



**Remarks at World Radio Day
By Ms. Rosa Malango
UN Resident Coordinator and
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13th February 2018, Kampala, Imperial Royale Hotel**

Honourable Frank Tumwebaze, Minister for Information, Communication Technology (ICT) and National Guidance,

Your Excellency Domenico Fornara, Ambassador of Italy to the Republic of Uganda,

Mr. William Blick, Chairperson of the Uganda Olympic Committee,

Representatives of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),

Representatives of Konrad Adenauer Stiftung,

Representatives of DW Akademie,

All protocol observed,

Distinguished Guests.

On behalf of the UN Country Team in Uganda, it is my pleasure to speak to you today during World Radio Day and the greater Radio Week Learning Conference to celebrate the role of radio in Uganda and the greater region as a means of information, communication, education, media plurality, and freedom for diverse cultural and other forms of expression.

The wide range of participants and diversity present here today—from media owners and entrepreneurs, media development practitioners, educators & scholars, trainers and students; from government ministries/agencies, the telecommunications sector, and international media organizations—is vital to mobilize the expertise of the sector to help identify and share best practices from a wider range of perspectives for long term sustainability in Uganda and Eastern Africa.

Despite being over 100 years old, radio remains the most popular medium for information, education and social change. Notably, radio represents a focal point for community life, accessible even in the most remote and underserved locations. It is a low cost medium of communication and is especially suited to isolated communities and groups of society at risk due to conflict or disaster.

Moreover, radio provides a communication platform where physical access is challenged due to road infrastructure, security or other hindrances that cut off citizens from access to information. It reaches the illiterate, giving everyone, no matter their level of education, a chance to join in public debates and address issues of their concern in a language they can understand. It also reaches the disabled, as well as marginalised women, young people and the poor in the remotest villages. More importantly, community radio provides the easiest platform for communicating with communities, with leaders and sending feedback on issues affecting them.

Given that radio remains the most common form of media in many developing countries, including those in this region, building a strong and sustainable media sector that leverages radio is in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular fostering good health and welling being (SDG3), education (SDG4), and building peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG16). Radio, especially community radio stations, who are well represented here today from four countries, also play an invaluable role in building sustainable communities (SDG11), redefining the role of communities and decision makers in managing the impact of climate change (SDG13), encouraging cultural, religious and other influencers to support new attitudes to gender (SDG5) including the protection of

adolescent girls and ensuring women have access to property, as well as many others.

The United Nations in Uganda, through Global Pulse Lab, which is part of my office, has worked with partners to conduct case studies which provide evidence of the fact that public radio discussion including reports of local incidents and first-hand experiences by citizens that are not gathered with other quantitative or qualitative assessment methods and are not formally recorded anywhere else, can be analysed for development purposes. The pilot projects show how the exploration of the unconstrained public radio discussion can inform programmes to achieve the SDGs. And they also prove that the radio applications developed by Pulse Lab Kampala and partners can be used to capture and analyse in a systematic way these discussions. For example, a pilot project by the lab evaluated the availability of public radio content to analyse perceptions on the quality of health service delivery that could be used to inform governance processes.

Pulse Lab develops tools and technologies that leverage data sources from radio content, social media, mobile phones and satellite imagery and has created toolkits to enhance decision-making and provide real-time situational awareness. Within the development community, Pulse Lab Kampala continued to foster an enabling environment for using big data for sustainable development and humanitarian response by supporting the development of regulatory frameworks and standards, connecting research communities, enabling capacity building and driving policy work. The network of Pulse Lab Kampala collaborators includes 30 UN agencies and government counterparts and 40 academic institutions. Moreover, a growing number of private sector companies were engaged in public-private data sharing partnerships with the facilitation of Pulse Lab Kampala.

According to the 2018 theme, as mandated annually by UNESCO, World Radio Day calls on radio stations to showcase the beauty of sports in all of its diversity; the traditional sports that connect us to our cultural heritage, the grassroots sports that anchor us within our communities, the stories that challenge gender stereotypes, and the inspiring stories of sports as a force for peace and development around the world.

