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Ramallah Office

PRESS RELEASE
2018/11
Ramallah, 2 October 2018

UNESCO celebrates the third International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI)



On 2 October, UNESCO celebrated the third *International Day for Universal Access to Information* (IDUAI 2018) in Palestine, through a "TEDx-style" discussion at the Birzeit University, to highlight the fundamental importance of the right of access to information, as an essential tool to foster open societies and to inspire effective laws and better practices in the field of media development.

The event emphasized how public access to quality information, along with strenghtened media institutions and an empowered civil society, are key to strengthen good governance and democracy and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The event sought to raise awareness on the importance of educational institution to access to information, the role of the governmental institutions and the importance to access information to combat corruption, the key role of the right to information to the Palestinian community and journalists to strengthen the relationship between the government and the citizen.

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The "TEDx-style" discussion featured influential and inspiring local speakers form academia, non-governmetnal institutions, well-known media outles actively committed to advancing the right to access information and prominent institutional figures. Interventions underlined the nexus between a strong societal fabric, good governance and the rule of law as the result of a public and equitable access to quality information.

The guest speakers, namely the 2016 Global Teacher Prize winner Ms. Hanan Al-Hroub, Ms. Rasha Amarneh, Director of legal affairs of the Palestinian Anti-Corruption Commission, the Director of Sharek Youth Forum Mr. Bader Zamareh, Ms. Nida Younis, Head of Media and PR Unit – Ministry of Information, Mr. Muntaser Hamdan, Journalist and member of the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate and Ms. Somoud Barghouti, Monitoring and Documentation Officer with the Coalition for Integrity and Accountability (AMAN) all highlighted the significance of access to information for a transparent and vibrant society further demanding the adoption of the right to information law.

Law student Ms. Tala from An-Najah University raised a very important question "on the importance of this law which facilitates access to information through the right channels, by setting the system this would streamline accountability".

Dr. Lodovico Folin Calabi, UNESCO's Representative to Palestine, concluded: "the adoption of a right to information law by Palestine would come at a time when the technological revolution we are living in is at the forefront of the international agenda. In such a rapidly transforming world, a fair and effective access to information is one of the most important foundations for strengthening individual and societal development."

The event was organised in the context of the IPDC Talks, which UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) is promoting under the theme "Powering Sustainable Development with Access to Information".

Fore more information on UNESCO's work to advance media development, please visit
https://en.unesco.org/themes/fostering-freedom-expression
https://en.unesco.org/programme/ipdc

For more information on UNESCO's activities in Palestine, please visit www.unesco.org/ramallah and visit us on : Unesco Ramallah Office

For more information on this event, please contact: Majd Beltaji, Public Information Officer of the UNESCO Ramallah Office, at m.beltaji@unesco.org