

James H. Ottaway, Jr., Chairman Emeritus of the World Press Freedom Committee

Remarks at the Inauguration of the

Photo Exhibition on Press Freedom and the Safety of Journalists

UNESCO, October 29, 2008

I thank Koïchiro Matsuura, Director General of UNESCO, for his eloquent and forceful defense and promotion of a free press and freedom of expression worldwide. He has also spoken vigorously for the safety of journalists and against impunity for the murderers of thousands of brave journalists who reported the truth about government violations of basic human rights, and corruption in business and political life.

At the May 2007 World Press Freedom Day UNESCO conference in Medellin, Colombia, Mr. Matsuura said “Let us appreciate the intimate relationship between securing the safety of journalists and realizing our own freedom. Our ability to act as informed citizens of the world depends on media that can work freely and safely.”

I thank Mr. Matsuura for defending freedom of expression in all of his work at UNESCO. And I congratulate Louise Oliver, U.S. Ambassador to UNESCO, who led the United States back into UNESCO after our self-imposed exile of nineteen years, and has done a superb job of representing our finest values and in particular of speaking strongly for press freedom.