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THE BBC AND THE FUTURE OF NEWS

Introduction

Early in its life, the BBC arrived at a defining moment.

It was in 1926, during the General Strike, when the then Chancellor, Winston Churchill, urged the Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin to commandeer the BBC airwaves for the government.

The BBC's founding Director-General, John Reith, resisted. He argued that it would destroy the BBC's reputation for independence and impartiality. And he won.

It was a moment that drew a dividing line between being the national broadcaster and the state broadcaster.

And it helped pave the way for the BBC's transformation, just months later, from the British Broadcasting *Company* to a public service corporation – with a mission "to inform, educate, and entertain".

Almost exactly 90 years later, in 2016, the BBC's new Royal Charter broadened the wording of that mission:

"*To act in the public interest, serving all audiences with impartial, high-quality and distinctive media content and services that inform, educate and entertain*."

It's significant because it underlines the fact that – today, almost a century from the birth of the BBC – those fundamental values of quality, impartiality, and universality have become more important, not less.

And more relevant than ever to the challenges we face right now.

I don't need to stand here, in this house, and remind anyone that these are extraordinary times.

Extraordinary for politics. And extraordinary for media and journalism too.

The context in which the BBC operates as a news organisation has changed beyond all recognition in recent years, and brought significant challenges.

But our mission has remained the same.

Today I want to talk about why I believe that mission gives the BBC a uniquely important role to play in this new media landscape.

About how confident I am that we can deliver what audiences need to navigate the noise.

And how determined I am that we stand up for integrity in news, and help protect its future at home and around the world.

The new landscape for news

But first, I want to consider some of those dramatic shifts in the landscape for news and the forces behind them.

The past decade has seen the progressive erosion of trust in the establishment and all those perceived as expert or elite.

The financial crisis and the effects of globalisation have fuelled a crisis of faith in our traditional institutions – including the media.

At the same time, society feels more divided and fragmented.

Two general elections and two referenda in the space of just three years have intensified political partisanship.

Since then the path to Brexit has taken us into unchartered territory, opening up new fault lines in our political life and new rifts in our society.

Of course, there have always been political and generational divides, conflicting economic and social priorities.

But today feels more aggressive, more polarised.

There's more of a sense that if you do not agree with someone, they must be your enemy.

Nowhere is this clearer than in journalism.

I remember once, early in my career, meeting Walter Cronkite – the CBS anchor and famously, "the most trusted man in America".

He was part of an age when it felt like great journalists could command the attention and respect of a whole country with the quality of their craft.

That world feels a long way away… Even his trademark sign off – "That's the way it is" – would be impossible now.

Today, so many journalists face constant anonymous threats online, simply for reporting on opinions that others might not want to hear.

Every day we see attempts to target, troll, intimidate them… To stop them from doing their job.

This is more than an attack on journalists. It amounts to a campaign to denigrate their craft.

The phrase, “mainstream media”, is now a term of abuse – used by people of all political persuasions.

Traditional journalism is painted as part of the problem rather than the solution.

This really worries me.

Ultimately, it’s an assault on freedom of expression… And our duty to seek out the facts – without fear or favour – no matter how inconvenient they might prove to be.

Two major forces

There are two major forces that feed this new atmosphere.

<u>First, the rise of misinformation.</u>

It’s astonishing to think that it’s only a few short years since the term ‘fake news’ truly entered our lexicon.

Back in the 2016 US Presidential race, it still felt to many of us like an act of desperation to dismiss palpably accurate stories from some of America’s most reliable media as being complete fabrications.

But it worked. And now the ‘fake news’ tag is used worldwide.

Disinformation has become a practised tool for profit or political gain at all levels. It’s the weapon of choice for repressive regimes everywhere.

Russia is the obvious example… In Cold War days the Kremlin were able to turn off the flow of information in and out of the country like a tap, and insist on a single narrative.

Today their tactics have gone into reverse… They flood the world with stories, the more confusing and contradictory the better.

They work tirelessly to undermine what the west reports – about the Salisbury attacks, for example – with sarcasm and mockery.

They give credibility to mass disbelief and encourage people to abandon the very idea of 'truth'.

All around the world, fake news is now the poison in the bloodstream of our societies – destabilising democracy and undermining trust in institutions and the rule of law.

In the west, we have witnessed its power to distort our discourse, fuel divisions and influence voter decisions.

