a public good is, if it's not supported by public funding, it's going to be under- provided'.

'Also calling what we're going through a "market failure". We don't speak about that enough, right? We don't, because once we name something properly, then we can respond to it accordingly.

'It's important we do this, because you can only repair market failure in two ways. One is through philanthropy, which we know there's certainly not enough of it around the world. The second is through policy, so it has to be a policy intervention.'

Charalambous noted that 'a lot of people in this room would like to think that the market failure of journalism, public interest journalism, started with the disruption by big tech, but that's not the case.

He referred to Free Press co-founders Robert W McChesney and John Nichols's book, *The Death and Life of American Journalism*, in which the writers assess why journalism is in crisis, why conventional analysis and solutions are failing and how 'enlightened and massive state subsidies are the necessary and only credible solution'.

Charalambous said it showed that even 'as economic activity and media company profits were increasing, the number of journalists in newsrooms was not keeping pace'. 'What was happening,' he explained, 'was that profit was being extracted and the variable cost of journalists and reporters was being used as a way to do that'.

Hence, 'the failing of the market started way back then and it became much worse later on'.

'There's a fundamental friction between the profit motive and public interest journalism. [We need] policy that can support journalism as a public good that incentivises the right kinds of





behaviours, and which doesn't compromise editorial independence and the rewarding of bad actors'.

Charalambous noted that 'investigative journalism, more language based journalism can [also] be supported with good policy intervention 'that can be designed well, that takes at 1% of GDP and then breaks it down'.

He later responded to queries from the floor about 'actionable' outcomes, saying that the recommendations from the industry out of the Government Communications Working Group are 'high level', aimed to 'create immediate benefits as well as long-term benefits in terms of navigating stakeholders'. Charalambous was clear that 'we are going to be guided by GCIS colleagues through this process'.

Ballim began his address by speaking to the ways media delivery has accelerated, using the example of the cost of a television set and moving onto the race for attention in the sector today.

'The ways in which media has been received represent the surge to democratise it. At the same time, journalism is under siege as we see news of one form or another on a proliferation of screens, meaning the manner in which you can reach an audience has expanded to the point where media itself needs to consider what it requires for viability.'

In Ballim's view, media viability issues may need to be considered against the backdrop of concentrated costs and concentrated finance.

Further, it's vital to consider 'the surging population since the 1960s in particular, the essence being that some 8 billion people now inhabit the planet. And this is why I'm referring to the supply side – the hardware – as well as the demand side, in terms of individuals being able to receive information'.

Ballim reminded delegates that massive amounts of content are thus being put out there.

'Media is competing with the influencers who have something to say, albeit not necessarily rigorously, not necessarily legitimately and not necessarily addressing a discerning audience.'

The Internet was invented in 1989, 'and it has been largely unconstrained – anyone anywhere could access the Internet provided you had the hardware and an Internet connection'.

'There was no weaponisation of the Internet, unlike the weaponisation now of technology, microchips, access to AI. And there's a battle with regard to AI because nations are pursuing primacy in these technologies for superior ascendancy.'

Developing upon some of the analyses already spoken at the Summit, Ballim said the description of a 'polycrisis' for media is apt, in a manner of speaking, 'given the enormity of structural change taking place in the world, the enormity for the need for understanding to grasp these multiple tectonic changes'.

Responding to comments from the floor and Charalambous's replies, Ballim said he agrees with the latter's remarks about 'the public good', but believes it 'needs to be fleshed out a little bit more'.

'I would say that the Rule of Law is the only reason an economy grows; it is the only reason an economy can sustain itself and achieve sustainable prosperity.

'That sounds a little bit rich, because in Economics 101, you learn it's about capital and innovation. But no matter how much capital and innovation you put into an economy, in the absence of the Rule of Law, it cannot sustainably grow.

'It would be like building a house on quicksand.'

'Big firms will be inclined to put money behind the Rule of Law ... firms will look at so-called "bang for their buck", but not everybody offers the level of rigour [it takes to be] a guardrail in society and therefore a genuine "public good".'

Skinner gave concluding remarks, especially about funds for journalism and media, such as the Digital News Transformation Fund, a R114-million initiative by Google in partnership with the



Association of Independent Publishers. Administered independently, its first call for applications opened in August 2025.

‘What is powerful about funds,’ said Skinner, ‘is that the private sector puts funding in with an understanding that there is a Board in place that has a very clear grasp of journalism, the public good, and they, the private sector, can play a role in terms of ensuring that.

‘And, yes, the broader industry gets funded, but [our plan is that] individual publications and media entities get funded too.

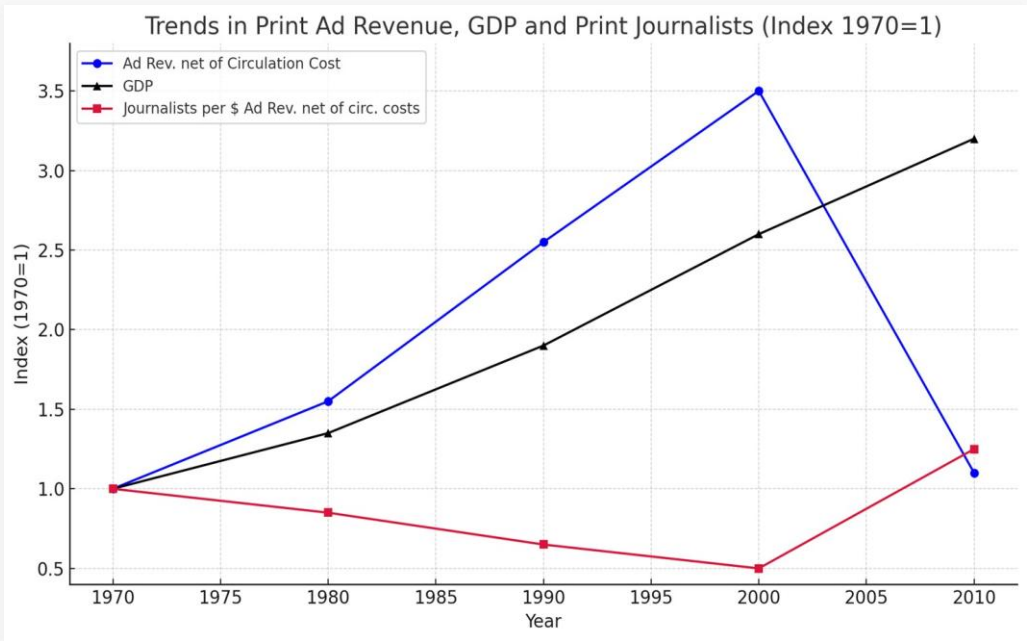
‘Hopefully, the private sector will get a greater sense that it’s a fund they can trust; that the Board, the people working in the fund, understand the overall ecosystem.’

M20 Annexures from Policy Briefs 6 and 8.

The table below relates to media viability: M20 Policy Briefs 6 and 8
It was described by Laura Moore, head of research and evaluation at DW Akademie and the author of the *Media Viability Manifesto*



The graph below relates to media viability:
M20 Policy Briefs 6 and 8
It was described by Styli Charalambous, co-founder and CEO of *Daily Maverick*. He explained that the graph is from a research report from which he sought to show a fundamental friction between profit motive and public interest journalism. Consequently, the need to support the latter as a public good.



PANEL 5: AI AND NEWS MEDIA M20

POLICY BRIEF 4

Framing the discussion



Zara Schroeder

Researcher at Research ICT Africa

Moderator:

Juliet Nanfuka

Research and communications officer at the Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa



Panellists



Guilherme Canela

Director of UNESCO's Division for Digital Inclusion and Policies and Digital Transformation



Amy Mitchell

Founding executive director of the Center for News, Technology & Innovation



Athandiwe Saba

AI Newsroom Initiative Lead at Code for Africa



Paul McNally

Founding director of Develop AI and founder of Develop Audio



Emmanuel Dogbevi

Deputy chairperson of The Africa Editors Forum; Ghanaian investigative journalist

M20 Policy Brief 4: Power, Politics, and Economics – AI, Africa and the G20



Framing the discussion Zara Schroeder

‘Media integrity isn’t just about ethics; it’s about power, politics, and economic balance, especially now, as AI reshapes everything around us.’

These were among the essential meanings speaker Zara Schroeder put to Summit delegates on one of the key themes. Journalism is indeed a public good, and ‘independent media ecosystems are essential democratic infrastructure which provide oversight that ensures AI is deployed in ways that strengthen, not weaken, public accountability’.

Without such oversight, AI risks accelerating disinformation, undermining journalism’s economic base, and consolidating the power of a handful of global tech firms.

To this end, she drew attention to Policy Brief 4, which she co-authored with Dr Scott Timcke. The Policy Brief identifies core challenges that ‘demand G20 attention’:

Power concentration and democratic oversight, in which a few tech giants dominate AI development, wielding immense influence without adequate accountability.

Africa’s structural position in the AI economy which sees African workers often contributing low-wage labour to global AI systems, while African data, languages and contexts remain underrepresented in AI models.

Media capacity and coverage gaps where journalism frequently treats AI as a ‘tech story’ rather than a governance issue, leaving critical implications for democracy and development underexplored.

Schroeder said these dynamics reinforce dependencies that limit Africa’s agency over its own digital future.

In South Africa, 84% of adults see digital technology as important for staying informed, and 46% believe AI could positively impact journalism.

Journalists themselves are optimistic with 87% expressing confidence in new media technologies, yet the sector faces shrinking advertising revenues and increasing competition from platforms that control distribution and advertising markets.

AI compounds this squeeze: tools that scrape content or redirect traffic reduce media viability, while disinformation campaigns erode public trust.’

Schroeder argued that AI governance must be anchored in rights, inclusion and accountability. Algorithmic transparency is critical. There should be impact assessments for public-sector AI. Media viability should be supported through fair platform revenue-sharing, digital taxes and independent funding streams for investigative journalism.

Protecting media freedom and embedding independent journalism in AI oversight frameworks are vital elements of reframing AI as a question of power and politics, rather than simply technology. This would ‘shift the conversation toward equity, sovereignty, and democratic resilience’.

Schroeder said, ‘AI governance is about agency and accountability’. ‘Algorithms shape our stories, our food, our safety. Left unchecked, they undermine democracy. But there is hope. Whether confronting political authority or algorithmic systems, independent journalism stands as a critical balance of power, to ensure we build a society that doesn’t just work for a few — but serves us all.’

She put it that the G20 in South Africa has ‘a historic opportunity to chart a path toward inclusive, media-integral AI governance, and ensuring that African voices, and African media, are not marginal but central to global AI debates, will be critical to building an equitable digital future’.





Panel Summary

Moderator Juliet Nanfuka opened the discussions with UNESCO's Guilherme Canela, asking how the organisation is adapting its strategies and initiatives to keep pace with shifts in a media landscape affected by AI, and anticipate future disruptions.

Canela noted that 2025 marks UNESCO's 80th anniversary, and that 'everything we did in these eight decades is actually directly related to your question'.

He posed this, then, to the delegates: 'How will we be able to continue protecting and promoting those 30 plus Articles in the Universal Declaration [regardless of] AI, quantum or whatever strange thing someone will invent tomorrow? If we miss this perspective, we are going to lose the battle.'

In part, Canela raised this angle first because, 'in the last six months, I've been on several panels with leaders of the industry, and they are advocating, not all of them, but some of them, that there is a dichotomy between innovation and protection of human rights.'

He quickly asserted: 'This is false. This is an absurdity.'

'This is the new lobby trying to avoid good governance towards these companies. Real innovation is how we protect human rights; that it is not a footnote, that human rights are an obstacle for [these companies] in how to make money.'