It is important to recognize the alliance of radio and sports as a force for civic participation and sustainable development and for celebrating our diversity and shared values.

However, gender equality is central to any discussion of radio and sports. It means providing equal opportunities for women broadcasters; promoting balanced coverage of men's, women's and mixed sports and ensuring fair portrayal of sportspeople, irrespective of their gender.

This is important since narrow gender stereotypes and clichéd portrayals that objectify or minimise the achievements of women, or rely on aggressive (or even violent) masculine ideals, harm everyone in society. Sports media are especially powerful in shaping the norms and values of society, so we need to carefully consider how the media sector and radio can help to support the achievement of SDG5, which advocates for gender equality, throughout society.

Studies have shown there are substantial numbers of women who are interested in sports and watch or listen to sports through various forms of media. However, there is a huge imbalance in the relative coverage of men's and women's sports around the world. For example, the UNESCO Global Media Monitoring Project, which looked at media coverage in 114 countries in 2015, found that only 7% of sportspeople seen, heard or read about in the media are women. Furthermore, only 4% of sports-related stories have women as a central focus. Other data show that women are also severely under-represented in sports broadcasting itself. According again to the UNESCO Global Media Monitoring Project, only 12% of sports stories are reported or presented by women.

Where there is coverage of women's sports, it is often found to rely on stereotypes and may minimize women's achievements. Women's sports or athletes who do not fit our narrow ideals of "femininity" may be ignored entirely or even derided. On the other hand while men often have the focus on their athleticism and achievements, they can also be portrayed through narrow stereotypes that idolize aggression, dominance and lack of emotion. It is therefore important to look closely at this, as sports media are extremely powerful in shaping the views and values of their audiences. This is especially true for young men, which can be a very difficult

group to reach through other means. A balanced coverage of women's, men's and mixed sports, equal opportunities for women broadcasters, as well as fair portrayals of all athletes, ensures sports media reflect the true diversity of their audiences.

Currently, professional and championship sports dominate airwaves around the globe – especially soccer and a handful of other elite sports. For example, more than 3.2 billion people tuned into the 2014 FIFA Soccer World Cup. In contrast, traditional and grassroots sports can often struggle to attract coverage. Media focus on what they perceive to be their audience's appetite, although the real picture is more complicated.

With the power to encourage people to connect with their cultural heritage, radio can highlight and celebrate traditional national sports, including the benefits, the history and the cultural richness traditional sports brings to communities. Examples from around the world show that broadcasters can even attract new audiences by exploring avenues for sports content based upon traditional, cultural or grassroots sports.

World Radio Day also advocates for greater coverage of sports for peace and development initiatives and more focus on the universal values of non-violence, solidarity and tolerance, promoting intrinsic values of teamwork, fairness, discipline and respect in sports coverage. There are countless examples of sports being used to bridge divides, empower communities and promote social cohesion, but many of these do not make it onto the airwaves. Yet by providing more coverage to the inspiring examples of sports for peace and development initiatives around the world, diversity of coverage is improved, and the awareness is raised of stories of local interest.

The story of the refugee team that participated in the 2016 Rio Olympic Games was widely shared and was a powerful example that inspired millions around the world and put a human face on the refugee crisis.

Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to Uganda where the Government's commitment to a diversified and liberalized media sector has transformed Uganda into a model country for the region.

I invite you to become advocates for the media sector and for radio in particular.

Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to highlight that the United Nations Country team through UNESCO and other UN agencies is supporting the Government of Uganda to address building a strong media sector. I believe African States have a lot of experiences to share amongst each other and with the world, not only on the issues and concerns of media and freedom of expression, but also on durable solutions to transform the media sector into a vehicle for social change, cultural proliferation, peace and sustainable development.

Thank you for your attention and enjoy the Pearl of Africa!