In emerging and developing economies, the picture is even starker.

Last month in Nigeria we saw the extent to which fake news stories can now disrupt the debate around elections – with false accusations swirling and both main political parties accusing each other of deliberately spreading disinformation.

Last year in India, we saw another example of how fake news can spark violence and even cause loss of life.

Ten people were killed by lynch mobs after inflammatory reports about child abduction gangs spread rapidly online.

A video blamed as the catalyst purported to show CCTV footage of a child being snatched by two men on a motorbike. In fact it was a cleverly-edited part of a Pakistani child safety campaign.

Many more have died in similar incidents involving rumours spread on messaging apps, with rising nationalism a powerful factor.

In countries where democracy is fragile and digital literacy low, the rise of misinformation now constitutes an urgent crisis.

And it's set to grow worse as the weapons of disinformation warfare become ever more sophisticated.

'Deepfake' video technology means that we're entering an era in which anyone can be made to look as if they have said or done anything.

Home or abroad, it has never been harder to separate fact from falsehood, certainty from assertion, truth from downright lies.

The second force I want to highlight is the impact of social media.

Let me be really clear: This is a hugely exciting time for audiences.

New digital services mean they've never had so much competition and choice in media.

They've never had so much news available – so immediately – from all parts of the world.

It opens up incredible possibilities – not least for the BBC and all the new ways we can reach audiences and make an impact with our public service mission.

It's something I'm really excited about.

But, in fragmented times – when people increasingly appear to see only one side of the argument: theirs – our media choices have become more fragmented too.

More and more people are becoming loyal to particular news services – and sometimes quite niche services – that reflect their worldview.

Of course social media has turbo-charged this trend, exacerbating our sense of polarisation as we all live within our filter bubbles or echo chambers.

It has never been easier for us to choose news that suits our views.

Today, social media is the most popular place we go for news online.

It's brought brilliant benefits.

But if we needed a reminder of the serious challenges it brings then it came last week when Facebook said that it removed 1.5 million copies of the video of the Christchurch mosque attack in the first 24 hours.

We have to remember that this is a world with no regulatory oversight, no test of authenticity or accuracy, no commitment to be truthful or fair.

And while most of us can recall the social media site on which we consumed the news, we often struggle to remember the original source of the news story.

Whether a traditional news provider or a more partisan source or something altogether more spurious.

It all adds up to a dramatically transformed news environment, and one to which traditional news organisations are still struggling to adapt.

But it's also about something much more vital and fundamental, because it concerns access to the truth.

Truth matters because democracies depend on it. For democratic government to be legitimate it needs not just the consent of the people, but their informed consent.

Yet today, truth has never been so hotly contested.

And that has serious consequences for us both as a democracy and a society.

An electorate that cannot rely on access to truth is an electorate effectively disenfranchised.

And a society in which two sides of a debate have no need to engage with one another – on the basis of a genuine appreciation of what is happening – is a society profoundly weakened.

Confidence for the future

So why, despite all these real challenges, am I so confident about the future of news and the BBC's role within it?

Two major reasons.

Firstly – I touched on it at the start – traditional journalistic values have never been more needed.

As our societies become flooded with disinformation, people need somewhere they know they can come for news they can trust and analysis they can rely on.

We know audiences believe in the values of public service broadcasting.

Research from Ofcom tells us that they support our public purposes in great numbers, across all age groups… Over three-quarters of 16-34-year-olds say they believe in our mission and want it to continue.

I know, by the way, that the Lords Communications Committee, chaired by Lord Gilbert, is looking at the future for public service broadcasting in the on demand world.

We look forward to engaging with that enquiry.

And one of the things I'm sure it will consider is what we do to reflect all parts of the UK, and to serve all our communities.

It's fundamental to our mission to make sure all views and voices are heard.

And that's a role that's even more critical in divided times.

It's too easy today to listen to just one side of the debate, and not test ourselves against where others are coming from.

It's too easy to end up insulating ourselves from the experience of those we feel distant from – not just politically, but geographically, ethnically, economically.

The BBC's responsibility is to help break down those barriers, to open up our audiences to new and alternative perspectives – perspectives they might not otherwise encounter.

We have to be the place the whole country can come to to help understand itself:

What's happening in our society; What sets our communities apart; What binds us all together.

<u>The second reason for confidence is this: audiences are depending on us to respond.</u>

Today the BBC remains by far the most trusted source of news in the UK.