Canela said when we go back to the principles, 'it is indeed very different, and what is happening from a technology point of view is that it is reshaping the very idea of freedom of expression'.

It's not a new concept. 'Since The Greeks, we've very much connected with the idea of the public sphere, and the idea of having a public sphere is the idea that you have a plurality even if it is a oligopoly, you can go there and have discussions.'

'But the way the AI story is being framed, people are moving to ask the question, or whatever is the question, to only one short part.

'This is really privatising the public sphere in a dimension such as we have never seen. If this is going to evolve in a positive manner, no one knows, or a very bad negative manner, no one knows.

'But we need to have this discussion, because if we reshape the public sphere, the idea of freedom of expression has a very different logic.'

Canela reminded delegates of a crucial aspect of respecting freedom of expression, as raised by delegate Richard Gingras speaking from the floor in response to a previous panel. This is about accepting to disagree

'It's about the things we don't really agree on at all, even the things we are disgusted about.

'One parameter could be,' and Canela pointed to his tie, 'this is a tie [but] if you think this is a cat, the entire logic' even of freedom of expression, is disrupted is disrupted. He was pointed to how, with AI and deep fakes, 'people might think this is a cat'.

'So, from a conceptual point of view, and hence a governance point of view, this is a real big difference from the past.'

Yet he wanted to be clear: 'The attack is not the technology. it's an attack against the accountability system.'

'When television came about, people were saying journalism would have to reinvent itself, but no one was saying journalism is not needed anymore - that it's the enemy of the people.

'With these new technologies, it's not about journalism needing to be reinvented. It's an attack [because] journalism is an essential institution for our democracies, meaning that [if these companies wish to harm that], the accountability systems must be – and are being – attacked.'

He pointed to that fact that 'the attack isn't only against journalists – it is against independent





judges and against independent regulators’.

‘The entire functions of our accountability systems are being attacked because [those behind it] realise that if they don't cripple the accountability systems, they can't transform [our societies] in real life.’

Technology can help, or not, to solve this problem. It's ‘not about the content, it's about the processes’.

‘It's not that this particular post is disinformation. It's about the entire structure and processes that are there.’

Canela then turned to the notion that ‘information is a public good’, which, he noted, was ‘born on this continent [Africa]’, and is ‘an essential driver for us to move ahead’. He expressed a fervent hope that the M20 would ‘strengthen multilateral discussions about these issues’.

Nanfuka re-emphasised the point in the Policy Brief about ‘power and the need to challenge it’ – ‘challenge it in the way it's manifesting in a very sneaky undercurrent’ – as the very ‘underbelly’ of some of the topics being discussed at the Summit.

‘We need to be aware of the power dynamics and power assumptions. When we're seeing a push or a shift from demanding accountability, [we have to ask] what are the strategies being pursued?’

Amy Mitchell spoke next, first sharing insights from a report which the Center for Technology and Innovation (CNTI), which she launched in 2022, has released, looking into what it means to do journalism in the age of AI.

‘This was an international survey of journalists we conducted with journalism member organisations around the world. We accompanied that with a four-country public survey – focus groups as well as a quantitative, representative survey – in the US, South Africa, Brazil and Australia.

‘We also held four convenings around the world on the topic. And more recently, we launched an international working research group on AI and news (of which Zara Schroeder and Scott Timcke of Research ICT Africa are a part) to be able to help make sense for people of what the research tells us.’

Mitchell noted the ‘juxtaposition of the focus of attention that technology has in newsrooms compared with the role it is playing in the production of journalism today’.

How does technology empower journalists? Does it strengthen the case for the importance of the role of journalism in society?

Mitchell said some 90%-plus of journalists surveyed said technology very important – ‘to communicate with sources, to deliver news, to do their work’. ‘And we saw very similar numbers when we asked the public about their consumption of news.’

‘But we saw a very different picture in terms of the use of AI in news. We got only about a half in terms of attention in the newsroom which comes below how journalists manage disinformation and their engagement with government.

‘Journalists want newsrooms to be paying more attention to that topic, both as to how it helps journalism and how it harms them.’

The outcome derived is that, ‘Too often, tech is seen and treated in newsrooms as an aside – something to respond to, to react to, and potentially, maybe, take one tool and try and apply it to a current product you're already using or a format you've been having for a long time.

‘This is as opposed to dedicating resources [to understanding it] and building ongoing, strong, deep facility and ongoing learning to develop expertise in tech.

‘When that happens, it can really end up working for journalists. It doesn't mean that, instead of all of the other important discussions about how to determine the value of content in the





digital space.’

The extrapolation is that, when journalists ‘feel confident about [their] use of technology, it not only helps produce the best most relevant content for your business success, it builds public relevance and it helps you compete against disinformation and other digital content’.

Further, it ‘helps journalists cover the story of AI and technology’, leading to ‘deeper questioning, strengthening sources and vantage points, and building stronger safety and security skills in a newsroom’.

Mitchell pointed particularly to the ‘importance of the public role, that public awareness, of the value and importance of journalism, and more specifically, an independent news media’. This is ‘freedom of expression writ large – something we really need to focus and build on’.

‘If we were going to make the case for the importance of journalism, the public voice in that is very loud, and we’ve seen again and again that when the public voice is there, it gets heard and recognised.’

A major point out of this reflects on the M20’s work and ways for journalists to use technology to resonate with the public. This is especially important for those hesitant to use it, believing this will further diminish their relationship with the public.

But, if it feels like something a journalist can vouch for, demonstrating they are against false information, that could make a shift.

‘Public engagement ranks top, and until the public has a better understanding of the nuances of journalism itself, it’s very difficult to communicate the value of your use of technology – and journalists know this.’

Interestingly, Mitchell said, ‘when we asked about [journalists’] use of tech, there is much higher reporting in Global Majority countries than we see in the Global North’. Not only that, ‘but there is also a much more positive attitude about the benefits and the role it can play to help journalists do their work and create an informed public’.

There were other elements – such as having strong technology with consistent access, fake news policies around the world, media remuneration and AI and legislation which doesn’t mention journalism.

But for Mitchell, it was vital that the M20 communicate to the G20 that States should ‘have journalism and independent news media front of mind whether it is directly in the policy room or not’.

Nanfuka agreed, also in how ‘we challenge ourselves in how we communicate the value of journalism – something that in current times seems so abstract, when everybody is calling themselves a journalist when they have a TikTok channel’.

‘Policies work differently in various parts of the continent. We need to dig deep into policy gaps.’

She then turned to Athandiwe Saba, to ask how information gaps are being filled for newsrooms, relative to AI, from the point of view of Code 4 Africa which works extensively on the continent, engaging with CSOs, the journalist community and in the tech space where ‘different sectors are trying to work together’.

‘A lot of our research and what we see shows that the media industry has gone through three major transformations over the past 15 years,’ said Saba.

‘The first was the internet, and the media industry was quite taken aback. There will be people here at the M20 who can attest to the fear they had at this first big transformation in information landscape.

‘Then came the social media transformation, which took us by surprise.

‘When we finally started being aware, we saw that there was lots happening outside of our newsrooms which had a direct impact on our newsrooms, how we tell stories, who we tell





stories to, our publishing models, how we get paid for the work that we do, should we be getting paid ...’

Saba said there was ‘lots of fear around social media transformation’, and ‘we gave up a lot of our power during that time to big tech’.

‘We didn’t interrogate it. We didn’t interrogate where the money was going. We didn’t interrogate where it was coming from, how we were engaging it, what they were doing with the audiences that we traditionally spoke to.’

Now, she said, ‘we are in what I believe is the third big transformation and it’s tech driven, and we are again as a media industry, as an information landscape as well, afraid of what has come – and now we need to try and understand what is our place’.

She speculated about how much Research and Development is being done around this in the media space as ‘a lot of the conversation that’s coming up is us being the public good’, but ‘these are conversations we should have been having a while ago’.

‘When we’re talking about artificial intelligence, we understand we should not be driven by the hype, but what does it mean for the information environment.

‘Also, when we talk about AI, what are we talking about? Generative? Predictive? Robotic? Trends and analysis? Big Data? Which part of AI are we talking about?’

Saba explained that Code 4 Africa’s team does a lot of investigations into the information environment on the continent where it seeks to find out what are the conversations that are happening – in any language.

In their experience, there are ‘bad actors trying to destabilise governments – we’ve seen that happening in the SAHEL, we know the countries that are pushing the disinformation’.

‘Within the disinformation space, the Code 4 Africa team uses and builds tools based on AI, which are able to track conversations and pick up trends that, manually, you would not be able to do.’

Saba gave the example of the impossibility of ‘sifting through 2 million retweets about the United Nations having to leave Senegal “because they are infiltrating their elections” ‘.

‘There is no proof of that, but who is pushing it?’

Code 4 Africa has ‘tools we use to create a healthy information environment, so it’s not all doom and gloom about AI, and there are ways of assisting and creating that healthier environment where disinformation is not able to destabilise our governments’.

Another example would be tools to track whether documents and similar materials ‘are legitimate or not cote’, which benefit big tech and certain bad actors.

But, Saba asked: ‘How are journalists in small newsrooms able to understand how an LLM is put together? What kind of information is fed into it? These journalists are not tech people, they’re not data people, not scientists, not any of these, but we want them to report critically on these topics.’

Her suggestion is the same methods that allowed journalists to eventually understand climate change should be applied.

‘There was a concerted effort to educate and to make sure journalists understood what it means and the impact it will have. Journalists and media industries do not have an understanding of the power dynamics and what is at play when we’re talking about big tech.’

‘But why is it important anyway? When you’re talking to ordinary people, they don’t understand, so how so we get journalists to do that and grasp the implications and the bottom line’

Saba said she would ‘like to push for there being a concerted effort to educate journalists to understand it is a power issue’. ‘In the same way we created business desks, political desks,





technology desks should also be there so journalists are able to do the work we need them to do to give society a better understanding’.

There are positive interventions taking place around AI. ‘In Equatorial Guinea, the African Union is creating conversations about the effects of AI on society. In Kenya, young people are developing AI tools for rural communities.’

‘There is a space there for innovation but what does it look like? It’s where we partner up – think tanks, universities, CSOs are all in different spaces [where innovation is] happening but it’s not connected.

‘There are resources in university spaces that media houses could make use of. All these spaces are talking about the exact same problems and we all want solutions, but we’re not collaborating and innovating outside our silos.’

Nanfuka moved then to Paul McNally, whose Develop IA explores uses and applications of AI in newsrooms. She asked what policy and regulatory frameworks he believed are necessary to strengthen journalism and not deepen dependencies on technology.

McNally, who coaches newsrooms mostly in Africa and Asia, said many newsrooms are either ‘keeping their head in the sand and not using AI or they are way overly-reliant on these tools’. That said, he said he was ‘very pro journalists using these kinds of tech and experimenting and building their own tools’, but is against overreliance.

He remarked that the media had ‘spent 20 years trying to get our audiences to use these platforms to view our content and now we’re being told that we must use tools from the same companies to build our journalism’. ‘It’s comical in the worst way.’

Reflecting on Policy Brief 4, Mc Nally said it was not ideal to have media become ‘too reliant on these tools to the point that there is a chilling effect around reporting and holding [the companies behind them] to account’.

He gave the example of coaching digital strategy at the *Pondoland Times*, a newsroom-based community paper in South Africa’s Eastern Cape province, ‘with a wonderful trio of guys and freelancers who put out a newspaper every Friday and do it themselves’.

The editor is ‘very gung ho about AI’, and the team has boosted revenue through the Google Ads API using a small tool they built. McNally applauded their efforts, but inasmuch as ‘people need to experiment’, ‘especially small newsrooms and special investigative units’, it is a risk to ‘build your whole business model on a particular cost each time you use it and then those costs go up’.

