

REPORT
STRENGTHENING AFRICA'S MEDIA
CONSULTATION PROCESS
ANGLOPHONE WEST AFRICA SUB-REGIONAL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 18 – 19, 2006

PALOMA HOTEL

ACCRA, GHANA

FACILITATING ORGANISATION: MEDIA FOUNDATION
FOR WEST AFRICA (MFWA), ACCRA

HOST ORGANISATION: UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC
COMMISSION FOR AFRICA (UNECA), ADDIS ABABA

SPONSORS: OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS NETWORK
MEDIA PROGRAMME

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From September 18 to 19, 2006 the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) Accra in collaboration with 'Strengthening Africa's Media' Secretariat at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, organised a two-day consultation meeting among media stakeholders from Anglophone West Africa.

Held in Accra, Ghana at the Paloma Hotel, the meeting, **“Strengthening Africa’s Media Consultation Process”**, brought together 50 participants including owners, publishers, practitioners and editors of both the print and electronic media from The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Also present at the meeting were trainers from media institutions and observers from media rights advocacy organisations and other interest groups.

The major challenges and the current most critical issues impeding the growth and development of the media and hindering their effective functioning as key agents of good governance in the sub-region were reviewed during the meeting. The participants also discussed key issues and challenges facing media institutions in the sub region.

The consultative meeting identified and examined existing opportunities for the acceleration of the development of the media and assessed the state of the media in post conflict countries such as Liberia and Sierra Leone and considered the special case of The Gambia as a country in a state of severe press freedom repression.

The conference concluded with participants proposing recommendations and strategies for dealing with laws obstructing free media and proposals for promoting common media legislation standards among others, for strong and viable media in Anglophone West Africa.

Background

The year 2005 saw unprecedented international attention focused on Africa's development challenges and the priority actions needed to address them. The recognition that well governed, capable states are critical to accelerated development in Africa represents an important element of the new international consensus.

A strong media and communication sector is critical to promoting good governance, fostering open and inclusive dialogue on public policy options and providing channels for governments and citizens to engage with each other. Broadly defined, the media can also provide an essential space in which freedom of expression can be exercised and alternative, dissenting, and minority voices heard.

In the light of the above, media and communication experts met at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa on March 9 and 10, 2006 to inform the design and implementation of a consultation strategy aimed at developing priorities for strengthening Africa's media.

Convened against the backdrop of renewed engagement around media development in Africa, the workshop was stimulated in large part by the Commission for Africa's emphasis on the media as a key agent of good governance and its call for the creation of an Africa Media Development Facility. The UK Department for International Development (DFID) – which is providing support through the ECA to the consultation process – funded the workshop.

Five consultation meetings were slated for this year as part of the process. The Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA) led the organisation of the consultation workshop for that region in June, while in July, the Panos Institute for West Africa (PIWA) facilitated the organisation of a workshop for Francophone Africa. The Accra consultation, organised by the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), was the third meeting of the consultation process and would be followed by workshops in Nairobi for East Africa and in Cairo for North Africa.

Together with the result of the electronic consultation and the other consultation meetings, recommendations and proposals from Accra would be reviewed with a view to formulating a document entitled '**The Case for Strengthening Africa's Media: Framework and Proposals**'. The document would provide the basis for a Stakeholders Conference, to take place in late 2006 or early 2007.

Introduction

On September 18 and 19, 2006, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), Accra in collaboration with the ‘Strengthening Africa’s Media’ Secretariat at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) Addis Ababa, Ethiopia organised a two-day consultation meeting among media stakeholders from Anglophone West Africa.

The overall general objectives of the meeting were as follows:

- to identify priority issues and areas requiring support
- to propose initiatives and programmes to strengthen the media industry and its role in the development of Africa.

Specifically, the meeting’s aims were to:

- Articulate the concerns and perspectives of the media in the sub-region
- Ensure that specific country, sub-regional and special interest perspectives are taken into account in developing a ‘*Strategic Framework for Strengthening Media in Africa*’
- Make a case for enhanced investment in media.

Held in Accra, Ghana at the Paloma Hotel, the meeting, “**Strengthening Africa’s Media Consultation Process**”, assembled 50 participants including owners, publishers, practitioners and editors of both the print and electronic media from The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Also present at the meeting were trainers from media institutions and observers from free expression advocacy organisations and other interest groups.

The meeting identified numerous factors impeding the development of media and hindering their effective functioning as key agents of good governance in the sub-region. It also examined the major challenges as well as the existing opportunities for the development of the media in West Africa.

CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of the two-day meeting, participants came out with the following recommendations and proposals on 5 broad thematic areas.

