

Sixth Media Development Conference will discuss ways forward for media sector

YANGON – The sixth media development conference will kick off on December 7 under the theme: *strategies and way forward*. This year will focus on topics related to the media’s most burning issues with key national and international experts across the media sector.

2017 has been a vibrant and troubling year for the media sector in Myanmar. More than 70 journalists have been charged under various laws for criticising the military or government. The Rakhine conflict has highlighted the need for and lack of true and verified information. The rapidly growing number of online news consumers mark the diversity of the country and complexity of the media sector. Access to information and independent media remains work-in-progress and will be some of the issues discussed at this year’s Media Development Conference:

“Despite Myanmar’s many gains in the area of media, Myanmar’s journalists cannot practice fundamental freedoms such as the right to free expression and access to reliable information. It is crucial that the national and international media sector work together to bring the media sector forward inclusively and effectively. The Media Development Conference is a platform for doing just that,” says Mikel Aguirre Idiaquez, Project Manager, UNESCO.

This year’s conference invites for an interactive dialogue between the panelists and audience to ensure inclusion, ownership and transparency.

The safety of journalists

Safety of journalists is one of the important discussion points at this year’s conference:

“The safety of journalists and access to information are essential ingredients in being able to practice professional and ethical journalism without fear of retribution. Issues of impunity remains prevalent across the sector and with the country’s transition to democracy we need high, ethical journalism to report accurately on the difficult topics related to peace and conflict,” says Programme Manager, Myo Min Htike.

The discussion on the safety of journalists will be informed by the new global study published by International Media Support in November 2017: “Defending Journalism – a comparative analysis of best practices on safety in seven countries.

How to counter misinformation, fake news and upholding professional ethics are other issues that will be central to the discussions at this year’s conference. Experiences shared will range from Bosnia to Sri Lanka – but all panels are dominated by national panelists.

“A challenging and vibrant media sector can lead the country forward in its democratic transition – and the media conference can help bring about such changes,” ends Mikel Aguirre Idiaquez, Project Manager, UNESCO.

--

Date & Venue: 7-8 December at 8:30am-17.00pm. Venue: Chatrium Hotel, Yangon.

If you are a member of the media and wish to take part, contact Nant Aye Myat Mon

auroramay31@gmail.com. Please see the full agenda on:

<http://www.myanmarmediadevelopment.org/index.php/2017-agenda>

About the Myanmar Media Development Conference

Beginning in 2012, the annual Media Development Conference has served as an opportunity for media stakeholders from across Myanmar to engage in dialogue with government representatives on issues related to the development of their rapidly-changing media sector. It is a rare chance for those who work in the media industry to speak face-to-face with officials responsible for media policy reform.

This year's conference is organized by the Myanmar Press Council and the members of Media Development Thematic Working Group in partnership with UNESCO, IMS-Fojo, DW Akademie, USAID, UNDP, and Ministry of Information of Myanmar.