



implications, such as how we communicate, work, inform and entertain ourselves, teach, learn, shop and even conduct elections. The journalism and media industries have not been exempt from such upheavals and thus media development organisations critically need a place at the stakeholders table in internet governance discussions. The task of the symposium therefore was to identify the most pressing digital policy concerns for media development organisations and how to strategise and cooperate effectively to make our voices heard in the ongoing internet governance debate.

Following introductions, Guy Berger, Director for Freedom of Expression and Media Development at UNESCO, spoke briefly on the overlapping interests of UNESCO and GFMD in promoting freedom of expression, a key internet governance topic. Others on the panel highlighted the difficulty for news publishers and journalists in finding long-term viable economic models. Massive online platforms, such as Google and Facebook, have absorbed much of the industry's advertising revenue. During the session ideas were floated, like pressuring Facebook to fund journalism, while others contested such measures signalling that independent publishers will be burdened with obligations to Facebook, putting their independence in jeopardy. Such differences of opinion highlight the complexities that all internet governance stakeholders share.

Participants of the working group heard also from [Ishara Danasekera](#), co-editor of [Vikalpa Voices](#), who recounted recent tragic episodes of inter-ethnic violence in Sri Lanka incited by disinformation and hate speech disseminated through social media and messaging applications such as Whatsapp. Danasekera's intervention was an apt reminder that while social repercussions have been felt in the West at least in part propagated of information disorder, many countries have experienced exacerbated violence and revivals of old conflicts as these technologies have been introduced without due attention paid to the potential social affects they can have. Recent events in Myanmar, India, Brazil and Philippines also highlight the urgency of dealing with disinformation and ate speech as an aspect of internet governance.

Following on from last year's discussion, GFMD's Michael Oghia presented an [issue paper](#) developed with the support of *The Working Group on Media Development and Internet Governance*. The paper identifies a number of matters where Internet Governance and Media Development converge. Broadly, these include:

1. Freedom of expression
2. Access to information & digital inclusion
3. Sustainability & economic viability

These three interrelated topics feature heavily in the concerns of numerous stakeholders and comprise further subtopics. For example, freedom of expression on the web may also relate to censorship, internet shutdowns, the right to privacy, anonymity and encryption, content moderation by platforms and questions over the government regulation on online hate speech and disinformation. Furthermore, a subject of interest to MDI, such as media and information literacy spans across freedom of expression, access to information and digital inclusion and so could be a potential key focus.

Given that the list of issues identified as potential topics of interest for media development organisations almost covers the breadth of issues discussed at the IGF and other internet governance fora, it may be of interest for media development and journalism support organisations to narrow their focus to a selection of key topics to tackle especially as limited resources and flagship interests such as journalist support take precedence. However, with the combined efforts of the many organisations involved, the working group has the potential to be a potent influence in future internet governance dialogues.