

Dynamic Coalition on the Sustainability of Journalism and News Media (DC-Sustainability) 2019 Annual Report

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Established in April 2019 by the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD) and three of our member organisations – the Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA), Deutsche Welle (DW) Akademie, and WAN-IFRA – after being approved by the IGF Secretariat, the DC-Sustainability is a GFMD-led, multi-stakeholder initiative formally operating within the IGF that is meant to be a hub for the journalism, news media, press freedom, journalism support, and media development communities to engage with important Internet governance and digital policy matters. The DC arose as a key recommendation in our 2018 [issue paper](#), and it specifically identified the sustainability of journalism and news media in the digital age as an area that urgently requires greater policy support.

Over the next five years, the DC-Sustainability also intends to raise awareness of the connection between access to quality information and how achieving the target is critical to realising the other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The sustainability of journalism and news media is imperative to this, and given the importance of the digital sphere, the DC-Sustainability will strive to ensure that policy processes within the Internet governance ecosystem understands and addresses the relationship between sustainable journalism/news and realising the 2030 agenda.

Throughout the year, we held multiple calls and in-person consultations, such as at RightsCon Tunis 2019 to prepare for the launch, draft our charter, and lay the foundations for our work going forward so we could ensure that by the start of 2020, we can actively contribute to the IGF intersessional work as the newest Dynamic Coalition.

Our activities in 2019 were marked by a significant event: the [launch](#) of the DC-Sustainability at the 14th Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Berlin, Germany, on Wednesday, 27 November. For the inaugural session, GFMD organised a roundtable discussion on the impact of the digital economy on democratic societies. It also offered a critical look at both the benefits and harms of a world where global platforms are dominant distributors of news and information as well as major forums for public debate. Moderated by GFMD Executive Director Mira Milosevic, key speakers for the session included Hossein Derakhshan (London School of Economics and Political Science), Xianhong Hu (UNESCO), Michał “Rysiek” Woźniak (Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project), and Courtney Radsch (Committee to Protect Journalists). For more information, you can read the [session](#) report, view the [recording](#) of the session, and see a [short interview](#) that DW Akademie conducted.

The official launch was preceded by the third-annual [Day 0 Media Development and Internet Governance Symposium](#) on Monday, 25 November, which garnered more than 100 attendees, and helped to set the tone for the week. Rasmus Kleis Nielsen from the Reuters

Institute at Oxford University delivered a keynote address, followed by stories shared from speakers representing journalism and news media organisations from Uganda, Zimbabwe, and Serbia. The last part of the session then saw the participants organize into two breakout groups – one focusing on advocacy, and the other focusing on research – to gather ideas and feedback for our 2020 Internet governance action plan.

Furthermore, we participated in the main DC session at IGF 2019, and spoke about how our work [connects](#) to the SDGs.

The closing of our first official DC-Sustainability session also saw us ratify our new [Charter of the DC-Sustainability](#), which we had worked on throughout October and November. It constitutes our substantive outcome, and established our governance structure.

Our overall experience at IGF 2019 definitely exceeded expectations. We were so encouraged by how much support we received from members of the journalism, press freedom, and media development communities who participate in the IGF. The success of the launch of the DC-Sustainability – which included more than 100 participants – also clearly indicates that there is ample necessity for these topics to be discussed, and we are looking so forward to ensuring issues that impact the journalism and news media sector are on the Internet governance agenda, that the sustainability of journalism and news media is inextricably linked to multiple digital policy issues that range from combatting disinformation to digital platform accountability, and that members of our community continue to be heard within Internet policy fora.

Following the IGF, our activities mainly focused on:

1. Successfully coordinating the inaugural election for three co-coordinators of the DC-Sustainability (per the new Charter) in December, which saw Daniel O'Maley (CIMA), Courtney Radsch (Committee to Protect Journalists), and Hesbon Owilla (Aga Khan University, Kenya) elected as co-coordinators for the 2020-2021 term. Per the Charter, the GFMD Secretariat will also act as the secretariat for the DC-Sustainability.
2. Devising our 2020 action plan with the new co-coordinators, which we are currently working to realise ahead of IGF 2020 in November.