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Foreword

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Media education provides the critical knowledge and the analytical tools that empower media audiences to function as autonomous and rational citizens, enabling them to make informed use of the media. Media education, which is an important part of civic education, helps to make people well-informed and responsible citizens, aware of their rights and duties. This publication goes beyond mere definitions of media education to analyze the regulatory and legal environment required for wide-scale media education programmes.

Over the past twenty-six years, UNESCO has been involved in actions to enhance media literacy, particularly within the framework of the Grünwald Declaration of 1982, which recognized the need for political and educational systems to promote citizens' critical understanding of «the phenomena of communication» and their participation in media. The Grünwald Declaration gave birth to the UNESCO Paris Agenda, including twelve recommendations for media education. UNESCO's main strategy in promoting media education consists of awareness-raising regarding its importance at all levels of the education process –primary, secondary, and lifelong education, and in teacher training–, as well as establishing guidelines and promoting policies for curricula development.

Recognizing the need to train teachers in developing countries to integrate media education in the teaching and learning process, UNESCO launched in 2008, a teacher education enrichment project. This included the development of the first model curriculum that merges media literacy and information literacy, both key competencies of knowledge societies, into one discipline, and to facilitate the integration of media and information literacy in the teacher training curricula. With the rapid growth of ICTs and the resulting convergence of new and traditional media, it is necessary

that media and information literacy be considered holistically and applied to all forms of media, regardless of their nature and the technologies used.

Further, the appropriate enabling environment fostering free, pluralistic and independent media is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of any media education programme. Media pluralism and independence allow the expression of diverse opinions and ideas, in different languages, representing different groups, in and across societies. Given the influence of the media on human development, peace and democracy, managing a society that upholds diversity, tolerance, transparency, equity and dialogue could be advanced through media education. This integration of media education into national, regional and global development planning also requires careful and purposeful formulation of policies.

This publication brings into sharp focus Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that, «Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers». UNESCO and the UN Alliance of Civilizations hold that media education is essential to empower people all around the world to reap the full benefits of this fundamental right.

«Mapping Media Education Policies in the World», comes at an important juncture when media education is increasingly recognized as an important item on the development and policy agendas in developed, developing and emerging economies.

There are many noteworthy developments which are indicative of a positive trend that attention is turning toward a policy and regulatory framework to guide and support a systematic take-up of media education. More and more countries and even entire regions such as Europe believe that media education is crucial for any society and that «compulsory media education modules» should be incorporated into teacher training for all school levels. Yet many countries are still far behind.

This publication provides answers to key questions for media, communication and education professionals, researchers and policy makers. It considers media education from three inter-related dimensions: media education in the national, regional and global context; the value of media education to citizens and civic participation and how to measure this value, and the crucial role of collaboration among governments, civil society and the private sector in the process.

It is UNESCO's hope that the information and knowledge contained in this collection will inspire readers to take action that is informed by expert knowledge. Each reader can be a catalyst for change and, purpose-driven media education programmes can aid this change.

Let me conclude by commending the UN Alliance of Civilizations for spearheading this publication. I thank all the contributors who have made this intellectual exploration possible. UNESCO is pleased to join hands with UN AoC and other partners to make this important contribution to the growing body of knowledge on media education.