When audiences are asked the one source they turn to for news they trust, BBC News is chosen most often – five times more than anyone else.

We're where people come when they want to understand what's really going on.

Close to 48 million UK browsers came to the BBC website and news app in the week of the last general election – an all-time record.

More than 4 million came to the live BBC News Special on BBC One last week, as MPs voted on Prime Minister May's withdrawal agreement… As many as watched *Shetland* or *Eastenders*.

We're sometimes told that news today is a turn off. That politics is just for the Westminster bubble and that young people in particular don't care about current affairs.

I've never believed this.

In fact, one of the most striking recent trends in recent years – according to the most recent Edelman Trust Barometer – is how quickly engagement in news has risen.

Two years ago, only half of people were engaged with media on a regular basis. Now it's closer to three quarters.

It's real jump.

At a time when so much information is so easily available, it underlines just how important the role of the media is in delivering the facts and trusted analysis that people really need.

And let's not pretend young people don't care about truth in news or believe everything they see on social media.

We know they're looking for trusted news providers.

Less than a quarter of those in the 16-24 age group feel things on social media are true, down from around 40 per cent in 2010. That's now in line with the broader population.

Half of 16-34s will head for traditional TV when they want to expand their world view.

So it is not just that public service values have grown in importance in today's media world.

It's also that audiences are looking increasingly to us to cut through the noise and give them information they can trust.

Rising to the challenge

All this is real cause for confidence.

But to deliver what audiences need, we know we have to adapt rapidly to the new media landscape.

Above all, we have to stand up like never before for the values they depend on.

So how are we rising to the challenge?

I want to set out four ways.

1. Re-asserting our core value of impartiality

First, by reasserting our core value of impartiality.

I've said the BBC remains the UK's most trusted news provider. We also rank highest for impartiality.

But as the context in which we operate has changed, so perceptions of bias and impartiality have changed too.

There are plenty of factors here…

The increase in scepticism about experts, elites, and the establishment more widely.

The impacts of political fragmentation, media fragmentation, and growing partisanship.

At the same time, social media has habituated us all to a coarser style of public discourse.

Fostering cynicism and conspiracy theories. Accentuating disagreement and aggression towards opposing views.

In this environment, it's no surprise that scrutiny of the BBC's impartiality has intensified.

For the BBC, impartiality is one of our most precious assets.

Our Editorial Guidelines make it clear that due impartiality is required of all our output.

For our journalism, that basically means we are fair – and seen to be fair – to all views.

It's important to push back against misconceptions.

Impartiality can never mean that we strike some sort of false balance…

Instead it means we reflect all contributions to a debate, and give each their due weight.

So no equivalence between the climate change sceptic and the overwhelming consensus of scientific opinion. But no absolute exclusion of viewpoints because they're generally felt to be beyond the pale.

We won't give in to pressure to silence dissenting voices… Nor allow those voices to be seen as mainstream.

Recently, Ofcom considered a complaint about the BBC's Brexit coverage… Last month I was glad to see it conclude that there'd been no breach of impartiality rules.

In doing so, it highlighted another important misconception.

Because it re-emphasised that the definition of due impartiality means adequate or appropriate to the subject and nature of the programme.

It does not mean equal time or an equal number of words must be given to every view.

Or that every argument has to be represented in each treatment of the subject.

Due impartiality in news can be something achieved over time, across a variety of different pieces.

It can look different according to what's appropriate to the circumstances, and the type of programme and channel.

Whatever the accusations sometimes levelled at the BBC – from one side or another, frequently about the same piece of coverage, by the way – the reality is that we're in opposition to no-one, and we're there to support no-one.

Except our audiences.

And, as Nick Robinson put it in a tweet: normal service from the BBC means that you will hear people you disagree with saying things you don't like. That's our job.

There's a more fundamental fight to be won here: Does impartiality matter?

Today there are a plethora of platforms offering partial viewpoints.

In the US, an outlet like Fox News has a clear right-wing agenda which viewers either love and trust, or hate and distrust.

In the past it has topped the polls both for most trusted news source and least trusted.

Meanwhile, many outlets prioritise a clear point of view over the search for subjectivity – and explore whether partiality is profitable.

It has led some to question whether impartiality is still an achievable – or even desirable – value in today's media world.

Do audiences notice or tell the difference?

Will they reward partiality more?

