



April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020

***Public Media serving in the time of a pandemic...***

The year 2020 will be forever etched in our minds. No matter where we live, we share common experiences of fear, grief and the suffering that comes with uncertainty.

And yet in this time of crisis, we are seeing communities come together as never before. We are discovering an even deeper respect for our health workers and other first responders, as well as for the many unsung heroes who are putting the needs of others ahead of their own, often at considerable risk.

Rarely has the role of public service media been of greater importance than it is now. That is why we, the members of the Global Task Force for public media, would like to add our salute to the essential service being provided at this time by public broadcasters around the world.

Our countries may differ by culture and language, but we all share the common duty to **Inform, Educate** and **Entertain**. Our **engagement** with audiences of all ages across a range of broadcast and online services is critical to our success in serving them whenever, wherever and however they want.

We are seeing audiences turn to public media in record numbers for the trusted news and reliable information that is our hallmark – and that has become a matter of life and death. As with all organisations, we have had to adapt to cover COVID-19 in depth. Each of us is also playing an important role for our democracies and holding our public institutions and politicians to account, to ensure there is transparency in their actions.

The Global Task Force is particularly proud of the speed with which public media across the world have responded to the challenge of supporting the **education** of children who are learning at home by bringing together brilliant partners from across the public and private spheres. Public service media is uniquely placed to play this role.

Meanwhile our promise to **entertain** helps keep spirits up, especially among our older audiences who are the most vulnerable. We continue to support the performers and creative talent who inspire us and help define our cultures, bringing us closer in a time of social distancing.

To achieve these aims, our employees, our freelancers, our creative industry partners, and of course our private media colleagues, have shown unwavering commitment to provide essential services in these difficult times. The audio, film and television production sectors are

a vital and growing part of our economies. Policy makers must take steps to protect the long-term health of this sector.

For all these reasons, we, the members of the Global Task Force, urge policy makers and politicians to support and defend the independence of public media and of journalism more broadly. Truly independent public service media has **never** been more precious to democracies around the world. Together, we will get through the current crisis.

We thank you, our public, for your continued support and for inviting us into your homes and lives.

Signed, Global Task Force for public media  
April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020

David Anderson, Managing Director, ABC (Australia)  
Thomas Bellut, Director General, ZDF (Germany)  
Delphine Ernotte Cunci, President & CEO, France Télévisions (France)  
Tony Hall, Director General, BBC (United Kingdom)  
Jim Mather, Chair of the Board, RNZ (New Zealand)  
Hanna Stjärne, Director General, SVT (Sweden)  
Catherine Tait, President & CEO of CBC/Radio-Canada, Chair GTF (Canada)

## **Background**

The [Global Task Force](https://publicmediaalliance.org/global-task-force) exists to defend the values and the interests of Public Media. The Task Force was formed to develop a consensus and single, strong voice around the issues and challenges facing public media. It offers a perspective that spans countries, languages and cultures. (<https://publicmediaalliance.org/global-task-force>)

## **ZDF**

ZDF is adapting its programming continuously. An overview on the changes and special broadcasts including various extra information and interactive offers on the Corona pandemic can be accessed at [ZDF web portal](#).

One prominent example in the context of the Corona pandemic is a specific service for kids and special content offer [with learning material and topics for homeschooling](#).