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EVALUATION REPORT

TRANSTEC

UDF-COL-09-341 – Monitoring freedom of expression and democracy in Colombia

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This report presents the findings from the evaluation of the *Monitoring Freedom of Expression and Democracy in Colombia* project implemented by Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa (FLIP) in partnership with the Proyecto Antonio Nariño (PAN) Alliance from December 1, 2010 to January 31, 2013.[1] UNDEF provided a grant of US$180,000, $18,000 of which was retained for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

The aim of the project is *to develop a monitoring methodology that makes visible the more indirect, hidden violations of freedom of the press at the national level and in the different regions of the country*. The participatory approach was prioritized in the project strategy, with the organization of forums for consultation and legitimation that brought together strategic stakeholders from the social communication and human rights sectors. The key component was the development of a standardized tool (Index) measurement and monitoring of freedom of expression and access to information over time by journalists and the Colombian public. The objective was also to promote the use of these indicators by journalists, the media, and CSOs to analyze the quality of democracy and make visible the restrictions on journalism, sparking public debate on these issues. During the development of the Index, initiatives were undertaken with government entities to enlist their support in promoting reforms and public policies to guarantee exercise of the right to freedom of expression and access to information.

Part of the post-project evaluations financed by the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), the objective of evaluation missions is to undertake an in-depth analysis of UNDEF-funded projects to gain a better understanding of what constitutes a successful project, which will in turn help UNDEF devise future project strategies. Evaluations also assist stakeholders in determining whether projects have been implemented in accordance with the project document and whether anticipated project outputs have been achieved.

(ii)   Evaluation Findings

The project strategy yielded results in several **relevant** areas. First, it helped make the Colombian legal framework more consistent in the application of international and domestic standards for the protection of freedom of expression and access to information. The Index makes it possible to see and systematically measure over time the violations and risks associated with security and high levels of impunity that inhibit the practice of journalism. Earlier domestic and international models were used as a reference in developing this tool. The project successfully implemented a consultative process that gave legitimacy to the indicators identified. Today, there are forums for collaboration in some settings where public policy is made. A number of reports on freedom of the press in Columbia have cited statistics from the Index when describing the recent attacks, illegal interceptions, and threats against journalists in the country. Several important strategic elements need to be strengthened, including the promotion of social appropriation and the development of gender and ethnicity variables.

The results obtained confirm a high degree of **effectiveness**—due especially to intensified oversight and greater guarantees of freedom of expression and access to information in Colombia. The Index recognizes the country's geographic diversity and the impact of the domestic armed conflict, which has affected access to information and freedom of

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[1] According to the Project Document (contract signed on October 15, 2010). The project received a 2-month extension. It ended on January 31, 2013.

expression. The strategic option of executing the project through The PAN Alliance, a partnership of organizations with an acknowledged track record in this field, maximized its capacity to engage in advocacy and engage with a diverse public that includes CSOs, foreign academics, journalists, opinion makers, and government. At the same time, great strides have been made in the dialogue with the government, and opportunities have been created for participation in public policy-making, specifically with the Ministry of the Interior's Human Rights Office and Office of the President's Secretariat of Transparency. Aspects requiring further attention are the refinement of the tool and the planning of a strategy that ensures its dissemination, sustainability, and future usefulness.

The project's level of **efficiency** was highly satisfactory, thanks to the value added contributed by the PAN consortium, which furnished its expertise and knowledge of the issues, thus optimizing the results of the project. From an operational standpoint, much of the responsibility for project execution was shouldered by FLIP, which provided the technical Secretariat. Management of the project followed a work plan based on the Project Document, and activities were monitored as they occurred. The reports and annexes provide a detailed summary of the project's implementation. The budget for year 2 was modified by agreement with UNDEF. The project had cofinancing from the British Embassy, USAID, the Open Society Foundations, and International Media Support (IMS).

The Index is published on the Proyecto Antonio Nariño website and was widely publicized in the media.

In terms of **impact,** the statements obtained indicate positive short-, medium-, and long-term effects. At a time when the State is working on the concept and design of public policies on freedom of expression and access to information, the Index is a valuable and timely input. A standardized quantitative instrument for monitoring progress and reversals in public policy, it will have a profound effect on the analysis of the quality of democracy and the exercise of fundamental rights. The regional approach contributed to the analysis of geographic diversity and the effects of the domestic armed conflict in terms of restraints on access to information and freedom of expression. All these components significantly increased the visibility of violations and of the precariousness of rights, as well as the restrictions on journalism, sparking public debate on these issues. The development of the Index created an opportunity for strengthening CSOs and increasing their participation.

The technical **sustainability** of the project derives in part from the strength of The PAN Alliance, which serves as an intermediary and genuine model for the organizations, media, and government entities working to promote and monitor respect for the rights of freedom of expression and access to information.

The Index has the potential for continuity and replication, but for that to happen, it must be widely publicized and its future usefulness enhanced. This will largely depend on its financial sustainability, which is still uncertain, and to some extent, on the course that international cooperation takes in Colombia, where only limited support is being provided for efforts connected with governance and the quality of democracy. The PAN Alliance needs to find alternatives to solve this problem.

The **value added** provided by UNDEF contributed to the successful development of the Index. Highly valued as a "one-of-a-kind" instrument, the Index sets well-defined parameters for analysis of the present and future situation of freedom of information and access to information in Colombia. It has also brought problems to light and raised awareness among populations in areas where the right of freedom of expression is highly precarious.

(iii) Conclusions

The conclusions reached can be summarized as follows:

- In the Colombian context, which is rather adverse for the practice of journalism, the Index makes a real contribution to transparency and the democratization process, since it makes possible close comparative monitoring of freedom of expression and access to public information in the country.

- Regular use of the Index will permit comparative evaluation of the progress made (or lack thereof) in the implementation of public policy and identification of any protective measures that need reinforcement to guarantee the right to freedom of expression and access to information. The addition of new monitoring indicators will increase its usefulness and relevance.