At the BBC, our incentives are different.

Our interests are only in how best we can serve our audiences and the country as a whole.

We know impartiality matters. We know healthy democracies and healthy societies depend on it. We need to stand up for it like never before.

So we've just been updating our Editorial Guidelines, to reflect the new media environment.

We're introducing new training, because we know we need to challenge any subconscious bias, and interrogate how it might creep into anything from a presenter's language or tone to a show's running order.

We're re-focusing on the importance of accuracy, both as a core value in itself and because we know even the smallest mistake can have a disproportionate effect on how we are perceived.

Of course, we can all make mistakes. That's not the same as an intention to deceive.

An honest mistake, admitted to and corrected, is not the same as fake news or an intention to mislead.

No one could seriously think, for example, that the BBC intended to suggest that Theresa May was flying to Brussels for Brexit talks in a spitfire… It was a mistake, pure and simple.

Now, I know there's a seductive view, I've heard so many say it: "What's wrong with everyone getting the news they want?"

It reminds me of John Milton, when he argued against the licensing of pamphlets in the 17th century in the belief that market forces would drive out falsehoods:

"Who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?" he said.

It's fair to assume he'd be somewhat surprised by the post-truth era.

The US has shown us what's at stake.

It's more than 30 years since the Reagan administration abandoned the 'fairness doctrine', which required broadcasters to be honest, equitable and balanced in their reporting… Impartial, if you like.

We only have to look to the last US Presidential campaign to see how public discourse has suffered.

How lies can become 'truth' and those who seek truth become 'liars'.

I'm determined that the UK will not go the same way.

I want to re-double the BBC's commitment to impartiality, and help ensure that the fake will never drive out the fair.

2. Strengthening our commitment to explanation and context

Second, we are strengthening our commitment to explanation in our news output.

This is really important.

People don't just come to us for facts they can rely on. They come to us for the background they need to make sense of events.

That's why we want to focus even more, not just on the *what*, but the *why* and the *why it matters*.

For me, explaining the news is as important as reporting the news. It's the essence of public service journalism.

And audiences value it.

Our Brexit coverage is a good example. We've had everything from long reads to jargon busters, news specials to Reality Checks, the brilliant *Brexitcast* to Norma Percy's outstanding *Inside Europe*.

The way audiences have responded has proved that they want more than the headline. They want detail and context.

So what are we doing to strengthen the analysis we offer and empower our audiences?

First of all, I'm a profound believer in specialism… First-hand, on-the-spot reporting, from journalists who know their subjects inside-out…

The BBC has specialists on all the big issues facing the UK – politics, economics, technology, science, education… In every part of the country – and the world.

All using their judgement to help us make sense of a time in which so much is challenged.

I can assure you this focus on specialism will not falter.

With Reality Check, we're really trying to take the fight to fake news.

It's become one of the most potent resources we have developed in recent years – investigating claims and counter claims and seeing through the bluster.

Now our goal is to make it work even harder.

I want it to become central to our daily journalism – online, on radio, and on TV – so that audiences can benefit from our fact-checking machinery on every big story we do.

We want to use it to take on lies, half-truths, and misinformation in real time.

We also know how important it is to take more time to stand back from the demands of the 24/7 news cycle.

People sometimes tell me that the BBC no longer cares about the sort of journalism that takes time – investigations.

The truth is just the opposite.

Investigations are time-consuming and expensive. They're fraught with obstacles and legal pitfalls.

For me, that only makes it more important that the BBC maintains them as a priority.

When I came back to the BBC as Director General, one of the first things I did was to return "current affairs" to the Director of News and Current Affairs job title.

So I'm really proud that programmes like *Panorama* are right at the forefront of investigative journalism.

Like revealing that police are failing to investigate more and more crimes…

Or that HS2 was based on cost estimates wrong by "hundreds of millions of pounds"… Both of which provoked parliamentary debate.

Or the extraordinary undercover report from inside Brook House Immigration Centre, showing bullying, self-harm, and attempted suicides.

It was a film that won all three major British documentary awards and launched at least four major enquiries. The Home Affairs select committee is due to report on it any day.

This isn't restricted to our flagship current affairs programmes.

I'm incredibly proud of everything programmes like *Spotlight* in Northern Ireland, *Disclosure* in Scotland, *Week in Week Out* in Wales, and *Inside Out* across England are doing to expose wrongdoing and hold power to account.

