



Association of Caribbean MediaWorkers

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ACM to lead free speech violation talks

ACM, March 21, 2010 - A fresh wave of violations of free speech and press freedom, affecting the region's media and democracies, will be the focus of three days of talks in Peru among media workers and free expression advocates in Latin America and the Caribbean, in which the Association of Caribbean Media Workers (ACM) will play a leading role.

ACM President, **Wesley** Gibbings, is to chair the discussion on "New and Emerging Threats to Free Expression" among hemispheric member organisations of the Canada-based International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX) - a network that monitors, promotes and defends freedom of expression worldwide. IFEX has over 80 members in 50 countries.

Gibbings will also formally welcome participants at the annual meeting of the Regional Alliance of IFEX Organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean in Lima from March 23-25.

The ACM occupies a seat on the Coordinating Committee of the Regional Alliance. The ACM's Legal Advisor, Puerto Rican law professor, Sheila Velez, will also speak on improving collaboration between Latin American and Caribbean free expression organisations.

While there has traditionally been heavy emphasis on the use of laws and other coercive methods to clamp down on free speech and the free press, Gibbings is expected to urge media figures and free expression campaigners to adopt an approach which considers issues such as media ownership patterns, community responses to social crises and the media's role in natural disasters.

Representatives from national and regional organisations in Argentina , Brazil , Colombia , Guatemala , Honduras , Paraguay , Mexico and hosts, Peru , will be in attendance. The meeting is being supported by Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Canada (DFAIT).