- The regional approach has revealed the vulnerability, self-censorship, and insecurity of journalists in the various regions of the country and the different institutional responses to the regions. The geographic dimension should be complemented with a thematic approach to expand the analysis base and improve the ability to generate information.

- Capacities have been strengthened, along with forums for interaction among the academic, media, and CSO stakeholders involved in monitoring freedom of expression and access to information.

- The continuity of the process must be guaranteed and a plan of action designed that includes future activities and encourages appropriation of the instrument by social and institutional stakeholders.

- The tool must be publicized, reaching other actors and sectors that are still unaware of its existence. Identifying synergies with similar domestic or international tools can further its use and heighten its impact.

- The Index depends almost entirely on funding from international cooperation, which, in the adverse environment of budgetary constraints for all donors, is a risk factor for its sustainability. Finding alternative sources of funding is therefore essential.

- Future phases of the Index' methodological review should include the design of specific gender and ethnicity indicators.

(iv) Recommendations

The recommendations below are designed to target certain elements of the project and improve its advocacy strategy.

- Promote use of the Index in drafting and evaluating public policies designed to reduce violations of and restrictions on rights. This will require intensified collaboration and the programming of specific activities and forums for collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior's Human Rights Office and the Office of the President's Secretariat for Transparency.

- Improve the quality of the Index and intensify its impact by conducting a methodological review of this tool with the help of statisticians. Such a review would include: (i) sectoral studies and analyses; (b) case studies; and (c) variables for gender and ethnicity analysis.

- Take advantage of the forums for participation and consultation created during the development of the Index to generate a relevant and lasting social appropriation

dynamic. At the same time, guarantee the future usefulness of the Index by promoting its social appropriation through the media and its adaptation to the users' profile.

▪ Design a funding strategy that will ensure the continuity of the next phases of the process, actively engaging the partners of the PAN Alliance.

II. INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

(i) The project and evaluation objectives

This report presents the findings from the evaluation of the *Monitoring Freedom of Expression and Democracy in Colombia* project implemented by Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa (FLIP), a member of the Antonio Nariño Alliance, in collaboration with Media for Peace (MPP),[2] Fundación Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano (FNPI), Asociación de Diarios Colombianos (Andiarios), and Friederich Ebert Stiftung in Colombia (FESCOL), during the period December 1, 2010 to January 31, 2013.[3] UNDEF provided a grant of US$180,000, $18,000 of which was retained for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

The project developed and implemented an Index on freedom of expression and access to information in Colombia. The aim was to measure and make visible the current restrictions on and violations of these fundamental rights. By devising a comprehensive monitoring methodology, the project sought to create a better understanding of the Colombian context and provide clear standards and tools for measuring the quality of the information that journalists are communicating to the public to ensure that the information is both clear and truthful. The project also explored freedom of press, access to information, and risky journalistic practices in areas of armed conflict in Colombia. This monitoring activity was also designed to put these issues on the public agenda to help citizens understand the importance of freedom of expression and access to information for democracy-building.

In order to maximize its impact, the project strategy was centered around a partnership approach involving some the major organizations working on the issue of freedom of the press in Colombia. The project beneficiaries were media professionals, social organizations that monitor freedom of expression and access to information, and the public at large, especially in conflict zones.

Part of the post-project evaluations financed by the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), the objective of evaluation missions is to undertake an in-depth analysis of UNDEF-funded projects to gain a better understanding of what constitutes a successful project, which will in turn help UNDEF devise future project strategies. Evaluations also assist stakeholders in determining whether projects have been implemented in accordance with the project document and whether anticipated project outputs have been achieved.

(ii) Evaluation methodology

The evaluation was conducted by an international expert and a national expert hired under the Transtec contract with UNDEF. The evaluation methodology is spelled out in the

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[2] This organization ceased operations in 2012.
[3] According to the Project Document (contract signed on October 15, 2010). The project received a 2-month extension. It ended on January 31, 2013.

contract's Operational Manual and is further detailed in the Launch Note. Pursuant to the terms of the contract, the project documents were sent to the evaluators in March 2013 (see Annex 2). After reading and analyzing them, they prepared a Launch Note describing the analysis methodology and instruments used during the evaluation mission to Colombia from April 15 to 19, 2013. The evaluators interviewed project staff and members of the project coordination team. They also met with project beneficiaries, media chiefs, and government officials. The interviewees were:

- The project management team
- The technical secretariat of the project: Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa (FLIP)
- A partner organization of PAN:[4] Fundación Nuevo Periodismo Latinoamericano
- The team from Cifras & Conceptos, charged with preparing the survey and designing the indicators
- External consultants hired to work on specific issues
- External academics
- Journalists and opinion makers

Annex 3 contains the complete list of persons interviewed.

(iii) Development context

Colombia has made great efforts in the past decade to restore security in the country through its Democratic Security Policy (PSD), which increased and strengthened the presence of government institutions in areas dominated by insurgents, launched a frontal attack on the narco-trafficking that fuels the conflict, and demobilized illegal groups operating outside the law. Thus, as it did during the administration of President Álvaro Uribe (2002-2010), the government intensified its counterinsurgency offensive to regain control over the territory, especially areas dominated by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). During this period, government forces gained the upper hand in the counterinsurgency war, achieving major victories against the guerillas, the FARC, and the National Liberation Army (ELN). Despite clear improvements in security in certain regions of the country, the FARC and the ELN, which had been seriously weakened, were neither defeated militarily nor demobilized. Experts calculate that the FARC currently has some 8,000 to 10,000 ex-combatants in its ranks.

The government's success on the counterinsurgency front was accompanied by progress in its negotiations with the United Self-defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) for their disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration into society. This process, which unfolded from 2003 to 2006, resulted in the demobilization and disarmament of 39 AUC units, demobilizing a total of 31,671 combatants. Under the agreement reached, demobilized AUC members were granted immunity from prosecution through Law 975, known as the Justice and Peace Law. This act also recognized the rights of victims to truth, justice, and reparations, requiring demobilized combatants to tell victims the truth and make reparations.