It was *Spotlight* who exposed the abuse of the Renewable Heat Incentive scheme in Northern Ireland, now the subject of an Inquiry.

Disclosure who revealed sexual and physical abuse across four decades at a Christian children's home in Argyll…

Inside Out South East who ran a series of investigations into illegal immigration stemming from Calais.

Just a few of their successes.

And it's a sign of their impact that both *Disclosure* and *Spotlight* are now up for an Amnesty Media Award.

This is important journalism.

But I'm challenging the BBC to do even more to take on the very biggest issues we're now wrestling with as a society.

Climate change. Population growth. Migration.

Energy and sustainability. Healthcare or the ageing of our populations.

AI, automation and the future of work.

At the BBC we have a unique ability to take on these issues throughout our output – not just in news and current affairs but across all our programmes and services.

We're doing it with plastic pollution – from David Attenborough's *Blue Planet II* to Liz Bonnin's *Drowning in Plastic* to our *Plastics Watch* initiative across TV, Radio, News, Online and Children's.

We're doing it with mental health, with a dedicated season of programmes around Mental Health Awareness Week in May.

All of this is helping our audiences see the bigger picture… Empowering them to take informed decisions about some of the biggest issues we face.

3. Investing in local democracy

The third area we are really focusing on is investing in local journalism and supporting local democracy.

We're all aware of the effect commercial pressures have had on local journalism.

In the last decade, circulation for local newspapers has halved. Titles have merged or folded right across the country. We've seen a net loss of 245 since 2015.

There's an irony that, in a time of so much information, the flow of information we all need to participate in democracy where we live has been drying up.

Last month, Dame Frances Cairncross' report into the future of UK media made the stakes clear.

She underlined that, as the number of local reporters has shrunk, so has their coverage of the whole machinery of local democracy.

In Port Talbot, a study found that reporting of council and political meetings declined by 90 per cent when the local paper closed.

In West London, the Cairncross report highlighted concerns that the decline of the *Kensington and Chelsea News* was a factor in council's failure to act on resident's concerns over safety risks at Grenfell Tower prior to the tragic fire.

What's now happening in local radio is amplifying the damage to local communities.

Last year, Ofcom issued new guidelines allowing station owners to reduce the minimum amount of hours of local programming on local radio – from seven daytime hours to just three.

They also removed a requirement for local stations to produce their own breakfast show.

Already we've seen the results of this.

We've seen the axing of around 60 local breakfast and drive-time programmes, to be replaced with shows hosted from London.

Dedicated studios will be closing from Brighton to Lancaster, Kendal to Kent, Swindon to Norwich. Huge swathes of the country will be covered by a single programme.

Now, I've had the opportunity to visit virtually all the BBC's 40 or so local radio stations in the past few years.

And what strikes me is how they are so often part of what actually defines our communities, gives them their sense of identity.

BBC Radio Merseyside is brilliant, for example – but then I would say that, wouldn't I?

It’s been defining scouseness for 50 years… And it says something that it was recently awarded the Freedom of the City of Liverpool for its service to the community and relationship with listeners.

At the BBC our priority must be to fill the gap – to move even closer to local communities.

That’s why I want to invest more in local radio and create new shows on our local stations.

That’s why we want to give station editors more creative freedom to celebrate local life, reflect local identity, make local voices heard.

I have always believed that the BBC should find ways to support a healthy local media ecology. Not least because it’s so often what communities trust and rely on most.

So I’m proud that we’re working in partnership with regional newspapers and the local media sector more widely to support a new network of local democracy reporters.

They’re managed by local media, but funded by the BBC. And it’s their job to hold local politicians and public institutions to account across the UK.

One year since launch, we have 136 reporters in post. And they’ve produced more than 50,000 public interest stories so far.

The new Royal Liverpool Hospital, built with unsafe cladding.

Northamptonshire County Council underpaying childminders and nurseries by thousands of pounds.

The £24 million health centre in Altrincham that will never be used, but is still costing the NHS over £2 million a year.

All stories essential for holding local institutions to account… All stories that might not otherwise have been heard.

The Culture Secretary, Jeremy Wright, has called the Local Democracy Reporter Scheme "a shining example of what can be done".

Dame Frances Cairncross has called for it to be extended.

And I should pay tribute to former Culture Secretary, John Whittingdale, for his continued championing of the scheme.