McNally noted that when costs have gone up like this, media and startups which built their businesses off the back of this have gone bankrupt. Huge AI companies are not yet making money, but and ‘trying to tease us into this process’ as they try to ‘win their own AI wars’.

‘Innovation is not chasing the next shiny object. People see AI as a silver bullet to solve their business model problems, but there is a tool apocalypse coming.’

McNally warned against assumptions about ‘casual traffic discovering your content through Google search’.

‘There’s this idea that people will search for things and come to our news site, but that’s going, and we don’t want to spend the next two years scraping around for cents to be found in LLM search. If we thought Google ads was bad, this is going to be much worse.’

His advice is to think about what would happen if casual traffic left, and rather concentrate on monetising a dedicated audience.

Meanwhile, on the subject of copyright, there have been events which affect our views of LLMs. Anthropic for instance had ‘settled an insane lawsuit for books they scraped and it was found they did it though piracy ... that’s how they built Claude, their LLM’. The ‘details of how much they will have to pay out have yet to be disclosed but it could be a trillion dollars, so they settled’.



‘From an African perspective, we need to think are we ready for that? Are we ready to go to court for this, because there is a copyright issue brewing in every region of content, and we don’t only want top Western authors and Disney suing these things. We also want to galvanise around that.’

Finally, McNally said he ‘implored those who are experimenting with AI for a small newsroom, to think about building their own small LM for their own office’.

‘That is a route. There is a path to that.’

Nanfuka then introduced journalist Emmanuel Dogbevi to talk to the uncertainty many newsrooms are facing in the wake of the increased reliance on AI.

He agreed: ‘We’ve all been caught by surprise.’

‘We all knew technology was going to evolve, but not at this pace, in this moment, where things are crucial for media organisations from every angle – ad revenue, democratic spaces shrinking, freedom of expression suffering all over the world.’

‘Not a single day passes and you would hear that a journalist has been arrested in one African country or another. and then there is the emergence of AI. How do you protect yourself? How do you remain relevant?’

While he felt there was no truth to the argument that ‘people won’t listen to news anymore’, we also ‘don’t know the full extent to which AI is going to go, because it’s still developing’.

‘AI is a tool. You can use it positively or you can use it negatively. Every kitchen has a knife, and it’s a tool for preparing nice meals and it’s also a weapon. AI is the same.’

To his mind, ‘newsrooms and news media organisations have to sit down and reflect deeply on how to make themselves relevant amid enormous challenges and the explosion of AI’.

‘Are you going to be able to keep your job in the next five, six, 10 years? Are our policies conducive?’

Dogbevi, who owns a media organisation, also trains journalists, and he said there is great concern among them.

‘They ask: is journalism going to die? And my answer is, it won’t, because it has principles. An influencer may come and give information or news, but it’s not the same way as when a journalists presents, because the process of putting that news out involves guidelines and rules.’

‘Our newsrooms need to offer continuous training, education ... we need to educate ourselves to stay abreast with the issues.’

‘We need to learn how newsrooms can operate with AI in such a way that they control the tool so that news media does not sit back and let AI tell the story.’



Moderator Juliet Nanfuka, Paul McNally, Amy Mitchell, Guilherme Canela, Emmanuel Dogbevi and Zara Schroeder



Thandi **Smith**

Head of programmes,
Media Monitoring Africa

In closing the first day's session, Thandi Smith said it was 'important to take a minute to reflect on some of the achievements for today'.

'We've dealt with three of the key issues the Summit plans to address, being information integrity, media viability, and AI and media.' Further, 'in our keynote address from our Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies, we had [his] commitment ... to support and endorse the Declaration and take it to forward to the relevant stakeholders'.

Smith confirmed the drafting team, who are members of the M20 Organising Committee, have 'been busy with the Declaration for about two weeks, receiving many inputs from local and international organisations'. Throughout the course of the first day's sessions, the team had received more comments and inputs.

'We would like to acknowledge that a few organisations, such as the International Press Institute, registered some concerns which were discussed and addressed within the drafting team.' She invited other organisations with any concerns or further issues to raise these.

In addition, Smith encouraged delegates to 'engage in creating pieces that support the Declaration or comment on your positions around issues raised in in the Declarations'.



M20 SUMMIT, DAY 2

Panel 6 on journalists and truth under attack, reflecting on [M20 Policy Brief 7](#)

Quickfire inputs on key issues for the information ecosystem, reflecting on [M20 Policy Briefs 2 and 5](#)

Fireside discussion on media and digital platforms

Ambassadors' Roundtable: Shaping information integrity for a digital future

M20 Summit Declaration and next steps

PANEL 6: JOURNALISTS AND TRUTH UNDER ATTACK M20 POLICY BRIEF 7

Moderator **Katy Katopodis**

Chair of the South African National Editors' Forum journalism wellness and safety committee



Speakers



Dr Glenda Daniels

Secretary General of the South African National Editors' Forum

**Hopewell
Chin'ono**

Multi-award- winning documentary filmmaker and international journalist



Panellists



**Yemisi
Akinbobola**

Co-founder of African Women in Media



Professor Dario Milo

Member of the High Level Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom



Tshepo Madlingozi

Commissioner at the South African Human Rights Commission



**Anja Wehler-
Schoeck**

International editor at the German newspaper, Tagesspiegel



Nicole Fritz

Executive Director of the Campaign for Free Expression, and Free Expression Legal Network

M20 Policy Brief 7: Escalating assaults on journalists' safety are a threat to democracy



Framing the discussion Dr Glenda Daniels

Dr Daniels began her address with a forceful question around AI: will it help, or will it make it worse? The question referred to the condition of women journalists and others in the field whose perceived vulnerabilities have opened them to private message violence, surveillance and professional threats.

Daniels even called it ‘telling lies’, using the words, ‘fake news’, this being when belligerent elements ‘try to intimidate women out of journalism altogether’.

She pointed to new research which shows that women are ‘already leaving the newsroom due to this kind of violence against them’, saying it was ‘not a linear progression’. Undoubtedly, she said, ‘we have to ask the G20 how they can come on board to being an end to the situation.’

Cybermisogyny is, of course, nothing new. ‘It has been going on for a while,’ said Daniels, ‘but it is increasing with more and more people having access to social media, and less and less regulation in the tech space, the social media space’.

She quoted research that shows that at least 70% of women have experienced online and offline threats, asking, ‘Whose responsibility is all this?’, and reflecting that she was likely addressing a room of the converted at the Summit.

‘I believe we should be doing something more than [what we, here, are currently doing]. It’s also the responsibility of traditional and big tech media organisations, as well as governments and civil societies to take action.

‘We need early warning systems. These need to be developed to monitor and prevent online escalation.

‘Research on cyberbullying in south Africa indicates that currently only NGOs in the civil society space are making a noise’ in this regard. She pointed especially to the work of M20 co-convenors, the South African National Editors’ Forum (Sanef) and Media Monitoring Africa, ‘but we need more’.

‘If the point of the M20 is to hold each of us accountable, pressure also needs to be applied to local media companies. They shouldn’t be let off the hook.’

Daniels drew the delegates’ attention to the work of Sanef’s Safety and Wellness Committee and said ‘there are some companies doing something, but not all’. Further, it should be made known more widely that ‘there are criminal consequences for things that are happening to journalists in this space’.

‘Intercontinental and global collaborations are needed to tackle the big culprits, like X and Elon Musk.’ She reminded delegates that X was the only relevant big tech company ‘which didn’t pitch for hearings at the Competition Commission’s Media and Digital Platforms Market Inquiry [in 2024 and 2025]’.

‘There are big culprits here that get away with murder. It may not be by their own hand, but murder happens in spaces that they tend to allow.’

Daniels said there needs to be ‘adoption of a more inclusive approach for law enforcement’ and vaunted that agencies such as some of those in the room could engage, to employ ‘gender-sensitive skills to tackle these spaces’.

‘Governments have said to us, “it’s not our area, go to the police”, and when you go to the police, they don’t understand it. There is an awareness and conscientisation that needs to happen across the board. This, I can’t emphasise enough.’

To that end, she pointed to the M2 Declaration in which there is a call on all governments ‘to strengthen and enhance these efforts ... to foster an environment that allows professionals to carry on their work’.





Daniels referred to the ongoing relevance of the 2012 UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists, and called on governments to ‘respond to the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists on 2 November’.

She urged global support for international mechanisms, saying ‘this [violence] is happening everywhere in different spaces [in our sector], and we must get everyone on board’ to be a bulwark against ‘what William Bird calls “the dark forces”’.

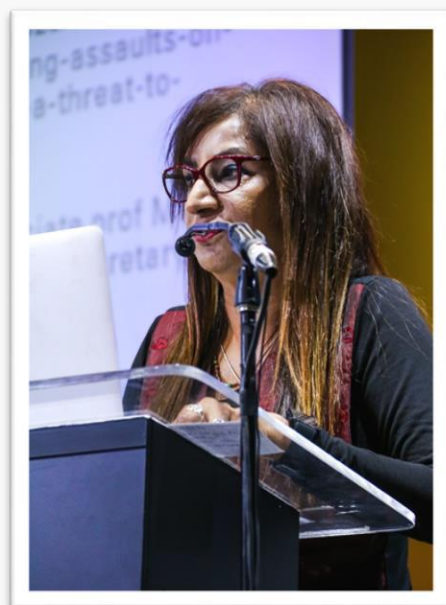
Daniels said ‘nobody wants policing of all speech’, but noted that when she had taken cases of cybermisogyny of journalists to the police, they had asked, ‘Under what crime does this fall ... what kind of crime is this?’.

‘So that is instructive. The laws are not there and in place for these kinds of protections. It is therefore imperative that there is a G20 joint campaign between civil society, progressive, democratic governments, media and international agencies’ to combat physical and emotional violence against journalists, especially against women journalists.

Daniels urged for ‘alliances’ to grow, but also for ‘safety measures and safety equipment’ and for news organisations to develop gender awareness protocols.

‘Thanks to all of us here,’ she said, ‘we can win this war for media integrity, sustainability and equality, and we should be inspired by our activism and this initiative’.

Dr Glenda Daniels



Framing the discussion Hopewell Chin’ono

Chin’ono began with context. Zimbabwe, then Rhodesia, was the first country alongside Nigeria to have television in sub-Saharan Africa. That was in 1960. Now, he said, Zimbabwe is the ‘only country of any significance in Africa which has only one TV station run by the state’.

Further, the Nigerian government gave the post-liberation Zimbabwe government \$5-million in 1980 to buy the holdings of South African publishing group, Argus, as ‘a gift to Zimbabweans’. ‘But, as you might expect, the Zimbabwean government controlled it up to this day, and used it as [white Rhodesian Prime Minister) Ian Smith had done – as a propaganda tool.’

Chin’ono said ‘sad to say, nobody buys those newspapers [today].. they are distributed free to government workers’.

This was fated when private media took off in Zimbabwe and ‘the first one out on the streets was outselling government papers 1 to 3’. This was until 2001 when the printing press of the private *Daily News* was ‘bombed by members of the Zimbabwean military’, and from that day ‘there is only one daily newspaper, run by the state’.





Chin'ono explained that it was back in 1998 that a death knell sounded after 'our government went into the [Democratic Republic of Congo] without requiring [President Robert] Mugabe to go to Parliament and state his case' [to be able to do this]. The *Los Angeles Times* and other outlets reported that 'an estimated 6 000 Zimbabwean soldiers were deployed in support of Congolese President Laurent Kabila, who was at war with rebels backed by neighbouring Rwanda and Uganda'.