Demobilizing the paramilitary units led to an improvement in certain key indicators of violence, such as massacres and kidnappings. Studies by such organizations as the International Crisis Group showed a drop in the number of murders from 28,775 in 2002 to 16,140 in 2008;[5] at the same time, however, the humanitarian crisis and absence of protection for the civilian population intensified, especially in areas abandoned by the guerillas.

Concerning violence against journalists, Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa (FLIP) reported a decline in the number of assassinations and kidnappings, explainable not only by greater security in the country but also by media "self-regulation" or self-censorship. Since

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[4] The heads of Asociación de Diarios Colombianos (Andiarios) and Friederich Ebert Stiftung in Colombia (FESCOL) could not be interviewed.
[5] The virtuous twins: Protecting human rights and improving security in Colombia. Latin America Briefing N°21. May 2009.

freedom of expression in Colombia has been under attack by illegal forces for decades, the statements of high Uribe Administration officials stigmatizing human rights defenders and journalists critical of the government raised concern among the OAS and UN Rapporteurs for Freedom of Expression about their effect on journalism. In 2005 the OAS Rapporteur said, "these types of excluding measures generate great mistrust and a polarizing attitude that do not contribute to the creation of an environment that permits the development of freedom of expression…These types of comments not only increase the risks that journalists and human rights defenders face but could suggest that the acts of violence aimed at suppressing them in one way or another enjoy the acquiescence of the government."[6]

Since taking office as President in August 2010, President Juan Manuel Santos has pressed for the passage of laws and regulations that foster respect for human rights and the guarantee of those rights; the enforcement of international humanitarian law; and appropriate assistance and reparations for victims of the conflict, including the groups most affected, among them teachers, union members, and journalists. The government managed to pass Victims and Land Restitution Law 1448, which creates the conditions for compensating many victims of the armed violence and restoring lands that were taken from them over a 10-year period. President Santos has proven open and willing to engage in a constructive dialogue with civil society organizations. This will give them greater influence over policy-making, as in the case of the Freedom of Expression Policy, which is in the initial drafting phase but has been widely publicized among the organizations working in this area, Proyecto Antonio Nariño among them. In addition, the National Protection Unit (UNP) has been created to connect, coordinate, and provide suitable protective measures for people at risk, including journalists. However, the challenges to providing specific protection are still daunting.

These efforts have gone hand-in-hand with a political strategy (Peace Agreement) to put an end to the prolonged armed conflict. This agreement is currently being discussed in a roundtable negotiation between the Government and the FARC guerillas. These negotiations will no doubt have implications for freedom of expression and journalism in terms of security for reporters and for truth, justice, and reparations as well, bringing to light the rights violations committed against journalists by armed perpetrators and government agents during the conflict.

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[6] Joint Press Release No. R05/09. *THE RAPPORTEURS FOR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION OF THE UN AND OF THE OAS EXPRESS THEIR CONCERN REGARDING COMMENTS MADE BY HIGH AUTHORITIES OF THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT AGAINST JOURNALIST.* (OEA/Ser.L/V/II/122. Doc.5 rev.1). http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/expresion/showarticle.asp?artID=738&lID=2.

II PROJECT STRATEGY

(i)   Project approach and strategy

The PAN Alliance is a group of national and international organizations formed in 2001 to further freedom of expression and a culture of respect and protection for journalism in Colombia. The *Monitoring Freedom of Expression and Democracy in Colombia* project is part of the national strategy pursued by the PAN Alliance, which seeks to spearhead processes and initiatives built around a common purpose to maximize their capacity for impact and change. Using this perspective as the point of departure, the project's intervention logic

Roundtable to validate the Index, Barranquilla

was built around three components selected through a participatory approach, prioritizing consultation and the involvement of highly committed strategic stakeholders with a strong track record in the social communication and human rights sector. The expected results sought to ensure: (i) that the Colombia public, including journalists and the media, have a standardized tool that will make it possible to measure and monitor freedom of expression and access to information over time; (ii) that journalists, the media, and CSOs use these indicators to analyze the quality of democracy and shed light on the restrictions on journalism, fostering public debate on these issues; (iii) that the Colombian government and legislation become more consistent and support the promotion of reforms and public policies that guarantee the exercise of the rights of freedom of expression and access to information. The project strategy was therefore focused on joint development of a new monitoring tool (Index) applicable to the Colombian situation that would help paint a clearer picture of the situation, based on hard data, to encourage the reporting of violations of freedom of expression.

The project's roadmap was based on the Project Document and consisted of two complementary intervention phases: Year 1, devoted to the design of the Index, and Year 2, to its implementation. The design phase involved a review of the available secondary information, including bibliographies, experiences, and international standards and indicators, for the preparation of the first draft of the indicators. Twenty in-depth interviews were conducted with FLIP personnel to learn about information uses and needs. A basic component of the design phase was the preparation and

> The Index provides numbers for something about access to information that was already discussed. The interesting thing about this exercise is that it furnishes much more reliable data on the situation in the country, since having hard data on these issues is key.
>
> **Andrés M., Director of FLIP**

administration of a national survey, which served as a source of information for the Index. The purpose of the survey was to elicit the views of journalists, editors, collaborators, and media chiefs about current conditions for the practice of their profession. It was also used to compare the existing information on freedom of expression and access to information with the information obtained through the quantitative instrument.
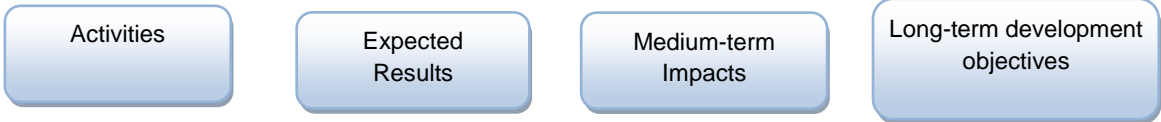
The Index presents the results for the national level, three departments, (Bogotá, Antioquia, and Valle del Cauca), and five regions (Caribbean, Pacific, Central, Eastern and Amazonia-Orinoquia).

