



Persons with  
**DISABILITY**  
ADVISORY COUNCIL

"Inclusion, Dignity, and Equal Opportunities."

## ***Press Statement***

### ***WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY***

3 May 2026

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The Persons with Disability Advisory Council (PWDAC) wishes to commemorate the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World Press Freedom Day. The celebrations for the World Freedom Day began in 1991 at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisations (UNESCO) Conference where the landmark Windhoek Declaration was adopted. The declaration which focused on print media, considered various issues on freedom of expression, access to information and public service role of journalism.

This year's theme "***Shaping a Future at Peace***" offers an incredible opportunity to reaffirm our commitment towards a society at peace with itself in line with our National Strategic Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals. It is also a reminder that there can never be peace without justice. Peace and justice demand that expression must be inclusive of all voices, including those of persons with disabilities. In an era where AI and digital technologies are reshaping journalism, it is only just that accessibility, representation, and inclusion cannot be afterthoughts. In our democratic state, persons with disabilities have a right to live in a disability friendly environment where they have a right to access information in formats they can use whether through captioning, sign language interpretation, screen-reader friendly content or plain language reporting.

Equally important, dignity is central to our constitutional morality hence persons with disabilities have to be presented and represented in the media not as subjects of pity or stereotypes, but as active contributors, experts, storytellers, and responsible citizens. In democracies freedom, including press freedom, is incomplete if it excludes marginalised voices. Non-discrimination, fairness and accessibility are core features and values of our constitutional democracy, it is imperative that AI tools deployed in newsrooms must be designed and deployed with those core values and features. To achieve this ideal, consultation of persons with disabilities in development of media policies, strategies, plans, and AI ethics frameworks and newsroom practices as well as in development of media related legislative instruments is critical.

On World Freedom Day 2026, let us remember that a "***brave new world***" which was 2025's theme can only prosper if in our commitments we are "***shaping a future at peace***" by promoting inclusion in diversity with every voice heard and represented. It is a reflection of a world which amplifies every voice rather than silence.



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