Current critical press freedom issues

As regards current critical press freedom issues such as rights and pluralism, participants noted the existence of legislations that undermine constitutional provisions guaranteeing media freedom and unethical reporting as key challenges facing journalists and recommended the following:

- an expansion of the frontiers of media freedom by re-enforcing advocacy for the promotion of freedom of information regimes generally
- increased collaboration between civil society organisations to advocate for repeal of legislations that undermine the application of constitutional provisions on media freedom
- strengthened regulatory bodies and journalists associations with effective Peer Review Committees to ensure that practitioners adhere strictly to codes of ethics

Media Policy and Regulation

On Media Policy and Regulation, participants made the following recommendations under the following categories:

1. Policy
2. Ownership
3. Regulation
4. Other Recommendations

Policy

- a. The establishment of independent and autonomous regulatory mechanisms devoid of political interference supported with parliamentary appropriated funding
- b. Transparent decision making processes for licensing, renewal of licenses, and frequency allocation
- c. Available judicial review in cases where applications for licenses are rejected or revoked.
- d. Representative and independent governing bodies for the regulatory mechanisms with open and transparent appointment processes and security of tenure for the members.

Ownership

Government - State ownership of broadcast media to operate within the framework of public service broadcasters, with independent governing boards whose editorial functions should be insulated from political interference. State participation in the print media sector should in no way undermine the freedom of expression provisions in national Constitutions.

- a. Private - Private interests and concerns should be allowed to establish media organizations as part of the process of promoting diversity and pluralism in the sources of information available to citizens.
- b. Institutional - Institutions such as Universities and Journalism Training Institutions should be encouraged and allowed to own and operate media organizations for the purpose of training prospective journalists.
- c. Community - Community media (particularly radio) should be encouraged and assisted to flourish. Community media may serve a geographical community, especially in poor/rural communities, or promote specific community interests such as farming communities, youth groups, women's organisations, etc.

Regulation

The mandates of regulatory bodies should be extended to cover the technical aspects as well as content of broadcast media. In addition they may require the print media to register but this should not be for the purpose of licensing or permitting them to operate.

Additional Recommendations

Existing anti-media laws and other pieces of legislation which inhibit media freedom and independence should be reviewed or repealed. All stakeholders should be involved and consulted in media law reform processes.

Participants also recommended the following:

- Review of all media laws in order to remove all penal provisions for defamation, false publication, sedition, incitement, insult to political authorities, etc.
- Discouraging state monopolies in print and broadcast media.
- Equitable allocation of frequencies between state and private owned media to check state domination of the sector
- Public service broadcasters serving the community at large and being accessible to all sectors of the society.
- The media should in principle be self-regulatory and should put in place codes of conduct with effective enforcement mechanisms.
- Media professional bodies or associations should be responsible for registering their members. Lack of registration on the part of an individual journalist should not inhibit his/her practice of the profession.

Participants also outlined some mechanisms for achieving recommendations:

- Advocacy should be undertaken to encourage and pressure governments and stakeholders to implement these recommendations at national and regional levels.
- Networking- media institutions, associations and media support organizations should be encouraged to network across national borders and at regional levels for information sharing and exchange of experiences in best practices.

Financial Sustainability – Economic Challenges of the Media Industry

Concerning how to achieve financial sustainability for the media industry, participants drew on experiences from Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Ghana and Liberia to highlight obvious, recurring problems for media. These include: A lack of access to capital, poor financial practices on the part of media organisations, and unstable business environment. To address some of these challenges the following were recommended:

- Basic skills training in writing business plans, formulating visions and proposal writing.

- University faculties and other training institutions must invest in media management, while acknowledging that there are specialised skills that need to be learned;
- Media development organisations, both national and international, must advise on financial/strategic planning and monitoring accountability and incorporate this into their fieldwork and capacity-building programmes;
- Access to capital (bank loans) be made available to media owners by making collateral security more flexible
- Press unions could own printing press to help publishers print at lower costs. This would make media more viable.
- Media owners should be discouraged from over dependence of private newspapers on advertising revenue
- Media Management should be included in the curricula of media training institutions
- Media Development Loan Schemes must be instituted to assist media owners with loan.

Training - Meeting the Challenges of Growing Needs Today

On the issue of meeting the challenges posed by the growing needs of current media training practices, participants clearly stated ways in which the media in West Africa could be supported. They discussed what the training needs of West African media are, what existing media institutions are doing and the new ways of training that could be initiated.

The training needs of media in West Africa were identified as including: new attitudes, well equipped schools to facilitate the training of West African journalists, the need for new management policies, access to ICT and a balance between theory and practice.

Participants therefore recommended that media training for West African media be structured in the following ways:

- Establishment of a focal point for the coordination of media and communication training such as the African Council for Communication and Media Education (ACCE);
- Setting up of a West African data base for trainers and training institutions;
- Establishing a media trust fund with the objectives of
 - providing scholarships for media practitioners in existing media institutions
 - accessing African media trainers to address the issue of lack of trained man power
- Use trust fund for the continuous exchange of programs among West African training scholars and journalists
- A review of the curricula of West African media institutions with emphasis on content and ethical issues. This would enhance the move for West African journalists to cope with present day realities.