The information has been published on the PAN website and can be accessed at http://www.sivios.com/flip/indice_final/index.html. FLIP's 20I2 Annual Report on freedom of expression also presents this methodological tool.

The analysis of the project strategy uncovered two aspects that could have been further developed: (i) The Project Document does not include specific activities related to obtaining Result 3. This information is also generally addressed in the Final Narrative. However, forums have actually been established for linkage with government entities, particularly the Office of the President's Secretariat for Transparency and the Ministry of the Interior's Human Rights Office. Moreover, many representatives of public entities, mayors, ombudsmen, etc. participated in consultations and organized activities to present the final results; (ii) A specific strategy should have been designed to publicize the tool and ensure its use by all journalists, especially those who are less involved in the matters addressed by the project and less sensitive to the issues.

(ii) Logical framework

The logical framework below describes the sequence of the intervention carried out by Proyecto Antonio Nariño (PAN), centered on three results. It also illustrates the activities and their contribution to the achievement of the results and objectives pursued:

Activities	Expected Results	Medium-term Impacts	Long-term development objectives
- Develop and administer a national survey for journalists to assess the degree of freedom of expression and access to information - 20 in-depth interviews - 5 roundtables (one international) - 4 pilot tests of national indicators - Final survey administered to 603 people, including 285 media chiefs and 318 journalists across the country - Creation of an online document with a proposed indicator database	**R 1 –**The Colombian people, including journalists and media organizations, CSOs, and the public at large, have a tool that that enables them to measure the freedom of expression and access to information situation.	- Determination of the basic structure and composition of the Index to permit monitoring of progress or reversals in freedom of expression and access to information, with emphasis on the geographic dimension - Baseline with information and a quantitative and qualitative diagnostic review of freedom of expression and access to information - Creation and electronic publication of the document "Índice de Libertad de Expresión y Acceso a la Información" (Freedom of Expression and Access to Information Index)	- Greater joint action by civil society, the journalist's association, and the government to monitor and follow the exercise of freedom of the press and access to information to make them priority issues on the national agenda - Development and validation of a tool for systematic quantitative and qualitative measurement of freedom of expression and access to information that is comparable to the indexes of Freedom House, Reporters without Borders, IREX, and Chile's Barómetro de Acceso a la Información (Barometer of Access to Information)
- Creation of risk maps and dissemination of indicators and monitoring methodology through a printed manual, a web information system, a final launch event and regional training sessions with journalists.	R 2 – The public, journalists, media, and social organizations make ongoing use of the indicator database to study the freedom of the press situation and engage in quality discussions on the matter.	- A quantitative instrument and risk maps for use by the association, the media, civil society, and government in the diagnostic review and measurement of freedom of information developed, validated, and disseminated - 80 journalists and social organizations in 4 regions of the country trained in	- Current restrictions and violations of fundamental rights made visible and demonstrated - A forum for dialogue and interaction between organizations working on the issues of freedom of the press and government

		the use of the monitoring methodology, and the report on the freedom of expression situation is publicized.	authorities created to improve conditions for the practice of journalism, including access to information
		- Media use of a specific variable analyzed in the Index as a source for news on freedom of expression and access to information.	
PAN and FLIP participated in the - *Más información, más derechos (*More information, more rights) campaign during the drafting of the bill on access to public information. - Several meetings with the Human Rights Office on the development of a public policy on freedom of expression	**R 3 –** Colombian government and legislation more supportive of legal reforms for the protection and promotion of freedom of the press	- The Ministry of the Interior's Human Rights Office and the Office of the President's Secretariat for Transparency value the Index very highly and express an interest in creating regular forums for collaboration in the construction and monitoring of public policy on freedom of expression and access to information - Ministry of the Interior's Protection Program uses the Index to move forward with the risk analysis and enforce measures for the protection of journalists.	

III.   EVALUATION FINDINGS

(i)   Relevance

The interviews conducted as part of the evaluation revealed several relevant aspects, namely:

- The project's objectives respond to the need to make the freedom of information situation in Colombia visible and systematically measure it over time, since despite the fact that the country's legal framework recognizes international standards and domestic laws protecting freedom of expression, violations, security risks, and high levels of impunity persist that inhibit the practice of journalism.

- According to Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa (FLIP), which systematically monitors the freedom of the press situation, in 2012 there were 218 direct assaults against journalists.[7] In its 2011 report, *El olvido de la justicia* (Justice Forgotten), of the 138 cases of journalists murdered in the line of duty between 1977 and 2010, the statute of limitations in 19 cases will soon run out and in 46 it already has. In 90% of the cases in which journalists were killed prior to 1991, the perpetrators got off scot-free.[8]

Launch of the Index, December 2012

- Earlier models of national and international methodologies were used in the development of the Index, among them the Freedom House Freedom of the Press Index, and the Reporters without Borders Press Freedom Index, the IREX Media Sustainability Index, and Chile's *Barómetro de Acceso a la Información*. However, this was the first national index for this type of measurement, which moreover, led to an effort to reach a sectoral consensus and soul-searching within the journalists' association.

- The index contributes to a structural understanding of the phenomenon to the extent that it is an instrument for measuring not only individual cases but the overall problem. It is an innovation that focuses the debate on four dimensions (access to information, the environment for freedom of expression and access to information, direct assaults, and impunity) and makes it possible to observe the diverse regional conditions by department and region.

- The joint efforts of the organizations of Proyecto Antonio Nariño (PAN) Alliance complement those of other civil society initiatives such as the *Más derechos, más información* platform, lending greater visibility to the need to guarantee freedom of expression and facilitating advocacy with the government.

- The joint intervention logic of the partner organizations of the Proyecto Antonio Nariño Alliance is consistent with the mandates and strengths of each.

- The views of the interviewees—that is, the direct partners, external academics, journalists, and opinion makers—about the relevance and usefulness of the tool are generally positive. The project has managed to position itself in a number of

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[7]'De las balas a los expedientes,' FLIP, Informe sobre el Estado de la libertad de prensa en Colombia en 2012, Bogotá, Colombia, March 2013.