Chin'ono says Mugabe sent in troops 'because there were personal gains – gold, diamonds – and members of the military and political elites were making millions of dollars'.

Against that backdrop, the private *The Sunday Standard* newspaper published a story about a failed coup attempt the following year.

Writer Ray Choto and editor Mark Chavunduka were arrested and severely tortured, 'Mark.. so badly that after few years, he passed away.'

Chin'ono graduated in 1994 and then went to the UK to further his studies. He returned to Zimbabwe in the wake of the violent farm invasions when all foreign correspondents had been kicked out. Commissioned by the BBC to cover events, and doing so without the required state accreditation, Chin'ono became a target for the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) which did everything in its power to damage his reputation.

'It got so bad that the British government had to issue a statement through its embassy in Harare saying [allegations that I was a criminal on the run from justice in the UK] were not true, and that I could go in and out of Britain without arrest as I had not committed any crime.

'But a whole state machinery was fighting me.'

Chin'ono then won a British government scholarship to study documentary film in the UK 'and then the public was told I was working for the [UK clandestinely]'

After he got his Masters, he went back to Zimbabwe where the government there again denied him the right to practise as a journalist, but he continued anyway, covering Zimbabwe's post-election violence first with ITV News which later went into a deal with South African broadcaster, enca.

After pursuing his studies at Harvard when he was named a Nieman Fellow, Chin'ono then worked for the *New York Times*, among others, and decided to go into documentary- making full-time.

Among his achievements was the groundbreaking film, *State of Mind*, which looked at mental illness on the African continent.

'That's when the coup happened [removing Mugabe from power] and we thought things were going to change, but [President] Emmerson Mnangagwa is just the crude version of what Mugabe was. Mnangagwa would just arrest you and lock you up, not concoct a law [to be able to do so] as Mugabe did.'

After attempts to silence his journalism during a COVID-19 looting scandal, Chin'ono turned his social media platforms into actual media platforms and published information he was getting while he continued investigating underground. Ultimately he was arrested, filming those events throughout, and jailed for 45 days until the pressure of South African hip-hop artist AKA's #zimbabwelivesmatter campaign led to him and others being released.

Coverage of a Zimbabwe gold smuggling syndicate saw him arrested again and placed in solitary confinement.

'The tragedy of my arrest was not that I was subjected to indignities but that it still affects media today because young [Zimbabwean] journalists are scared to write these stories,' he says. 'You won't find them writing about Mnangagwa stealing public funds, looting government land.'

He refers to the arrests in 2025 of journalists Blessed Mhlanga and Faith Zaba.

'It's important for us as media practitioners to have solidarity. A lot of journalists in African countries cannot speak or write freely and, unfortunately, governments which could influence





that sort of change are not doing so. This includes South Africa.'

Chin'ono has now moved to South Africa on a 'retirement visa', following a warning in 2024 from a senior South African government official of his latest imminent arrest in his home country.

'Dictatorships are so scared of the truth,' he says. 'They'll use technology to unleash trolls and fake news sites to attack your family and make incredulous claims when the only power they have left is to try and tarnish you.'

Panel Summary

Yemisi Akinbobola spoke about the unwillingness to talk about internal threats against women in media organisations, these including sexual harassment, gender pay gaps and culturally gendered roles to which women in media are assigned.

She spoke about the 'triple jeopardy' affecting women in media which was reinforced during research she did in Ethiopia which expanded to other countries. Media organisations have lost high numbers of women journalists through sexual threats as part of the wider harassment they experience, many not only leaving their organisations but the industry as a whole.

Organisations did not have a gender policy, and there was a general lack of awareness and preparedness. But the disappearance of women from the sector also means there are perspectives missing in the content audiences receive.

Akinbobola asked, 'How can you have information integrity if you're missing 50% of population?'

Her view is that states are instrumental in shifting these internal industry challenges which have consequential outcomes for reception of information by the public.

Akinbobola's research across the continent shows that the experiences of women journalists are 'pretty much the same also in terms of family status': 'You are damned if you have a child and damned If you don't.'

Anya Wehler-Schoeck said she spoke 'from a situation of great privilege working as a journalist in Europe and especially in Germany as the struggles that Hopewell and Yemisi described are at the moment beyond our imagination'.

'But I want to emphasise that Europe can serve as a warning. We've achieved a lot of great things when it comes to freedoms in Europe such as building the European Union after World War 2, but we see enormous backsliding if we look at the numbers Reporters Without Borders put out this year [in its World Press Freedom Index].

'More than half of EU states performed more poorly this year.. states like Hungary, Italy, Slovakia, to name a few.

'The EU has of course gone to great efforts to put together frameworks to protect transparency in media especially in terms of ownership, safety of journalists and the economic safety of media, but it depends on Member States as to how they will implement these.

'We're also seeing threats from the outside, such as from the Trump administration. The EU did a deal with the US on tariffs but there were threats of additional tariffs from the US on Europe regarding the Digital Markets Act and the Digital Services Act to regulate platforms.

'There were even threats to individually sanction people in governments who might implement these regulations.'

Wehler-Schoeck said social media can be a tool in documenting the harassment journalists experience, 'but the threats to regulating platforms are obvious'.

Katy Katopodis spoke about a 'chilling' tweet sent to *Daily Maverick* suggesting it 'watch its back as we may be coming to your newsroom', asking the Human Rights Commission's Tshepo Madlingozi about the impact of this.





He explained that although the HRC is 'not a regulator but an independent constitutional body', it 'does get involved when we receive complaints or equality is threatened', with a tweet like that holding the potential to incite violence.

'We cannot ignore this. As we always say, we have to balance freedom of expression with the need to respect dignity, promote equality and not incite harm.'

Madlingozi noted that there is no proscription for tweets, and drew attention to the HRC's Social Media Charter published five years ago which encourages responsible online engagement and has been cited in court cases while also being adopted at universities and rolled out at schools.

Dario Milo said 'sometimes quite unfamiliar laws are being weaponised' against journalists around the world, and cited the case of Nobel laureate, the Filipino-American journalist Maria Ressa, who 'not only faces [threats of] classic defamation-type violations but claims of tax evasion, cyber libel and breaches of foreign funding law'.

Milo said it is as if 'the toolbox of the powerful across the world' includes finding laws they can weaponise.

'Closer to home, we find the [Protection from] Harassment Act, which should principally be used against stalkers, and data laws being invoked against journalists. The trend also shows that old laws are not necessarily dead and buried, but can also be used against the media.

'We've seen at least six Prior Restraint applications against the media by businessmen trying to stop reporting. We saw a cardiologist trying to stop *Carte Blanche* from running a story about medical negligence. There was the case of [convicted rapist] Thabo Bester trying to stop [a documentary from being aired], and former minister Malusi Gigaba trying to stop a programme which featured his ex-wife [talking about matters relating to him].

'We're seeing new challenges, new threats, weaponising sometimes esoteric laws.. dusting them off. Prior Restraint, for instance, affects free speech because [the intention is that you] never get an opportunity to get the truth out there.'

Milo said the media 'always win the cases against them', but 'that's not the point', as, once unleashed, these cases incur costs and affect reporting, not to mention exacting professional and emotional consequences.

Nicole Fritz spoke to the 'very troubling trend that women journalists face threats which mirror those in society'. But now this is intensified through an innovation like the [Protection from Harassment Act], which involves protection orders which can trigger arrests, being used against journalists.

'There's now a virtual plague of this being repurposed as a gagging order against journalists. We saw this in Limpopo against a freelancer reporting on corruption in the construction industry, and also against [high-profile journalist] Karyn Maughan, where a magistrate secured a protection order against her.

'What we know is that those who want to shackle the truth have every incentive as we move from centralised state capture to its fragmentation.'



QUICKFIRE INPUTS: KEY ISSUES FOR THE INFORMATION ECOSYSTEM M20 POLICY BRIEFS 2 AND 5

Moderator Zubeidah Kananu
President of the Kenya
Editors' Guild



Presenters



Ivana Bjelic Vucinic

Director of the International Media
Advisory and Policy Centre at the
Global Forum for Media Development



Amanda Strydom

Senior programme manager for CivicSignal.Africa and
engagement at Code for Africa



Dr MaryStella Simiyu

Africa Senior Legal Advocacy Officer at the International
Press Institute



Phakamile Madonsela

Public and media skills development manager at Media
Monitoring Africa



Presenter Manfred Kluge
Co-founder and first chairman of Initiative 18



M20 Policy Brief 2: AI's impact on the intellectual property rights of journalists

M20 Policy Brief 5: Children's rights should not be sidelined in the digital environment

Summary

Moderator Zubeidah Kananu, the President of the Kenya Editors Guild and a broadcast journalist from Kenya, began by noting how many editors from Kenya were in the room, attending the Summit. She drew attention to their challenges, calling these 'issues that cause me sleepless nights as a leader'.

She gave the example of facing a newsroom when you are 'not sure about whether you'll get paid' and 'not sure about how to sustain that newsroom.'

In addition, you are 'not sure about whether [the journalists will] get home safe, always looking over their shoulder to see who's watching or who is following them'. To this end, Kananu shared that she is herself 'one of the victims'.

'I've been trolled. I've been hurt. I've been called names just because of being vocal. I'm so happy we are having these conversations because, coming here, I thought these challenges were unique to Kenya, only to realise they cut across.'

Thus, Kananu's wish was that 'we are going to implement and we are going to work at home with tangible solutions to curb the challenges that we are facing as media in Africa'.

Ivana Bjelic Vucinic of the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD) began with empathy, saying 'media would like a quick fix – it's been in trouble for so many years – and as a media development and journalism support community, we would like to have a quicker solution'. But that is 'a mix of different approaches'.

The GFMD, 'the largest global community for media development and journalism support through collaboration and collective action', has a 'network of 216 members and partners, and creates, promotes and delivers policies and programmes to sustain journalism as a public good'.

Vucinic said she was proud that the Forum has '39 members from sub-Saharan Africa' and that the chair of its Steering committee is Zoe Titus from the Namibia Media Trust Foundation, with other members of the Steering Committee also emerging from this region.

She then described the fourth mapping of GFMD donor support programmes in several regions. This started with the Western Balkans, then the Levant, then Asia, and now sub-Saharan Africa, in which there are five focused countries – South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

'We have a unified methodology which we use across regions so that we can compare results. We use global databases, donor portals, implementation websites and recipient websites and the focus is to see our donor priorities to understand emerging trends.'

The final report will be published near the end of the 2025.

Vucinic said the GFMD methodology is to use publicly available data, and also reach out to members working on the ground who know what the funding looks like, what the current funding opportunities. 'Then we substitute or we complement the publicly available data with the data we get from the members.'

The result is 'a mix of bilateral, multilateral and philanthropic support, and there is a focus on combating misinformation, especially during the elections'.

Vucinic said 'there is the opportunity for more structural and long-term ODA (Official Development Assistance) funding for sustainability', with some funders already identified.

Preliminary findings show donor support is 'quite fragmented and there is a need for a stronger coordination among donors'. But, 'commitments remain under-documented'.





In some sub-Saharan areas, there is bilateral and EU support and some micro-grants related to journalism, with priorities being strengthening independent media, supporting civil society for freedom of expression and building resilience. Most prevalent is project-based funding which is regionally concentrated, and donor concentration.

Vucinic said this can make it difficult for media to plan for long-term capacity building.

There are also some areas that are not sufficiently supported – for example, community media viability or local language journalism or media information literacy. Support and defence against SLAPPS were also mentioned, as was newsroom mental health.