We've proved this approach works. I think it's now time to build on that ambition.

We know we have to do more to fight back against the chronic underreporting of events, issues, politics and crime in local communities…

It's led to whole sections of our society feeling left behind and ignored, and reinforced a disconnect between the big cities and the rest of the country.

This is not simply a challenge for politicians. The media must be part of the solution.

This is something I feel really strongly about. Obviously I want the BBC to be at the heart of it.

But could – or should – it involve others.

That's why I have already started a conversation about the possibility of a dedicated foundation – independent of government and others – to support a strong local media landscape and nourish the foundations of local democracy.

It's just one idea – there may be more… We will need to discuss with the news industry to find the right approach together.

But I think there's potential to unlock money from a range of businesses and institutions.

My goal is to mobilise a powerful coalition behind the creation of a Local Democracy Foundation – employing independent reporters to cover what really matters to local communities.

I want us to do all we can reverse the damage that has been done to local democracy in recent years and bring about a sea change in local public interest journalism.

4. Investing in the UK's voice and values worldwide

The final priority I want to highlight is investing in the UK's voice and values worldwide.

The BBC's global services are one of this country's greatest cultural gifts to the world.

A gift based on speaking truth to power, being independent of all, serving no one but the right of our global audiences to the truth.

I was delighted when the Government recognised the importance of these services to the UK two years ago by making its largest ever investment in the BBC World Service.

For 85 years the World Service has been reporting without fear or favour from the very toughest geographies and in the very hardest political climates.

Thanks to the new investment, we have just completed its biggest expansion since the Second World War.

We have opened new and expanded bureaux in locations from Bangkok and Belgrade to Cairo and Kathmandu.

We now operate in 42 languages – from Korean to Punjabi to Pidgin – meaning that our language services now reach a record 60 million people online each week.

Not only does this enhance our coverage and trusted news services for audiences abroad.

But it also gives our UK news services a more in-depth view of areas which have traditionally received less attention.

And it's invaluable for the UK's soft power and influence at an important time.

I'm really proud of how our BBC news teams are bringing light and insight to parts of the world in which truth can often lie hidden.

BBC Africa Eye, for example, whose painstaking analysis of video footage from Cameroon proved that the army had carried out killings of civilian women and their children.

Or the critical democratic role our teams have been playing in elections in Nigeria and India – calling out fake news and fact-checking disputed issues in real time.

Or what we do to help foster understanding in places like Kashmir…

With our Hindi correspondent in Islamabad and our Urdu reporter in Delhi, we are the only international broadcaster who can provide the space for audiences in India to understand Pakistan, and vice versa.

None of this is easy… And I have to pay tribute to our teams' fearless reporting.

If our journalists face abuse at home, the stakes abroad are often far higher.

We have become far too used to the targeting and killing of journalists in Afghanistan, for example, or during the war in Syria.

And we continue to highlight the case of our BBC Persian staff, who, along with their families, are being harassed and persecuted by the Iranian authorities.

It's something that, just last week was condemned both by the European Parliament and by the UN Human Rights Council.

Our journalists frequently face real dangers in their efforts to expose corruption or simply do their job.

They play a priceless role in supporting democracy and the UK's democratic values around the world.

So I'm pleased that we're now talking to the Government about extending its support for what the BBC does overseas – including our BBC World News channel on television.

In short, we think the BBC can do even more for Britain.

Conclusion

I want to finish with one final reason to be confident.

What we do, as the BBC, is unique.

The world's largest broadcast news organisation.

Reaching 8 out of 10 adults in the UK each week, and nearly 350 million people around the world.

An unmatched level of local, regional, national and international news and current affairs.

An unrivalled global brand – synonymous, everywhere, with trust.

It gives us a special responsibility, and a special role.

That's why, for example, I have invited media organisations from across the world to join the BBC at a special conference this summer.

It's to explore how, together, we can tackle the global rise of misinformation, bias, and fake news.

I've been really encouraged by the response, with everyone from newspaper groups to technology companies to social media platforms keen to take part.

For all of us, the focus is firmly on practical measures we can all sign up to now to hit back against fake news.

It's reminded me of just how many media organisations there are out there whose values we share. And how powerful a coalition of the like-minded can potentially be.

And it makes me feel certain that – together – everyone who shares a commitment to those core values of accuracy, integrity, and impartiality, can fight successfully for their place at the heart of the future of news.