[8] *El olvido de la justicia*, FLIP, Informe sobre el Estado de la libertad de prensa en Colombia en 2010, Bogotá, Colombia, February 2011.

policy-making settings, as the Ministry of the Interior's Human Rights Program has recognized, since the information from the Index can serve as a baseline for drafting a public policy on freedom of expression.

- While the information generated by the Index is useful for monitoring the situation, the strategy for its social appropriation and for participation in the public policy settings where it can be used were not clearly defined.
- Although the Project Document called for the analysis of gender and ethnicity variables through the collection of information on freedom of expression and access to information from women journalists and indigenous women in conflict zones (pursuant to the directives in United Nations Security Council resolution 1325), this component was not adequately addressed when developing the Index.
- In the weeks following the evaluation mission, assaults, illegal interceptions, and threats against journalists were reported in Colombia—once again putting the debate on guarantees for the practice of journalism at the forefront. Significantly, several reports on the freedom of the press situation cited figures obtained from the Index.

(ii) Effectiveness

Some of the project's results were considered very positive and very valuable for guaranteeing rights, thus meeting its main objectives. One of the key results was development of the freedom of expression and access to information Index, and especially, the participatory process generated during the various phases of its development. In addition to mobilizing journalists and media people working primarily on the issues of economics, justice, politics, and conflict (the survey sample consisted of 603 people and a universe of 3,236), the process managed to bring visibility to the issue and put it on the public agenda. The Index is built around four dimensions (access to information, the environment for freedom of expression, direct assaults, and impunity), which in turn are disaggregated into 12 categories and 42 variables. The information sources include 35 variables from private and government sources and 7 from the perceptions survey.

> The project fills a void in terms of the need to create a tool for quality advocacy on the issues, not only with professional associations but the government in one of the countries with the highest rates of violence against journalists.
> **Mario Morales, Dean of Social Communication Social, Universidad Javeriana.**

The results were validated and legitimized through four roundtables held in Bogotá, Popayán, Medellín, and Santa Marta and a panel of experts well-versed in juridical and freedom of expression issues. The purpose of these meetings was to present the Index and adjust its structure, analyze the survey results, and compile information on weighting. At the same time, the data collected served as a baseline for measurement that will permit ongoing monitoring of progress and/or reversals in the implementation of current public policy.

The organizations of Proyecto PAN—Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa (FLIP), FESCOL, Andiarios, Fundación Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano (FNPI), and Medios para la Paz—have an acknowledged track record in this area, complementary strengths, and a specific capacity for advocacy that facilitated widespread legitimation of the tool and advocacy with a diverse public that included CSOs, external academics, opinionmakers, and government officials. The tool recognizes geographic diversity and the impact of the armed domestic conflict that affects access to information and freedom of expression. Nevertheless, some interviewees mentioned the need for further methodological review and refinement of the tool, suggesting consultations with experts more versed in statistical methods to make adjustments for its improvement.

The project has had a very positive impact on the dialogue with the government on monitoring its activities and participating in policy-making to improve the environment for

Presentation of survey results

freedom of expression and create the conditions for access to information. Based on the results of the survey, the project's Technical Secretariat has held several discussions attended by the officials that oversee the prevention and protection policy disclose some troubling findings, such as the fact that in the Departments of Arauca, Cauca, Urabá Antioqueño, and Cesar, the free practice of journalism is in serious jeopardy. Both the Ministry of the Interior's Human Rights Office and the Office of the President's Secretariat for Transparency have expressed a highly positive opinion of the Index and satisfaction with the forums for collaboration already created and the idea of creating others as part of public policy-making and the monitoring of freedom of expression and access to information. Determining the applicability of the Access to Public Information Law, currently under review by the Constitutional Court, will be another opportunity for collaborating with the government on initiatives that contribute to its enforcement.

Finally, in terms of boosting the project's efficiency, the mission points out two areas that could have been explored in greater depth. First, the strategy for publicizing the tool among circles outside the stakeholders that customarily participate in PAN Alliance initiatives was not sufficiently developed. Second, there was been no planning for the activities monitoring phase to guarantee the tool's sustainability and future usefulness.

(iii) Efficiency

In terms of human resources, the project was headed by qualified personnel with acknowledged expertise and legitimacy in the field. The consultant in charge of developing the Index, as well as the experts hired, have the competencies required for good job performance. FLIP, which served as the technical secretariat of the project, was responsible for its administrative and financial management. The PAN Alliance had already implemented other projects in partnership with other organizations. The value added contributed by the consortium can be observed above all in the strategic approach, since each partner brought its expertise and specificity to the work at hand, maximizing the project's impact. Andiarios, as a professional

> Studies on freedom of the press should have reference parameters to identify improvement or empowerment. This index has parameters that ensure that analyses of freedom of the press are based on data and make it possible to determine whether government policies increase freedom of the press. It helps journalists analyze the environment.
> **Álvaro Duque. Dean, University of Rosario School of Journalism.**

association, opened important opportunities for dialogue with the government, at both the congressional level and with the Office of the President. FESCOL, as an international organization with a long history in the field of human rights and democracy, has the recognition of civil society and close ties with major media and databases in the region. The FNPI, characterized by its search for excellence in journalism and its contribution to democracy and development in Ibero-America and the Caribbean, provided expertise in conducting workshops on journalism, ethics in journalism, and e-journalism. Collaboration

with Medios para la Paz ceased in 2012, owing to the organization's serious financial difficulties, which forced it to cease operations. From an operational standpoint, FLIP assumed responsibility for much of the project's implementation, although the partner organizations contributed in a more or less balanced way to implementing the workshops, roundtables, and training activities. A work plan based on the Project Document was prepared, and bimonthly coordination meetings were held. The activities were monitored as they progressed. The reports and annexes provide a very detailed summary of the project's execution.

The evaluators observed that the people interviewed stressed the high quality and usefulness of the Index in conducting a diagnostic review of freedom of expression; however, their answers varied when it came to the use of this tool, access to it, and the documents produced by the project.

