

## Introduction

Next year marks the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with its renowned Article 19:

*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.*

Since 1981, the Canadian Committee to Protect Journalists has worked to make these freedoms a reality worldwide. More recently, the CCPJ helped initiate the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX), a network of the world's leading free expression organizations, and in fact, on behalf of this network, manages the IFEX Clearing House linking more than 250 such organizations in over 80 countries.

Being a journalist or writer remains a hazardous occupation in many parts of the world. In too many countries, members of the media face censorship, arrest, imprisonment, abduction, torture, and even murder. Our efforts in these cases remain urgent and ongoing.

At the same time, new technologies have introduced both unprecedented opportunities for the dissemination of free expression and new challenges to it. These new developments too have necessarily become part of our mandate.

In a real sense, we are already part of Canada's foreign policy, functioning as one element of Canadian civil society conducting business, exchanging knowledge and exercising influence abroad from a uniquely Canadian perspective. The interests of the present government are usefully reflected in the Canadian International Information Strategy and in the well-received report by Maurice Strong et al, *Connecting With the World*. These positions now offer an opportunity, in partnership with organizations like CCPJ, to promote and enhance free expression concerns as a more central aspect of Canadian foreign policy. The government already plays a positive role; PEN Canada has hailed its work as the lead sponsor of the resolution on the Right to Freedom of Expression at a recent UN Commission on Human Rights.

But much more remains to be done. In the words of *Connecting with the World*, "The protection of Canadian values and culture is important to our success in the world." Those values include democratic development, good governance, human rights and development. We see freedom of expression as