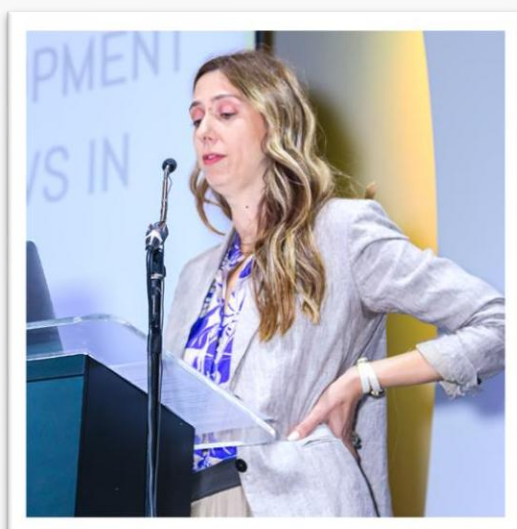
A lot of new funding is around digital rights advocacy.

What are the next steps? Vucinic said the aims include identifying key implementers and key donors as well as the broader context and thematic analysis, which guide policy and advocacy and strategic approach.

She noted that the print, digital, broadcasting, video, even the public broadcaster budgets in the sub-Saharan countries where GFMD is operating, are in the millions and billions. For example, Kenya's assessment for print and digital news media for 2025 is around \$170 million, while ODA is \$3m.

However, said Vucinic, ODA funding 'may mean a lifeline for small community media – it may be a difference for them to survive through the next stage and serve the public good'.

Ivana Bjelic Vucinic gave compelling insights into how funding works





Kananu noted that some donor-funded projects which elicit investigative journalism and which cost a lot of money, may broadcast or publish that story, and other platforms use the content without giving them their fair share.

She asked, 'How do we protect our IP as journalists? How do we protect our content? How do we protect what we worked so hard for?'

Amanda Strydom said one of the main concerns raised in the Briefing Paper was the uncompensated use of journalism content, which undermines and disincentivises the production of quality news products. This, in turn, devalues journalism and ultimately the integrity of information ecosystems.

She looked at some of the suggested solutions in the paper, which included global cooperation on a fixed fee, licensing with tech companies and robust copyright reinforcement.

'For Africa, our focus is specifically on preserving information integrity. One measure we use for this is our participation in the annual Reuters Digital News Report, which measures audience trust in media.

'The global average of trust in news media stands at a staggeringly low 40%. The three African countries we focus on – Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa – still show some hope, with averages of 68, 65 and 55%, respectively.

'But these same countries also show the highest concern when asked if they are worried about being able to tell what is real versus what is fake in news media, with the average in Africa at 73% compared to the global average of 46%.'

Strydom said 'the threat of false synthetic information and AI slop and the speed at which it can be created and shared, makes the continent particularly vulnerable to this rapid break in trust'.

But she said 'we don't think all is lost for Africa'. Code4Africa gives advice on synthetic media policies for safe use in newsrooms, as well as offers sandboxes to news content creators, 'recognising there isn't one solution to manage all of this'.

It has just launched a new tool called Robo Shield 'as we recognise the danger that big tech holds for information integrity'.

The tool allows new sites, activists and civic or civic tech organisations to defend their content from unauthorised AI scrapers, and to build a global network of news content creators with hard data to see exactly who is scraping the sites.

This year, C4A scanned around 3 500 South African information sites and found that while nearly 2 700 have such in place, only 252 actively block them.

'*The Outlier* (an independent publication specialising in using data to create public service stories and visualisations) also recently shared a list of new sites in South Africa with active blockers versus no blockers.

'It was found again that most of the big media organisations were using bot blockers while most of the smaller ones had limited blockers or none.'

Strydom said that relying on partnerships with tech companies is not a reliable source of income or a promise for sustainable media.

'Meta funded the largest fact checking initiative up until this year and announced the cutting of this fund to kick in by the end of 2025, so we'll see the closure of many fact-checking units globally.'

Her view is that journalism as it is now is not going to win against Large Language Models.

'Journalism is heading closer to news-fluencers and news content creators for future news – users who build trust with their audience and create news products that reflect their emergent behaviours.'

Dr MaryStella Simiyu began by focusing on how society might see public services, usually understood as government processes or matters affecting the economy, and may include digital





payment systems, digital identity and data exchange points.

But when one considers this framing and discourse around civil society organisations and media, ‘there’s a gap there because the media has been ignored in these conversations’. Hence, research has sought to find a way to rectify this, by placing the emphasis on values.

She pointed to the work of Professor Ethan Zuckerman, who defines the Digital Public Infrastructure that enables us to participate in digital spaces.

Zuckerman situates public interest journalism not only as a business, a product, a commodity, but as a core aspect of life.

Public interest journalism is a public good that is not publicly funded, explained Simiyu. ‘We have to ensure that there are strong protections for media freedom ... how do we ensure that the infrastructure is value-based and rights-based?’

She urged the M20 to look at the deficiencies ‘that are already’ in digital structures currently controlled by tech that is profit driven.

‘How can we develop infrastructure that is centred around the community; that is more centred on greater civic and public participation.’

‘To do so, we have to ensure that transparency and accountability are values here’ along with media freedom and the rights to privacy, which are key rights.

‘What is our call to the G20 in this regard? It is for States to support the development of tools and systems – that is, the digital infrastructure which is at the core of these systems – which are embedded in public interest and democratic values.

‘Public service media can reach new audiences and also increase revenue streams.’

Simiyu said it is important to ensure that States abide by relevant existing frameworks and international human rights law – not only binding frameworks but also soft law instruments that provide protections for media freedom.

She directed us to the 2019 Declaration on Principles of Freedom of Expression and Access to Information, passed by the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights, which has already expounded on how to better protect these rights. Equally, Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights.

‘We also already have materials and resources developed by media, by civil society organisations and academia that can guide discussions for States.’

Simiyu said ‘there’s a need to promote equitable access through the media to diverse channels of news distribution and revenue generation’.

We are already seeing the development of alternative platforms, but ‘it is important that there is strong public oversight in digital infrastructures that can lead to greater and more meaningful civic and public participation’.

Are we at a point where we should decolonise technology? When we come up with our own solutions, we don’t have to wait for other people. We have potential. We have solutions.

Kanunu opened the way for the next speaker, Manfred Kluge of Initiative 18, by asking: ‘Can somebody remind me how many Sustainable Development Goals we have, currently? There are 17. Why 17 and not 18? Can we include one more that focuses purely on media?’

Kluge would go on to explain how and why the nonprofit, Initiative 18, came about – as a direct result of this question – in Germany in 2024.

It has a small team who are in advertising or communications, or have a legal background. The name, Initiative 18, emerged from that question about the SDGs, which ‘as part of the Global Compact, are designed to encourage businesses to adopt sustainable, responsible public policies, and report on implementation’.





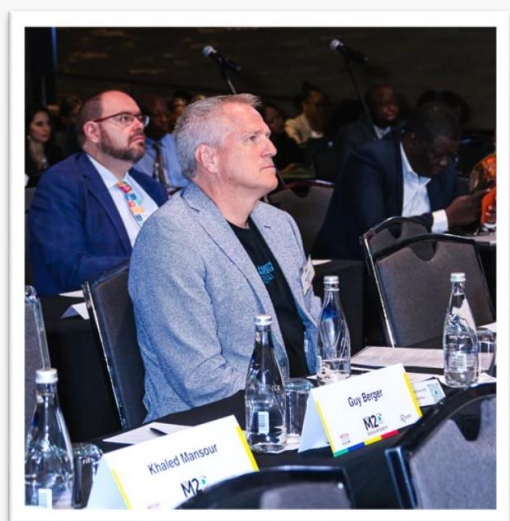
Kluge and other activists say there must be an 18th for media. ‘Freedom needs the entire picture. Media diversity protects democracy. This is not a slogan. It is our conviction.’

The Goals were published in 2015 and have since become an integral part of many corporate strategies. But, ‘what has happened since then?’. ‘We’re increasingly flooded with harmful content on the Internet, especially social media, and sometimes on what we call traditional media.’

‘This is extremist content ... ecological, economic, social or geopolitical. We see that disinformation and misinformation now pose a major risk, and there is a clear connection to social division and polarisation.’

Kluge’s view is ‘these are the greatest global risks’, and there is another, allied problem – the ‘monopolisation of Internet usage, which has not yet been on the Summit agenda’.

‘I would estimate that two-thirds of Internet usage in Germany, for instance, is controlled by the 10 largest global companies. Many great journalistic portals have too little reach to serve as a corrective for this information.’



Manfred Kluge spoke about the struggle to see an 18th SDG – for a free and independent media

‘We must not forget content distribution is governed by platforms. Revenues reside in the capitalisation of content.’

‘It is high time for an 18th Sustainability Goal – free, safe, sustainable media. By free, we mean independent of State or party political influence. We also mean at least basic information should be freely accessible without a paywall.’

‘What do we mean by safe? It is about the basics of ethical and trustworthy journalism. And by sustainable, we explicitly focus more on responsive, responsible, corporate governance.’

‘Media houses and platforms should comply with youth and data protection rules and there should be transparent business models, including the disclosure of algorithms that control the distribution of content.’

Just as the 17 SDGs have 169 sub-goals, Initiative 18 has defined eight of its own, including freedom of the press, which ‘must apply to digital platforms’, and ‘sustainable allocation of advertising budgets’.

Kluge asked: ‘What would media agencies and advertisers do if national publishers were confronted with accusations that they were triggering online addiction, distributing harmful content or lacking data protection? We would probably rethink our spending.’

‘This is not a call for a boycott, but the intention to sensitise advertisers to contribute to the preservation of media diversity through the responsible allocation of advertising budgets.’

Kananu responded to Kluge’s discussion with a thumbs-up, saying we need ‘safety, security and sustainability in media, not only in terms of physical safety, but digital safety as well, financial safety, for journalists’.

Phakamile Madonsela then spoke to M20 Policy Brief 5 which relates to children, beginning by thanking the M20 for prioritising children's rights and thanking the donors that made the Policy





Briefs, especially this one, possible.

She then drew the delegates' attention to 'a special guest amongst us' who wrote an exam at school that morning and still made it to the Summit: 17-year-old Webranger and Article 12 ambassador Gomolemo Pooe (who addressed an M20 panel with Ambassadors on Day 2).

Madonsela said we must try as much as we can 'to include young people's voices, because they're very important in helping us understand the media'.

'The work we do is [concerned with] the information ecosystem and understanding that, for children, that ecosystem is fragmented, with competing interests – not all in their best interests.

'There are policymakers, big tech, government and there's the learner at the centre,' Madonsela explained. 'At Media Monitoring Africa (MMA), we try to work with parents, schools, teachers and the learner, as well as big tech and policymakers, so that we are able to build a healthy information ecosystem for young people.'

Their focus areas are: children in the media; media information literacy; information integrity; how AI is impacting African children; privacy rights, and the persistent digital divide.

She noted that at this conference, the discussions are about media, information integrity, excess and tech, 'but a lot of our African children don't have the basics of the Internet and infrastructure that [even] allows them to be online'.

Thus, MMA's other focus area is children's participation rights. Madonsela said she believed the M20 could offer a 'kind of a road map for developing a more inclusive and rights-based media environment'.

'It's hard for young people to engage [with and in the news]. They don't see themselves. They have no agency and they cannot speak on their experiences. It's always media or adults speaking for them. and this has dire long- term impacts on their experiences of news and how they engage with information.'

Madonsela said 'we've done justice a little bit in this conference to include children's voices in the discussions, but more needs to be done'.

She said the expectation from G20 leaders is legal mechanisms for child-centred safety standards, including age, appropriate design and transparency moderation.

'We want middle literacy integrated into educational systems as the foundational infrastructure. We want AI systems trained and data reflecting African cultures and we want universal, affordable child-safe incident access.'

