

2024 Belt and Road Journalists Forum

El Foro de Periodistas de la Franja y la Ruta 2024 se celebró en Chongqing, China, y reunió a casi 100 representantes de organizaciones periodísticas de todo el mundo. Durante el evento, se discutieron temas como el desarrollo verde, la cooperación Sur-Sur y la cultura. Los periodistas también participaron en visitas a lugares emblemáticos de Chongqing, como el Museo Subacuático de Baiheliang y la Reserva Natural de Guiyuan. Además, se lanzaron nuevas iniciativas, como la Iniciativa de Embajadores de Medios de la Franja y la Ruta, que busca fortalecer las asociaciones globales en el ámbito del periodismo.

As the global media landscape evolves and becomes more global, the Belt and Road Journalists Network (BRJN) has risen as a crucial platform for fostering international cooperation and promoting the values of responsible journalism. Established by the All-China Journalists Association (ACJA) in 2017, the BRJN brings together journalists from countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to exchange ideas, collaborate, and build trust through dialogue. The 2024 Belt and Road Journalists Forum, held from August 26, 2024 to September 1, 2024, in the bustling city of Chongqing, China, marked a significant chapter in this collaboration. Attendees from across the globe—representing diverse cultures, regions, and media ecosystems—gathered to discuss how journalism can continue to shape a more informed and connected world.

The program kicked off with a road trip, giving participants a glimpse into several districts, counties, and autonomous regions within Chongqing, the host area. This journey highlighted the tremendous growth and development taking place in China.

Chongqing spans 82,400 square kilometers and is home to more than 32 million permanent residents.

A Platform for Exchange: The Roundtable on Global Journalism Trends

At the heart of the forum was the International Journalists Organizations roundtable on August 31, 2024 where leading voices explored how journalism can address some of the most pressing issues of the day ranging from misinformation to the impact of new technologies.

Opening the discussions was Guan Hong, Chairman of the Chongqing Journalists Association, who spoke passionately about the transformative

power of local investigative journalism. Highlighting the success of Chongqing Television's "Today's Focus" program, Mr Guan detailed how its in-depth coverage of environmental issues, such as the pollution of the Xiaojia River and flood relief efforts in Dianjiang County, has prompted tangible improvements in public administration. His message was clear: the media can and should play a pivotal role in driving social change through impactful, investigative reporting.

Mahamoud Tahir Abbas, President of the Union of Chadian Journalists, contributed by highlighting the media's profound influence in shaping public opinion, often exceeding that of legal and judicial institutions. Mr Abbas called for the strengthening of investigative journalism across the globe and emphasized the importance of protecting journalists from intimidation. He stressed that "journalists must be empowered with the tools and training needed to expose corruption and injustice without fear."

This theme of media as a force for good resonated with many participants. Beeharry, Chairperson of Media Trust in Mauritius, lauded China's media landscape for its commitment to public service. "It is encouraging to see such dedication in China, and I hope Chongqing's media will continue serving the people with the same commitment," Beeharry remarked, noting the importance of media that truly prioritize the needs of the public.

Championing Gender Equality and Youth in Media

One of the forum's standout moments came from Christiane Munoki Nkeng, a trailblazing journalist from the Democratic Republic of Congo. She raised the critical issue of gender inequality within the media industry, where women continue to face significant barriers to advancement, including gender bias, lower pay, and limited opportunities for leadership. Ms Nkeng's powerful call for action sparked a meaningful dialogue on the need for structural changes to ensure women are given equal opportunities in journalism.

Maria Luisa Ribeiro de Castro Fernandes, CEO of Shopping de Comunicação in Brazil, commended China's media for embracing youth involvement. She noted the vital role that young people are playing in shaping the future of journalism, particularly in China, where their contributions reflect a deep respect for innovation and energy.

"Investing in the next generation of media professionals is not just a necessity, but a responsibility," she said, underscoring the importance of mentoring and supporting young journalists.

Adapting to a Digital World: Social Media and Innovation

As journalism increasingly moves into the digital space, the forum explored how social media platforms are reshaping news delivery and content creation. Solovyev Vladimir, President of the Russian Union of Journalists, shared insights into how Russian media are leveraging platforms like Telegram to reach wider audiences with real-time news updates and multimedia content. By collaborating with influential bloggers and establishing official media accounts, Russian journalists are enhancing their reach in a digital-first world.

The Chairman of the Belarusian Union of Journalists, Andrei Kryvasheyeu, emphasized the role of media innovation in bridging the gap between governments and citizens. He pointed out how media initiatives from Chongqing could serve as a model for Belarus in fostering greater public engagement and resolving societal challenges.



Combating Misinformation: A Global Priority

One of the most urgent topics addressed during the forum was the global spread of misinformation. Christopher Isiguzo, National President of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, compared misinformation to a “pandemic” that threatens to undermine the credibility of journalism worldwide. He warned that without coordinated efforts to combat the rapid spread of false information, the integrity of the media profession could be seriously compromised. Mr Isiguzo’s call to action resonated with many at the forum, reaffirming the collective responsibility of journalists to uphold truth in an increasingly complex information environment.

Looking Ahead: The Role of Technology in Journalism’s Future

Concluding the session, Wu Xu, Secretary of the Secretariat of the All-China Journalists Association, offered a vision for the future of journalism. Ms Wu emphasized the need for global cooperation in the media industry and stressed that emerging technologies—such as 5G, big data, and artificial intelligence—will be critical in shaping the next generation of journalism. She encouraged journalists worldwide to embrace these technologies as essential tools for modern storytelling, ensuring that media professionals are equipped to navigate the complexities of a digital world.



A Unified Vision for Ethical Journalism

As the 2024 Belt and Road Journalists Forum drew to a close, one thing became clear: the future of journalism lies in collaboration. By sharing ideas, embracing new technologies, and committing to ethical reporting, journalists from across the globe are better positioned to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

The forum concluded on an uplifting note, as participants departed Chongqing infused with a renewed sense of purpose and determination to bridge divides between cultures, regions, and communities. Energized by their shared dedication to the future of journalism—anchored in truth, creativity, and a collective vision for a well-informed, interconnected global society—they embraced the task ahead. The evening's highlight was an unforgettable dinner, where guests indulged in the bold, spicy Ravors of traditional Chongqing cuisine while being enthralled by vibrant cultural performances, from graceful dances to mesmerizing music, creating an atmosphere of unity and celebration that lingered long after the night ended.

Source: Business24