The evaluators also observed transparent financial management and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances. The project grew exponentially, resulting in major changes, since the original plan had been to construct a battery of indicators and it was later decided to construct an index. Overall, the changes introduced did not affect the quality of the results. The project received a 2-month extension. There were also changes in budget execution, since the PAN partners assumed the cost of some Year 1 activities. Without changing the total amount, the budget for Year 2 was adjusted with UNDEF approval in May 2012. The project also had cofinancing from other funding sources such as the British Embassy, USAID, the Open Society Foundations, and International Media Support (IMS).

The approved version of the Index was published online on the Proyecto Antonio Nariño website. A manual containing guidelines on the use of the indicators for journalists and social organizations was also published.

The launch of the Index in December 2012 was widely publicized in the media (press, radio, and TV) and had a great impact on the public in different contexts and on stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in the project.

All of these factors resulted in a very good cost-benefit ratio. The project's impact and successes can be seen at different levels.
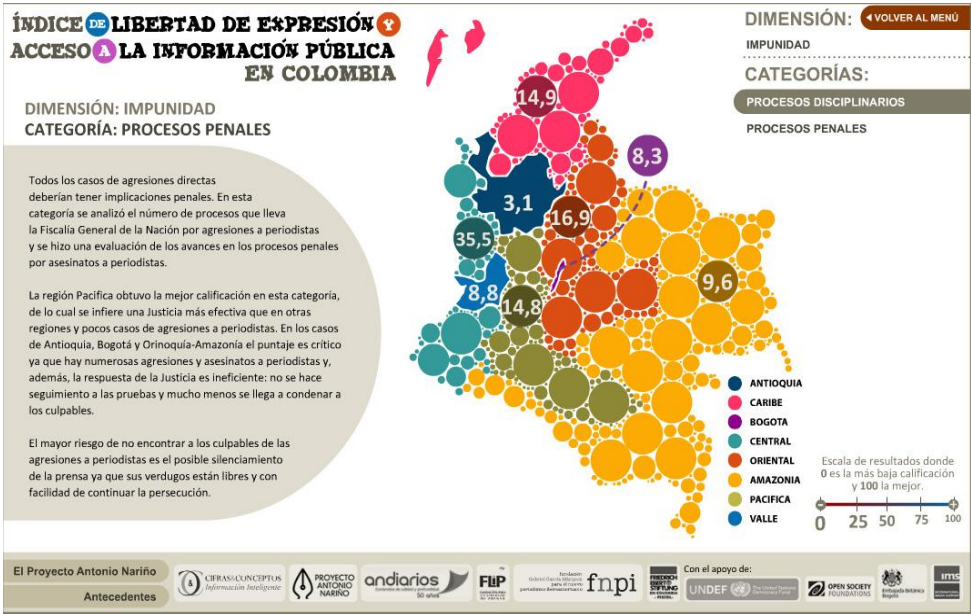

Illustration of one of the components of the Index

(iv) Impact

The mission was able to capture and observe several indicators and testimonies that verify the impact and effects of the project, some of them more immediate and others with potential to exploit in the medium and long term.

- The Index is considered a very valuable input, since it was developed at a very opportune moment, marked by government initiatives to formulate public policies on freedom of expression and access to information. In that context, it was important to have a tool for gathering useful information—one that would make it possible to compare overall public perceptions with information from a quantitative instrument and that, moreover, could be used to monitor progress and setbacks in the exercise of rights and enforcement of public policy.

- Journalists, editors, and media chiefs, as well as representatives of academia and civil society organizations, believe that this tool will substantially improve the analysis of the quality of democracy and practice of journalism. They consider the Index to be one of the key sources for learning about access to public information and freedom of expression in Colombia. For example, according to the 2011 Index, on a scale of 0–100, the score for freedom of expression and access to information nationally was only 50.3, while the score for impunity was 12.1. Periodic comparative analysis of the information collected by this instrument will help identify areas that must be improved and strengthened to create an environment more favorable to the exercise of fundamental rights.

- Adopting the regional approach as one of the priority lines of action helped to recognize and delve more deeply into the issue of geographic diversity, analyzing the impact of the domestic armed conflict in terms of restrictions on access to information and freedom of expression. At the same time, the Index contributed to the analysis of issues of growing interest, such as the situation on the Colombia-Venezuela border, for which the partnership with International Media Support proved very useful.

- Presenting the results of the Index was very effective in bringing rights violations, the precariousness of rights, and constraints on the practice of journalism to light, sparking public debate on these issues. The launch of the Index was widely publicized in the media; the presence of media people at the session where the findings were disclosed resulted in many articles in the press.

- Developing the Index also strengthened the forums for CSO participation and networking, encouraging the active participation of these organizations in the various entities for consultation and legitimation. The tool's future usefulness should increase opportunities to raise public awareness about its right of access to information and about the government's obligation to guarantee its transparent management. At the same time, having objective, hard data will improve CSO advocacy with government entities during the design and enforcement of public policies.

- Finally, the Index has the potential to serve as a model for other countries of the region, which can adapt it for their own use, facilitating studies and comparative analyses of the current conditions for journalism and access to information and freedom of expression.

(v) Sustainability

Their institutional track record and roots in society make the organizations of the PAN Alliance leaders and models for other organizations, media, and government entities working to promote and monitor freedom of expression and access to information, which is a significant component of sustainability. Technically and institutionally, the project has yielded results with the potential for continuity and replication, among them the participatory development of the Index, the experiences with consultation, and the visibility brought to the precarious rights situation in the regions, as well as the opportunities for advocacy with the government. However, these components must be strengthened and consolidated, and that will depend on the capacity of the PAN Alliance to keep these initiatives going.

The issue of financial sustainability is one of the concerns and a pending challenge.

- The evaluation team identified lack of medium- and long-term funding as the main threat to the sustainability of this effort. The project's technical secretariat has begun identifying potential sources of support for the process; however, to date, the outlook for mobilizing new sources of funding is uncertain.

