

Panos is pleased to announce the birth of the **Global South Panos Network**, a grouping of autonomous institutes working to ensure that information is effectively used to foster **public debate, pluralism and democracy**. Grounded in six regions of the global South, this Network seeks amplify the voices, aspirations and initiatives of citizens, communities and countries in global debates and policy processes. With an enduring commitment to **freedom of expression**, it advocates the need for **media development** at global level to contribute to local empowerment. Its member institutes share a common vision of a world where communities build open, democratic and sustainable societies aimed at social justice, with free and diversified information and communication flows, including an independent and plural media.

This new development comes 40 years after the creation of Earthscan, the predecessor of Panos, within the International Institute for Environment and Development and almost 30 years after the establishment of the first Panos institute in London in 1986. Following the closure of Panos Canada, Panos London and Panos Paris (recently renamed Panos Europe) over the past few years, the Network is now a South Network of institutes grounded in the realities of their regions, staffed by media practitioners and development workers who are committed to the causes they serve, and governed by independent boards that reflect and represent local constituencies.

In Africa, the four Panos Institutes (**Panos Eastern Africa** based in Kampala, **Panos Great Lakes** based in Bujumbura, **Panos South Africa** based in Lusaka and **Panos West Africa** based in Dakar) share a programmatic focus on media pluralism and development, and on governance and peace, among other themes. At **Panos South Asia**, based in Kathmandu, the focus of the work includes media development and transparency, while **Panos Caribbean**, based in Kingston and Port au Prince, works primarily on governance, resilience and the rights of vulnerable communities. Taken together, these institutes are now active in **more than 50 countries on the three continents of the South**.

This new Global South Network is currently developing a number of **joint initiatives** that build on the work of and methodologies employed by member institutes and that address critical development and social issues that are at present insufficiently covered and debated by the media. The themes covered by these initiatives include: **transitional justice; cultural innovation and popular forms of artistic expression for social change; homophobia and associated rights and diversity issues; and climate justice**.

In December 2015, the Global Panos Network will take the opportunity of COP21, the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris to present its work to key partners, share ideas and experiences, and consolidate existing partnerships while exploring new ones.

Information on the Panos Network and its activities can be found on www.panosnetwork.org and by following us on Twitter @panosnetwork.

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