She said the list is 'not exhaustive, but it does help us better understand how we can advance rights in the digital world'.

Phakamile Madonsela is an activist for child-centred safety standards online



FIRESIDE CONVERSATION: MEDIA AND DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Discussant

Professor Guy **Berger**

Expert in media and Internet policy issues. Professor *emeritus* at the School of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University



In conversation with:



Khaled Mansour

Writer and communications expert; member of the Meta Oversight Board



Richard Gingras

Chair of the board at Village Media

Advocate Pansy Tlakula
Information Regulator of South Africa



Fortune Sibanda
TikTok's Director of Public Policy and Government Relations for Sub-Saharan Africa





Summary

Professor Guy Berger began by introducing Fortune Sibanda to situate TikTok's role in the news ecosystem, and Sibanda's opening was that TikTok 'wants people to sing and dance right?'. But, he said, 'it's very important that it's not always just song and dance, especially during significant periods like elections'.

'We also have to play a role as a platform to support citizen access to information. Our main role is to enable creators or communicators such as journalists to be able to reach the audiences that they want.'

'So, yes, you will find there's a lot of entertainment, but there are new forms of educating people [even through] the snippets, the bite size chunks ... all of that is still very relevant, especially for young people.'

Sibanda said the media could adapt and use a platform like TikTok for their benefit.

Richard Gingras agreed. As a member of the Advisory Board of the *Frontline* documentary series in the US, among other roles, he advocated for its innovation.

'One is, they're on YouTube. They're getting 10, 20 times the amount of viewership on YouTube than they ever got on public broadcasting in the United States. Full stop. Secondly, they're beginning to do things like YouTube Shorts or TikTok videos, short components to reach different audiences, right?

'You can theoretically do a series of short videos that convey just about everything that was in the hour-long documentary or maybe tease them back into the hour-long commentary.

'So I think ... if the distribution environments in the media environments try to get to the audiences we can get, we can accomplish great things.'

Sibanda said TikTok created 'a dedicated team' to enhance its educational component after speaking to parents, teachers, governments even, who said 'there's so much information, so much fun and dance, but there is not much that's useful ... we want our kids to also find stuff that's useful'.

A separate feed was developed on science, technology, education and mathematics featuring African creators – 'very localised, very specific' – and 'it is blowing up across the continent'.

Conversations such as these, about fresh content and distribution methods, have to be had to put pressure on platforms and social media to improve their output, and consumers and media to take advantage of the upside.

Gingras observed that with every generation of evolving communication technology, developers get 'more stuff right'. But it takes time to learn and to overcome interference. He worked on Google search for over a decade on the algorithmic side, and has seen how significantly criticism about algorithms has grown in recent times. Yet, 'critically, this is only a next chapter ... coordinated attacks, people tricking the algorithm ... and it doesn't super-concern us because of the way our algorithms work'.

'There are two key things. The way search works is the content is relevant to the query, and it's coming from an authoritative source ... That's what's going to be key: where is it coming from?'

Gingras was relatively unaffected by some of the fears around Generative AI, especially its capacity to mop up others' content and what it uses such content to achieve.

'That's fine, as long as [the platforms are] standing up to their own reputations, and the content is good and their reputation adheres. It's another tool to help you create content.

Gingras said he dislikes it when media generalises about how tech, especially in its requirements to train AI, is unprincipled. 'Obviously, different environments are operated in different ways, and hopefully they're principled





His view is that 'YouTube [for example, is] very careful and very thoughtful'. Is that true of every platform? 'I can't say that it is for my own experience. But honestly [there are] really interesting signals of morality.'

As part of her work, Advocate Pansy Tlakula, chair of the Information Regulator in South Africa, considers requests to compel tech companies to disclose certain information and even granular data.

Berger asked whether the Information Regulator could 'create more transparency, more access to data ... and would that be good from the point of view of journalism, news media, investors?'

He noted that tech companies can be 'opened up' – to give up certain information – in other territories: 'Voluntarily in the United States, by compulsion in in the European Union.'

Tlakula said South Africa's Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) and Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) are 'among the very few in the world that apply to both private bodies and public bodies, including political parties'.

'That means any person can request access to information from a private body or a political party if they can show that they require that information to exercise or protect any rights.'

But it's not always a simple process to retrieve that information.

Tlakula made reference to the Information Regulator's experiences with trying to access information from Google South Africa. The company said it did not hold the information required as its information was 'with Google LLC and Google Ireland', its contention being that 'South Africa's freedom of information law did not apply to it'.

Tlakula said the Information Regulator got the same response when it addressed mis- and disinformation related to Facebook and Instagram. 'Tiktok raised the same defence, but they said, in the interests of transparency, they will give the information.'

The decision then made by the Information Regulator was 'to approach the courts for a declaratory order to tell us whether these companies [indeed] cannot release information' based on those contentions.

'We have asked for a legal opinion on prospects of success

... The courts [now] have to deal with this matter because we cannot allow these platforms to be opaque and to do as they wish.

'They have to comply with the law, the laws of South Africa. So that's where we are ... without [legislation like] the Digital Services Act [as in the EU] here ... but it's a battle that I'm prepared to have.'

Gingras was not positive about the Information Regulator's prospects, saying 'I'm not sure it really helps a whole lot'. At the same time, he pointed out that 'all organisations which use AI should do those disclosures now', although 'one of the tricky things on those kinds of disclosures is: are you causing the user to distrust something that they actually should trust?'

His view is that it's 'not particularly helpful from an algorithmic case because you'll go right back to source reputation'.

Berger then turned to Khaled Mansour, prefacing his conversation with a brief explanation of the Oversight Board, which 'gets hundreds of thousands of complaints [about what is published by Meta], but [with only] 20 people or something on the team, they select, choose 50, 60 a year, the most important ones'.

Berger described it as 'a very interesting system – the only one I know of [from] a company that has such an autonomous mechanism'.

However, 'if you compare that to the media world, at least outside the US, you have press councils or media councils [instead], systems to which individuals can make a complaint and the council should process that and [offer] some redress'.

He recognised there is the Appeals Centre Europe, an independent organisation providing out-of-court dispute resolution for content and account decisions made by social media platforms for users in the EU, as offering such 'a first level complaint' forum.





The Appeals Centre is certified as expert, impartial and independent by the Coimisiún na Meán (Ireland's Commission for regulating broadcasters and online media) under Article 21 of Regulation (EU) 2022/2065, known as the Digital Services Act.

'Firstly, we are comparing apples, oranges and watermelons,' Mansour responded. '[It's not that] we should not continue the fight using local jurisdictions and national legislations, just that certain things have to be fought in parallel while we do that, and it will have an impact.'

His view was that this is 'probably the only way to push the corporations to accommodate us and also to allow a level of competition among them'.

Last year, the Oversight Board had 500 000 appeals, 'and we deal with a beast that has probably 3 billion accounts with maybe 1 billion posts a day ... and millions and millions of contested content pieces'. Thus, 'these are issues of scale'.

The Oversight Board 'maintains a great form of autonomy because the money they put into our trust is irrevocable – they cannot walk back until all the money has been spent, so we have three more years to go'.

Mansour's position is that 'self regulation will not be enough to deal with this, except on policy levels, because we [make] binding decisions'. He indicated the Oversight Board could influence Meta policy on, say, a journalist who had had their content removed.

The Board could vaunt, for instance: ' "This is wrong. He's a journalist. He was quoting somebody. All journalistic staff should be exempted or at least reviewed by a human, for example." That would be a recommendation that would help change the policies.'

'Having said that, it's not enough because it doesn't address the issues for hundreds of thousands of people,' said Mansour. 'The hope is, when you have a policy change, that will affect and enable hundreds of thousands to put their content on – although we have some measures for that.'

Redress mechanisms 'will force companies to be more serious about their own content policy and content moderation, and also listening to things like human rights Article 19, what you can remove and cannot remove and stuff like that.'

Mansour's view, nonetheless, is that, while this is good, it shouldn't take such mechanisms to create the change, which should be 'structural' and 'systemic', 'which in my mind,' he said 'is more OK'.

Gingras said he had 'learned over time to be wary of trusting governments' – usually the drivers of systemic and structural change – when it comes to 'free expression in the press'.

'Be really careful what you ask for. I feel like a lot of liberal countries have crafted laws, for instance, regarding fair use and modernisation that authoritarian governments look at and say, well, they endorsed it, we should do it too because that's a method of control.'

He noted that the G20 itself offered 'a mix' of governments, among which were such approaches there.

He voiced this view at the G20 in Brazil in 2024 – that 'all the freedom of information laws are archaic – they are no longer fit for purpose [in the digital age] because they talk about information held by public bodies ... and yet they have to apply to private bodies [too]'.

Berger remarked that regulation is thus important, but specifically 'regulating for the future'. We should ask, is this piece of regulation still 'required or necessary'? 'If not, can we change it? Can we throw it away altogether?'

He then asked 'what is stopping Africa' from adding 'digital components' and freedom of information into the African Free Trade agreement which is still under negotiation.

Berger's position is that if those components were in the agreement, it would allow the 1 billion people of this continent to have a greater influence.

Currently, the African free trade agreement – which has just developed a digital protocol – says there can be no transparency demanded by algorithms, which is 'an interesting kind of



limitation’.

If policies and regulations could ‘cover as many countries as possible, there [would be] predictability’. ‘If we’re investing, we know that we’re not going to have to apply one [approach] to one law in [one country] and a different law somewhere else, which] becomes very, very difficult.’

Gingras then explained more about Large Language Models, which, he said, display two different components around using content for which there may be no permission granted or using content in a *laissez-faire* sort of way.

‘One is: training the model to probabilistically say things’, it having been taught ‘a massive amount of content to get that right and that will get refreshed’. The second ‘is what we call “grounding”, where the stuff is that you’re using to make sure you have the right answer’.

He said his general sense is that ‘fair use’ claims on language models ‘will hold up’, but put it forward that ‘the G20 should also ‘be careful about asking for changes [that affect] copyright’.

‘We want to make language models smarter. Research I saw from Northwestern [University in Illinois, USA] that said Open AI is 67% relying particularly on a small set of news outlets, whereas Google is different, much broader, much more diverse [and that] is what it should be. We want that to happen.’

Further, a commitment to ‘only using licensed content’ means there will be ‘selective licensing’. Gingras remarked there is no current reason to believe a lot of money can be made out of news queries as only ‘2% of search queries are news, and there are no ads against them’.

Mansour said he sees ‘no way other than smart regulation to fix [these kinds of] problems and hold [corporations] accountable – regulation that doesn’t stifle innovation’.

If he had a platform to speak with the G20, he would first say it needs ‘some form of global guidelines to speak about the harm on platforms’. He said ‘start from the heart, start from fighting this information that can cause offline harm’.

Secondly, he would advocate for transparency ‘about the rules that lead to removal’ and how this ‘affects freedom of expression’. What can lead to demotion?

Further, ‘a positive donor shift by social media companies’.



Professor Guy Berger (far left) with Khaled Mansour, Fortune Sibanda, Advocate Pansy Tlakula and Richard Gingras

AMBASSADORS' ROUNDTABLE: SHAPING INFORMATION INTEGRITY FOR A **DIGITAL FUTURE**

Moderator for part 1 Children and **digital rights**

Gomolemo **Pooe**

Grade 12 learner from Soweto and an Article 12 working group member



Moderator for part 2 Platform accountability and online **safety**

Claire **Dehosse**

Associate at ALT Advisory



Ambassadors/Representatives



Andreas Peschke
Ambassador of **Germany** to South Africa



Anesh Maistry
Representative of the South African government; member of the G20 Task Force on AI, data governance and innovation for sustainable development



Jean Spiri
Head of Cooperation and Cultural Affairs at the Embassy of **France** in South Africa



Rodrigo Govedise
Head of the media section of the Embassy of Brazil in Pretoria



Summary

Part 1

Moderator Gomolemo Poee introduced himself as a 17-year-old student at St Matthew's Secondary in Soweto. An ambassador of and former Article 12 member, he is also a former Google Youth Advisory Board member.

