

3 May 2014

**Message of H.E. John W. Ashe
President of the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly,
for World Press Freedom Day**

On this World Press Freedom Day, let us take a moment to recognize the courage of journalists the world over, many of whom toil in very difficult environments. We pay tribute to them and the countless individuals across the globe who consistently put their own lives in danger in order to report the news. eapons Convention, and upon all of us to uphold our responsibilities and eliminate the threat of chemical weapons.

In the past year, some 92 journalists lost their lives while doing their jobs. And many other members of the media have been attacked, kidnapped, held hostage and subjected to intimidation, harassment and arbitrary imprisonment. We must end impunity, and perpetrators of these acts must and should be brought to justice.

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights underscores the freedom for all to seek, receive and impart information, regardless of borders. Nevertheless, this universal standard which was wholeheartedly endorsed by governments has not yet guaranteed full protection for the Press.

In December last year, the UN General Assembly adopted, for the first time, a resolution condemning all attacks and violence against journalists and media workers and proclaimed November 2 the International Day to end Impunity for Crimes against Journalists. The Assembly called upon Member States to promote a safe and enabling environment for journalists to perform their work independently and without interference.

Today, I encourage Member States to make a steadfast commitment to support this call and to foster media freedom. As we continue to set the stage for the Post-2015 Development Agenda, we will see how new and expanding technologies will help shape how data is shared between nations. Efforts to support free and open access to this information for the media and all citizens will be vital.

Let us never forget that freedom of expression is a basic human right. And a pluralistic and independent Press is essential in helping to support democratic and sustainable societies. Increased public participation in political processes and civic engagement boosts development at all levels and we must strive to allow journalists to share our important stories, from one community to another, without putting themselves at risk.