> Despite the difficulty of developing measurements of the guarantee of rights, the Freedom of the Press and Access to Information Index contributed to a diagnostic review of the problem and could be one of the basic inputs for the public policy on freedom of expression that will be drafted by the Ministry of the Interior's Human Rights Office in 2013.
> **Andrea Camacho, Coordinator of the Freedom of Expression Policy, Human Rights Office, Ministry of the Interior.**

- The project's financial dependence on international cooperation funds is worrisome, since multilateral organizations and cooperation agencies in Colombia are generally cutting back on their support and channeling what funds are available to issues associated with the peace agenda and a negotiated exit from the armed conflict, relegating matters related to governance and the quality of democracy to the back burner.

- The evaluators identified the need to draft a proposal that would attract new stakeholders to the process in the medium and long term. The project's sustainability largely depends on securing new sources of funding that are willing to shoulder the expense of the personnel required for this work.

- One potential source of funding could be professional associations or the major media, such as national newspapers like *El Tiempo* and *El Espectador* or the magazine *Revista Semana*. However, this possibility is still being explored.

(vi) Value added

UNDEF's financial support was key to the success of the Index development process. In addition to facilitating the hiring of experts for the technical design, the funding made it possible to set up participatory forums for consultation and legitimation in the regions identified. This made the populations in areas with a precarious right to freedom of expression visible and helped raise their awareness. The Index is highly valued as a one-of-a-kind tool that sets precise parameters for analyzing the present and future situation of freedom of expression and access to information.

Nevertheless, FLIP mentioned the need for UNDEF to participate more actively in the project's implementation, as this would generate greater political backing and increase the impact of advocacy efforts, particularly with national and regional authorities.

IV. Conclusions

The main conclusions and lessons learned observed by the evaluation team can be summarized as follows:

(i) Support for the transparency and democratization process. The project contributed to the design of an Index containing a battery of indicators that permit a detailed comparative analysis of freedom of information and access to public information in Colombia. All stakeholders interviewed consider this tool a major contribution to understanding and shedding light on rights violations and restrictions. This, in turn, raises awareness about the need to monitor the phenomenon through reliable and verifiable statistics. The views of the stakeholders interviewed confirm the relevance of the process begun, given the adverse climate for journalism in Colombia.

(ii) Monitoring of public policy. The Index serves as a baseline indicating the needs and necessary protective measures that must be strengthened to guarantee freedom of expression and access to information. Used periodically, it facilitates comparison of the progress made, if any, in the implementation of public policy. Several of the stakeholders interviewed believe that to maximize its effectiveness, constant adjustment of the tool is needed to integrate new indicators for monitoring access to information and/or freedom of expression.

(iii) Regional approach. The project's regional approach uncovered the degree of vulnerability, self-censorship, and insecurity to which journalists are subject in the various regions of the country and at the same time contributed to the development of appropriate institutional responses for each region. Some interviewees noted the need for a broader analytical approach covering not only the regional but the issues dimension, since emphasis on the regional variable could limit the scope of the analysis and the capacity to generate information.

(iv) Participatory design and validation of the Index. The consultative process was very participatory, legitimizing the tool and at the same time creating a forum for connecting stakeholders from academia, the media, and organizations that monitor freedom of expression and access to information and raising awareness among politicians. Although this forum needs strengthening, it is both a major achievement and a pending challenge with respect to strengthening the capacity for political advocacy among stakeholders engaged in the dialogue with the government.

(v) Need to prioritize a "process logic." Creating the Index was the first phase in a long-term process of consensus-building that includes appropriation of the tool by the social and institutional stakeholders involved. Its use in the design and monitoring of public policy will help create an environment favorable to the practice of journalism and citizen access to information. This is why it is important to design a plan of action that includes the future activities needed to guarantee the continuity of the process.

(vi) Need to generate a social appropriation process and synergies. The evaluators observed the need to optimize the use of the tool and publicize it among the

project's target public, while at the same time broadening its scope to other sectors that can actively participate in its future design and use. Identifying synergies with similar international or domestic tools, such as the Transparency and Anticorruption Observatory of the Office of the President's Secretariat for Transparency would heighten its impact.

(vii) Need to identify alternative sources of funding. At the moment, the tool is financed entirely with donor funds, indicating the international community's endorsement of this activity. This, however, creates a sustainability risk, insofar as international cooperation priorities in Colombia are not freedom of expression and access to information in an adverse environment of budgetary constraints for all donors.

(viii) Analysis of gender and ethnicity variables. Specific indicators for gathering information about freedom of expression and access to information for women and indigenous journalists, particularly in conflict areas, have not yet been designed. Strengthening this component is one of the activities still pending—one that will be further explored in future phases of the Index' methodological review.

V. Recommendations

On reviewing some of the lessons learned and challenges identified, the evaluation team has several recommendations to help focus on certain aspects of the project and improve its advocacy strategy.

(i) Promote use of the Index in monitoring public policies. There is clearly a need to encourage the use of this tool in drafting and evaluating public policies for lifting current restrictions. The Ministry of the Interior's Human Rights Office has now recognized the importance of using the Index as the baseline for a diagnostic review of the freedom of expression policy. This is certainly a major step forward. However, specific activities must be identified to influence the development of both the anticorruption policy, coordinated by the Office of the President's Secretariat for Transparency, and the access to information policy, which should be drafted pursuant to the Statutory Law on Access to Information, currently under constitutional review. (See Conclusions ii and iv).

(ii) Program a methodological review body. Several of the stakeholders interviewed mentioned the need for continued methodological review and refinement of the tool by experts in statistical methods (including DANE, National Planning, CERAC, the National Center for Consultation, and others) to improve its quality. Other experts suggested incorporating studies and sectoral analyses in the Index to broaden the regional approach already developed; they also suggested the use of case studies to complete the risk map drawn up with the addition of qualitative studies. This would entail a review that includes suggestions from the various stakeholders, as well as the identification of gender and ethnicity indicators. (See Conclusions ii and viii).