Established under the aegis of Media Monitoring Africa – co-convenor of the M20 – Article 12 is a working group which engages in ICT-related policy discussions to ensure children's voices are heard in relevant sectors.

Poee explained that 'we make [tech] take accountability for certain actions', and reflected on the importance of the ambassadors collaborating on similar efforts, as it's 'no use if one country goes it alone'.

He noted that while there is the Digital Services Act in the EU, most of the service providers are American. Article 12's intentions have to be directed at service providers which may not have their actions covered in legislation.

The ambassadors responded to a question from Poee about protecting children from despicable content online, saying there was a need for international cooperation.

South Africa was heralded as commendable for putting these issues on the agenda of the G20, especially the notion of a task force on AI within the framework of the Leaders' meeting.

All nations, 'in essence', have the same problem but different laws to deal with it, said the ambassadors. Questions raised included whether there should be legislation to protect children and other vulnerable parties from dangerous content in every country. But what would make it possible for there to be such international law to govern all platforms?

The new Online Safety Act in the UK was mentioned. The ambassadors agreed platforms ought to have more responsibility around children's rights and safety online.

It is important to have 'realistic and evidence-based, common principles'.

Poee said the youth wish to express their requirement for 'information of quality'.

Jean Spiri of the Embassy of France said his country was prepared to fight for this, and to tell tech companies, 'If you don't respect it, we are able to close the market for you'. He gave the example of a new French law mandating pornographic sites implement stricter age-verification technology.

In response, adult entertainment company Aylo twice suspended access to its content in France, including for adults. (The European Commission meanwhile launched an investigation into Pornhub and three other adult websites, accusing them of not complying with regulations designed to protect minors from accessing pornography.)

Rodrigo Govedise of the Embassy of Brazil said this discussion was 'very timely for us' as legislation in Brazil has recently drawn debate and attention nation-wide through its intention to protect children online after an 'influencer' compilation video.

That content sought to show how paedophiles and other criminals are incentivised by algorithms which increase their numbers of views and, thus, monetisation.

Since the video was published, federal deputies in Brazil have presented 17 Bill proposals to the national congress to tackle issues raised by the influencer.

Rodrigo noted that Brazil would continue to lead in this arena, although it is important to 'get everybody to agree'.

The ambassadors conceded that 'the closest we've come to it, even though there are some big States that are not part of it, is the Global Digital Compact from the United Nations', which has





‘space for protection, privacy, all of these things’.

But even if there is ‘value-setting’ and ‘norm-setting’ within the global system, national legislations will have to conform to their own contexts and needs. Countries would have to buy in first to adjust to changing global ethics and principles.

South Africa’s Anesh Maistry, a member of the G20 Task Force on AI, said South Africa tended to ‘cascade’ law in this regard out of what was happening in Africa.

The G20 countries ‘are not trying to reinvent a global system, a global regulatory framework ... they're trying to do work that will complement not only what exists continentally in Africa, in other regions, but globally’.

Pooe emphasised that under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child, specifically Article 12, children should be involved in decisions that affect them.

Germany’s Ambassador Andreas Peschke said it was a ‘political question [in his country] about how to curb this problem’ and that ‘when we were talking about children’, decision-making was ‘aggressive’ as ‘everyone came together and approved it’.

It was pointed out that ‘you can't just legislate to regulate – it has to be multisectoral as it's the private sector and it's government, but it's also parents and adults and people who need to be part of making sure that children are protected in this environment’.

‘We've got to find the right balance of digital rights for children by protecting, but also empowering them. The reality is the digital age is here. It impacts everything that the child does. So, it's how you learn. It's how you educate.’

Maistry said ‘you've got to adapt both social norms and values and legislation [with the South African] Children’s Act, for instance, needing to be looked at in a context where it evolves with the times’ as ‘we've got to find the right balance of digital rights for children’.

Part 2

Moderator Claire Dehosse began by acknowledging the ‘many firsts [happening] in terms of regulatory action’, but ‘there's also uncertainty in terms of the best ways to hold tech platforms accountable and how to tackle online harms’.

She sought panellists to first address the question of technology-facilitated gender based violence (GBV) ‘because it's one of the most pervasive forms of online harms affecting journalists, politicians and civil society actors that are women, which often forces them out of the public discourse entirely’.

She asked: how is South Africa balancing the development of legal frameworks with more preventative approaches like digital literacy?

Maistry acknowledged that technology-facilitated GBV is ‘a very, very serious thing’ and it’s a ‘challenge that we face head on’. He referred to South Africa’s National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Act, which went into effect in November 2024, calling it ‘a good legislative starting point’.

He emphasised that we must ‘have a human outlook on this issue because we don't see the human parts of this – we're treating it as a crime problem, a judicial problem, but not a human problem’.

Maistry urged for regulation, ‘especially against bullying, online bullying and various other harms that come with that which amount to harassment and sexual exploitation’.

‘It's about having proper policing strategies in place to be able to complement legislation that's in place ... it's important we look at this holistically, and [so] there needs to be more social, especially grassroots, interaction in educating and dealing with the issue’.

Dehosse then turned to Peschke, asking what international cooperation mechanisms he envisioned for prosecuting those operating across borders in this regard.

He admitted it should ‘be easy’ to establish such in the EU because of existing cooperation





agreements between its Members, and due to 'most of our legislation in this field [being] done by the EU [itself]'. Yet, 'everybody has to start in their own country ... in order to really regulate these issues and also mitigate and stop' [the harm].

Germany first used its Criminal Code to understand what it had in its criminal law that could also be used to prevent GBV and protect individuals, especially women and girls, online.

The EU Digital Services Act (DSA) has since come into use (following Germany's own Digitale-Dienste-Gesetz, which replaced its controversial, but pioneering content moderation law, the Network Enforcement Act or NetzDG), but Peschke said 'we should take it further – on an international level, like to the G20, like to the United Nations – but we don't, we must not, have any illusions' about the effectiveness of that.

This is as it 'will be very difficult because most of these' institutions are consensus-based and 'not everybody is as like-minded', thus it is important to 'look at what can be done beyond legislation'.

He gave the example of Germany setting up a reporting office for criminal content on the Internet and having a specialised prosecutor for violence against women.

'It can be that 'the further you go (say, to the international bodies), the less concrete it becomes. You really need to start on a municipal, provincial, school, national level, to provide concrete assistance.'

Dehousse turned to Spiri, asking how France is translating EU- level policies such as the DSA into concrete national protections as France 'has been quite active in shaping its news policy on online harms'.

Spiri said many think the implementation of 'very strong words' could be difficult, but 'it's not', as 'common law is similar'. The value lies 'in policing and the justice system'.

He gave the example of the Laboratory for Human Rights, which was launched in France in 2024 and is 'a mix of think tank and incubator'.

'We support innovative solutions, concrete projects, to fight GBV in the digital space. Now, the purpose is to develop very concrete actions, because the change of legislation gives us a common preoccupation. We have to [enact it] locally, in your province, in your towns, in our nation, and internationally.'

That said, Spiri noted 'we cannot speak about online harms and online safety without speaking about platform accountability – you have to balance the regulation'.

Dehousse pointed then to Brazil, which has been very engaged with platform accountability, notably through its Supreme Court judgments. She asked Rodrigo to provide context about the challenges Brazil faces. How is it approaching legislation in order to achieve that 'balance'?

He answered first with a caution, that 'sometimes you can't wait for a court order': 'When you get a court order, the harm is already done – the GBV has [already gone viral] – and even if you remove that content, it's already there'.

Rodrigo reiterated that the influencer's video resulted in bills being proposed in Congress to deepen legislation and make both the prosecution of online criminals and the response of platforms, faster. But citizens helped make that happen.

'We had people asking the platforms to act faster – even without a court order. So it got to our Supreme Court and the Court created a list of content that has to be removed immediately without a court order.'

GBV online is on that list. If a platform receives notification of such a transgression, it has to react, immediately, and there are punitive measures for those which don't comply which go from warnings to fines and can even get to the closing of operations in Brazil.

Harmful content would also include racism, discrimination, terrorism, anti democratic activities, and other illegal acts.

'Countries are markets,' said Rodrigo. 'So if there is a possibility that a platform can lose that market to another, they usually comply.'





Peschke agreed that the terrain has evolved and is constantly evolving, because the challenge is changing all the time.

Right at the beginning, users have said, ‘we want to express ourselves freely and we want to use the new media as well, and so the DSA came up with clear obligations and potential fines of up to €50 million’.



Claire Dehosse, Rodrigo Govedise (Brazil), Jean Spiri (France), Anesh Maistry (South Africa), Andreas Peschke (Germany) and Webranger and Article 31 member, student Gomolemo Poee
(17)



M20 SUMMIT DECLARATION AND NEXT STEPS

Moderator: Izak Minnaar

Digital rights and media expert; member of the South African National Editors' Forum and the Press Council of South Africa



Speakers:



Janet Heard: M20 Summit Declaration

Media specialist and practitioner; editor of the M20 Policy Briefs

Rashweat Mukundu: Future of the M20 Africa adviser at International Media Support



Dan Gillmor: Participation by the US in 2026:

Director of News Co/Lab at Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Summary

Izak Minnaar invited Rashweat Mukundu and Janet Heard to the stage to join him in wrapping up the M20 process over the past few months with the focus on the two main outcomes so far.

The first outcome was the Declaration, which, at last count, saw more than 60 organisations having signed up, not all of those present at the Summit. Those not present sent correspondence expressing their support.

The second outcome was to 'talk a bit about ideas and how to take the M20 agenda forward in the year to come'.

'Who's been involved in some of the discussions and how do we move forward? How did it start?'



To answer these questions, Minnaar invited Heard to explain, and she began by saying that ‘everyone in this room has participated in some way and it's been really quite incredible to experience’.

In terms of the Declaration, there had been ‘lots of drafters, inputs, endorsements, when we weren't even sure we would get one, and lots of meaningful and very tough and frank conversations which needed to be had.’

In terms of the Policy Briefs, ‘the important thing was to get global partners and have a global collaboration and we came up together with the substance team’.

‘The whole of the South African National Editors’ Forum and the whole of Media Monitoring Africa were involved as well as Michael Markovitz and Guy Berger. We were joined on the drafting stage by Zoe Titus. But I want to emphasise that everybody on every platform was involved, so to even start mentioning names is risky.’

Heard said the eight Policy Briefs ‘are complex’, and took weeks of consultations with an Advisory Panel.

‘The idea is to have more input every year and for it to be collaborative, so this is a starting process. It's not a two- pager Declaration, which would have been signed off, probably easily, focusing on one thing – information integrity – which is very broad.’

Instead, the idea behind the Declaration was for it to gain full collaboration and ‘everyone feeling that they have a voice and can be heard’. The process is important, not just the outcome, meaning there was ‘a lot of tweaking and contestation and an attempt to accommodate’.

Heard acknowledged that ‘some would say [that approach] causes a distraction because the core issue is so urgent, but ... we have tried to not get stuck in the weeds’.

‘It is the inaugural M20 declaration and it will be the Johannesburg Declaration, so in many ways it's an historic occasion.’

Minnaar encouraged delegates to ‘read it and share it’. The commonality, that journalism is a public good, urges mobilisation around it.