(iii) Capitalize on the results and promote a social appropriation process. If the goal is to guarantee and increase the future usefulness of the Index, it must be publicized, identifying new publicity channels and informing the public about its value

added and how to increase its usefulness. Advantage should also be taken of the forums for participation and consultation that were created during the development of the Index to generate a relevant and lasting social appropriation dynamic. This process should not only involve stakeholders already committed and participating in initiatives to monitor freedom of expression and access to information, but should broaden the cadre of mobilized stakeholders, reaching out to more journalists and new stakeholders from other sectors—people who have not yet joined the process and are unaware of the Index' existence. (See Conclusions v and vi).

        (iv)   Guarantee financial sustainability. A funding strategy for the next phases of the process must be designed that will expand the donor base to private stakeholders and professional associations, both national and subnational. This will call for intensified implementation of diversified measures and alternatives in the search for financial resources. The members of the PAN Alliance should be participants in the funding strategy, since this work cannot be delegated solely to the Technical Secretariat of PAN. Furthermore, the funding strategy should include objectives that are relevant to the new stakeholders' interests in using the Index. (See Conclusion vii).

International roundtable with national and international experts

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	▪ Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context? ▪ Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why? ▪ Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?	▪ To what extent have the project's objectives been reached? ▪ To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not? ▪ Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives? ▪ What has the project achieved? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this?
Efficiency	To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts?	• Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs? • Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability? • Was the budget designed, and then implemented, in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives?
Impact	To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization, or to direct promotion of democracy?	• To what extent has/have the realization of the project objective(s) and project outcomes had an impact on the specific problem the project aimed to address? • Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive; which were negative? • To what extent has the project caused changes and effects, positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, on democratization? • Is the project likely to have a catalytic effect? How? Why? Examples?
Sustainability	To what extent has the project, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards democratic development?	▪ To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact? ▪ Are the involved parties willing and able to continue the project activities on their own (where applicable)?
UNDEF value added	To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors?	• What was UNDEF able to accomplish through the project that could not as well have been achieved by alternative projects, other donors, or other stakeholders (Government, NGOs, etc.). • Did project design and implementing modalities exploit UNDEF's comparative advantage in the form of an explicit mandate to focus on democratization issues?

ANNEX 2: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

o   *Project documents:*
  - Project Document UDF-COL-09-341
  - Mid-term Narrative Report
  - Final Narrative Report
  - Website : http://www.pan.org.co/acercade.php

o   *Materials published in the framework of the project:*

  - PowerPoint presentations
  - In-depth interview guidelines
  - In-depth interview report
  - National Survey Form
  - Presentation and analysis of survey results
  - Risk maps
  - Systematization of Index information
  - Standardization of Index data

o   *Other documents reviewed:*
  - BURGESS, John. *"Evaluating the evaluators; media freedom indexes and what they measure". Center for international Media Assistance, National Endowment for Democracy and Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania. 2010.*
    http://cima.ned.org/sites/default/files/CIMA-Evaluating_the_Evaluators_Report.pdf

ANNEX 3: PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Sunday, April 14, 2013	
Consultant's arrival in Colombia	
Monday, April 15, 2013	
Meeting of evaluation team	Luisa María Aguilar, International Expert; Nohra Eugenia Posada, National Expert.
Meeting with Proyecto PAN coordination team	
Claudia Mejía	Coordinator, Proyecto Antonio Nariño – PAN
Natalia Torres	Assistant, Proyecto Antonio Nariño
Diana Severiche	Financial and Administrative Adviser, Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa – FLIP
Meeting with the team from Cifras & Conceptos, in charge of survey preparation and indicator design	
César Caballero,	Manager, Cifras & Conceptos
Margarita Jiménez	Coordinator, Opinion Panel, Cifras & Conceptos
Meeting with team from Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa (FLIP)	
Andrés Morales	Director, Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa
Emmanuel Vargas	Adviser, Access to Information Area, Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa – FLIP
Jonathan Bock	Adviser, Protection and Monitoring Area, Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa – FLIP
Alvaro Duque	Coordinator, Master's in Journalism, University of Rosario
Tuesday, April 16, 2013	
Alvaro Sierra	Editor-in-Chief, Revista Semana
Cesar Molinares	Director, Portal Verdad Abierta
Jorge Restrepo	Director, CERAC
Daniel García	Adviser, Secretariat for Transparency, Office of the President
María Alexandra Vaquero	Secretariat for Transparency, Office of the President
Wednesday, April 17, 2013	
Robert Shaw	Consultant, International Media Support, Latin America
Jaime Abello	Director-General, Fundación Nuevo Periodismo Latinoamericano
Mario Morales	Director of Journalism, Director, School of Communications, Universidad Javeriana
Luis Novoa	Director, Asociación de Periodismo Investigativo, Editorial committee
Thursday, April 18, 2013	
Luz Angélica Mariño	In charge of the design of public policy on freedom of expression, Human Rights Office, Ministry of the Interior
Vivian Newman	Deputy Director, Centro de Estudios de Derecho, Justicia, y Sociedad, Dejusticia
Elisabeth Ungar	Director, Transparencia por Colombia
Marcela Restrepo	Director, Public Sector Area, Transparencia por Colombia
José Ricardo Puyana	Governance area, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Friday, April 19, 2013	
María Teresa Herrán	Freelance journalist
Jorge Enrique Calero	Director, Early Warning System, Ombudsman's Office
Closing meeting with team of Proyecto Antonio Nariño	

ANNEX 4: ACRONYMS

ANDIARIOS	Asociación de Diarios Colombianos
CAF	Corporación Andina de Fomento
CERAC	Conflict Analysis Research Center
CPJ	Comité para la Protección de los Periodistas
CSO	Civil society organizations
DEJUSTICIA	Centro de Estudios de Derecho, Justicia and Sociedad, Dejusticia
FESCOL	Friederich Ebert Stiftung
FLIP	Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa
FNPI	Fundación Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano
GFMD	Global Forum for Media Development
IMS	International Media Support
MPP	Medios para la Paz
MSI	Media Sustainability Index
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
OAS	Organization of American States
PAN	Proyecto Antonio Nariño
RSF	Reporters without Borders
SARA	System for Registration and Updating of Actions against the Press
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development