‘It is a time of agitation, not being silent, and collaboratively using the Declaration to build. Maybe there will be overlaps between what different organisations want to do. Please publish this everywhere on your own and other platforms, please promote it on social media.’

‘We need to make noise so that we get heard within the G20 organisations and the negotiations. If I look at the content, this Declaration will be used far beyond just the G20.’

Rashweat Mukundu followed to summarise where challenges and needs have been identified – not only from a geographic perspective but from a developmental indices perspective.

He urged the delegates not to work in isolation, but – whether from beginnings at a national or regional level – to strengthen their capacity to work at a global level.

He reflected on the importance of the M20 Advisory Group that the South African organising team put together.

Importantly, he was able to confirm that the South Africa M20 conference had achieved a much broader perspective into looking into the issues that media is facing. Not only that, but it had had a more inclusive and consultative approach.

This was said with gratitude to India, which provided the initial build up to what was realised in Brazil.

‘We need to maintain and keep the momentum,’ Mukundu said. ‘[Those of us here] have an interest in making a contribution to the future structure of the M20.’

He said the main issues covered at this M20 were information integrity, media viability and sustainability, the safety of journalists and the critical role of media in our society to promote the right to freedom of expression.





His view is that ‘a good, fair, favourable ground has been laid for planning and agenda-setting for the 2026 M20 in the US’. He hoped an overarching theme – to promote the right to access to information – would remain grounded.

Minnaar returned to the stage and emphasised Mukundu’s points, especially the need for the M20 to be sustained in the future, and ‘for it to be more inclusive, not only of the international media actors, but also local media’.

‘More importantly, to be inclusive of the diversity of media, and not only media advocates, but also the practitioners.

He then introduced Dan Gillmor, who, more than two decades ago, had already started talking about how mainstream media would get competition from what we now know as ‘content creators’. Gillmor – a digital-media literacy and entrepreneurship expert – had predicted they ‘may force mainstream media out of the traditional role’.

He began by ‘very strongly’ endorsing the M20 initiative ‘to go in conjunction with the G20’.

‘I hope that people in media, particularly now, in this time of great turmoil and great strength, will understand that we have a series of interconnected, very difficult issues that we must deal with at a professional level.’

Gillmor said we ought not to ‘abandon media principles that are valuable’.

‘We have to focus on doing our work with integrity, and sometimes that means understanding that there are not two sides to an issue. M20 is doing what it can to bring topics to our understanding, to our focus, and I hope you will help everybody in the process of understanding this [vital] work.’

Amy Mitchell, whose CNTI intends to play a role in the M20 in the US in 2026, said she was ‘very pleased to have been a part of’ the discussions at the M20.

‘It’s really important that we come together across global boundaries and various parts of society – journalism, coming together with civil society, with research, with leaders in the technology space and those who are inside our political spaces – to have these conversations.

‘These issues are complex. There’s not a simple solution. But we know that meaningful discussion is where that starts. We are at a time where the pressures on an independent, free news media and the public’s open access to a plurality and diversity of news and information, is at greater risk in more countries than I think we’ve seen, certainly in recent history.

‘We have to ask: how do we balance the right kinds of actions, which safeguard an independent press, in ways that enhance the benefits against the kinds of harms that can come from policies that can be used against the news media and information. That balance is not an easy one. It can go in unintended directions that end up causing more harm.’

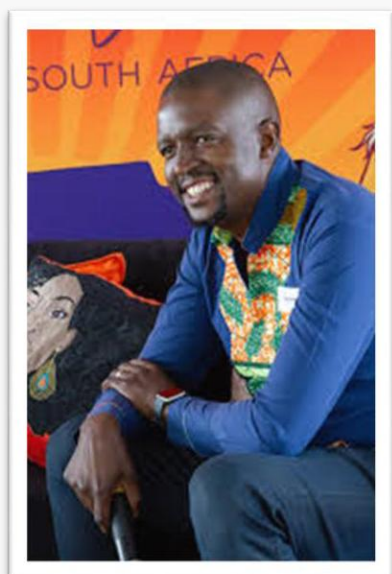
Minnaar noted that CNTI has been joined by four other organisations based in the United States which have indicated they would work together to host an M20 programme in 2026.

These are: the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ); the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University; the Freedom of the Press Foundation and the Free Press Action grouping.





CLOSING WORDS



Reggy Moalusi

South African National Editors' Forum



William Bird
Media
Monitoring Africa

Reggy Moalusi thanked everyone in the room for their attendance and contributions to the first in-person M20 Summit. He particularly thanked **Siddharth Varadarajan** for 'giving us his time when this idea first came about'.

'It was a meeting between myself, him, Izak [Minnaar] and Guy [Berger] where we said, "should we do this or is it a totally bad idea?"

'Meetings were then held with the relevant groups as a whole and with many individuals on how to deal with the G20 and involve other organisations. Some of those reached out and brought others to the table. It was really beneficial.'

Moalusi noted that 'most of those organisations said, "well, we really like what you're doing this year, why don't we continue?" – and so began a discussion on what should happen with the M20 and its agenda after this year'.

He thanked the M20's sponsors, saying that 'we are quite fortunate here in South Africa that, in terms of civil society and the private sector, we get on quite well'. Hence, there was support for the initiative.

The current M20 grouping would be 'working closely' with the team of the 2026 initiative, while 'conversations with the colleagues in the South African government' would continue to 'iron out issues' around the media and freedom of information at home.

Moalusi found it especially gratifying for the Summit that 'there were young people in these conversations, through the invaluable circles of Media Monitoring Africa, the M20 Summit co-convenor with the South African Editors' Forum.

'We say, we need to bring in the young people because it is them who are talking about content generation on Tiktok, on WhatsApp and so forth. We cannot leave them behind.'

William Bird reiterated Moalusi's thanks to the delegates, the sponsors and all others who were involved in the Summit. He especially thanked Izak Minnaar for his drive and purpose in visualising the M20 and seeing it emerge.

'Now, we must sustain some of the outcomes, some of the learning that has come from the conference.'

Bird also had a warning about the difficulties ahead: 'These are very, very dark times with very strong dark forces which are continuing to get stronger, and we are what stands against them, so we've got our work cut out for us.'

‘Luckily, I think we will win that battle. It may take a while, but I think ultimately, we'll win.’



M20 JOHANNESBURG DECLARATION HANDED OVER TO PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA

NOVEMBER 19, 2025

With a few days left before the official kick-off of the G20 Leaders' Summit, President Cyril Ramaphosa received the Media20 Johannesburg Declaration from Media Monitoring Africa (now called Moxii Africa), and the South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF).

William Bird, director of Moxii Africa, and Makhudu Sefara, chairperson of SANEF, led both delegations as they handed over the Johannesburg Declaration.

Ramaphosa was joined by Ronald Lamola, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, and Enoch Godongwana, Minister of Finance, respectively.

Bird highlighted to the President the meaning and importance of the M20, held at the beginning of September and attended by international guests eager to address challenges faced by the media globally. Sefara took the President and his team through what the Johannesburg Declaration addressed and why it was important for these issues to be presented to the G20.

In his response, Ramaphosa promised to appeal that the Johannesburg Declaration must form part of the G20 agenda. He acknowledged the issues raised by the M20 are of concern globally.

The President said he was pleased with the initiative, and it will surely appeal to not only the G20 countries, but also the other 22 countries that participate in G20 activities. He emphasised the importance of media freedom and how the Johannesburg Declaration was focusing on key issues that are relevant to today's challenges.



President Cyril Ramaphosa met with Moxii Africa (MMA) director William Bird and other members of the M20 initiative in the days before the G20 Summit in Johannesburg.



M20 RESPONDS TO THE G20 SOUTH AFRICA LEADERS' DECLARATION

NOVEMBER 27, 2025

The M20 applauds the historic achievements of the G20 Summit but is also disappointed at the critical omission in the Leaders' Declaration of the threats to information integrity and, ultimately, democratic resilience.

This year marked a historic milestone with the G20 hosted in Africa for the first time, delivered under exceptionally challenging geopolitical conditions, including a boycott by the United States.

Despite these pressures, South Africa successfully hosted the Summit and secured consensus for the Leaders' Declaration, an outcome many believed impossible.

The M20 recognises this milestone achievement. It also welcomes the recognition and support the M20 received on key public interest media issues in the build-up to the Leaders' Summit.

'We appreciate President Cyril Ramaphosa taking the time to meet with us before the Summit and giving us an opportunity to do a formal handover of the M20 Johannesburg Declaration to him.

'However, this must not be the end of the conversation but rather the beginning of a collaborative effort to highlight information integrity and media issues,' said Makhudu Sefara, Chairperson of SANEF.

However, the success of the G20 Leaders' Summit cannot obscure a profound governance gap: without information integrity in the digital ecosystem, democracy cannot be protected.

The M20 has engaged extensively around these issues, which were highlighted in the historic Johannesburg Declaration in September 2025, as endorsed by more than 70 organisations to date. The Declaration was then formally handed over to South Africa's Communications and Digital Technologies Minister Solly Malatsi in October.

Just days before the Leaders' Summit, an M20 delegation had an opportunity to present the M20 Declaration with key recommendations for the G20 to President Ramaphosa, making the omission of information integrity, media sustainability, journalist safety, online attacks on women, the role of public-interest journalism or children's rights in the digital environment in safeguarding democracy from the final Leaders' Declaration disappointing.

Information integrity and media sustainability are the new frontiers in the battle of digital rights and safety. A healthy information and media ecosystem signals a healthy and thriving democracy.

If the information ecosystem collapses, every major G20 commitment becomes harder to achieve, whether on climate action, inclusive growth, AI governance, or digital cooperation. Failing to recognise the relationship between information integrity and democratic health weakens the credibility of the multilateral system at the very moment democracies are under unprecedented strain.

Not including information integrity and media issues in the Leaders' Declaration is an omission with far-reaching global consequences, especially given the work done on information integrity and the digital economy during Brazil's Presidency in 2024.

However, the M20 notes that the G20 made progress in several important areas, such as AI governance, data governance and emerging technologies, digital innovation for sustainable development and access to computing power, datasets and capacity building for Africa.





These are encouraging commitments which we hope to see prioritised during the 2026 Summit.

The M20 further notes useful entry points for further engagement in the Declaration, all of which could support future advocacy around media sustainability, digital rights, platform accountability and the fundamental importance of trusted information in governance systems.

Importantly, the M20 recognises President Ramaphosa's 11th-hour audience with the M20 delegation, during which he expressed a strong understanding of the public-interest role of journalism, the need to protect information as a public good and the urgency of strengthening information resilience in the digital age.

President Ramaphosa also acknowledged the role of the M20, in particular engagement about media freedom, during the G20 Social Summit ahead of the closing summit.

The M20 Johannesburg Declaration has also been published on the official G20 South Africa website.

'The next G20 Presidency (in 2026) will be led by an administration in the US that is likely to be antagonistic toward global commitments on information integrity, media sustainability, platform accountability and democratic safeguards.

'Despite this, our momentum must not be lost. This makes South Africa's leadership of the protection of media freedom and the continuity of M20's work even more important,' says Thandi Smith, Head of Programmes at MMA (now Moxii Africa).

Looking ahead, the M20 remains committed to focus on the role of media and journalism to foster information integrity as a cornerstone for human rights, effective governance, international cooperation and public trust needed for social and economic development in G20 countries and around the world.

The M20 programme will be steered by an advisory group of representatives of international organisations which supported the South African M20 this year.

The group will guide and support annual local M20 programmes in G20 host countries, such as in the US next year and in the UK in 2027, to provide a permanent vehicle for independent, parallel media engagement within the G20 landscape.





The M20 Johannesburg Summit resulted in the SA M20
growing into a global movement