- A needs assessment should be carried out to know the strengths and weaknesses of existing media institutions.
- Establishing a link between professional bodies and training institutions to ensure high standard in the profession. There is need for well equipped schools. New management policies should be formed
- There should be balance between theory and practice
- Access to computers and print equipment
- Establishment of focal point for media training.
- There is need for West African database
- Review of curricula to enhance the capacity of West African journalists
- Gender must be incorporated in institutions' curriculum. It must include how to report on gender. Gender issues must be projected.

These would serve as a catalyst for the growth and development of the media in West Africa.

Editorial standards and capacity development

Poor editorial standards and capacity development have adversely affected professional standards in recent times. Participants therefore proposed that:

- Poor ethical standards should be addressed by reproducing handbooks on ethics and making them available to all journalists;
- Training should be given to all staff of media institutions for them to adhere to professional codes of ethics;
- More research and investigative reporting should be made regular for various institutions as most stories and articles are shallow.
- Media institutions should tap on expertise of professionals
- Media outlets must have more in-house training as editorial meetings are rare or non existent and affect professionalism.
- There should be unity and reconciliation which are important to strengthen collaboration
- The low level of newsroom management must be corrected

Summary of Sessions

1st plenary

MEDIA PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE-CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Chairperson: Edet Ojo – Executive Director, Media Rights Agenda

Presenter: Alhaji I. B. Kargbo – President, Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ)

**Discussants: Boakye Dankwa Boadi – Chief Editor, Ghana News Agency
Aminata Dibasse**

The session provided an overview of current professional practice of journalism as against media professional standards. It was observed that the media in Africa are in some cases confronted with governments that see a necessity to control the news media, restrict commercialization, limit political competition, and suppress or discourage the expression of political opinions that are at variance with those of the ruling group or party.

Media practitioners also come in various colours. There are those who see the profession as a means of making livelihood and those who see it as a calling that must be practised with very high standards. Without doubt, those who view it as a means of livelihood would approach the profession in a different way from those who uphold the principles of high professional standards.

The presentations raised questions such as:

- How can journalists do their work professionally?
- How can journalists receive proper orientation and support?
- What are the best practices for reporting pertinent developmental issues?
- How can ethical standards be enforced?

The presentations thus addressed issues relating to standards for professional practice, editorial standards and capacity development of media in West Africa. These were discussed in light of key professional challenges of media practice in West Africa, citing specific cases and examples from The Gambia, Ghana and Sierra Leone to illustrate trends in contemporary journalism.

The presentation brought up for discussion challenges of censorship as well as adherence to professional ethics, while pointers to good practices and opportunities that exist for experience sharing to strengthen media in West Africa were also touched on.

The challenges included weak human resource capacity in various media houses leading to the lack of professionalism. It was noted that while graduates from certain institutions which lack well trained staff and accreditation suddenly emerge as editors in private media houses, some radio stations also engage people with no training whatsoever as presenters.

The weak governance structures of media houses were also identified as a major challenge.

The high cost of materials (newsprint, broadcasting equipment, etc) which have to be imported has forced some newspapers to either reduce their circulation or close down.

Ethical infractions which have become common among practitioners should strongly be condemned by Journalists Associations in Africa.

Following the discussions, the participants came out with the following recommendations with the view to promoting higher standards of professional practice:

- Remuneration - Media owners must pay journalists well;
- Capacity building – Support to journalists to broaden their scope of knowledge. This could be done through sponsoring journalists to participate in exchange programmes;
- Corruption - To check corruption in media houses, media owners should operate separate company accounts from their personal accounts;
- Effective sanctioning mechanisms to deal with journalists who commit ethical blunders;
- Media training institutions must have basic equipment for the purposes of practical training;
- Journalism awards are being hijacked by governments and Journalists Associations must check this.

The plenary session ended with participants urging journalists to aim at pursuing an African agenda just as journalists in the developed western countries do. African media practitioners must strive for access to accurate information on Africa with the view to projecting the continent positively.

2nd plenary

CHALLENGES OF MEDIA OWNERSHIP IN WEST AFRICA TODAY - PRIVATE COMMERCIAL/COMMUNITY RADIO

Chairperson: Alhaji Abubakar Siddique Ahmed – Station Manager, Radio Univers

Presenter: Mr. Charles Van Dyck

Discussant: Mr. Isaac Massaquoi

There was a brief overview of media ownership trends in West Africa, with a focus of two key issues: who owns the media and the prospects and challenges for media consolidation. The challenges of financing, investment, profitability, growth and sustainability opportunities in media as well as economic and social obstacles were examined. Also reviewed was the status of public service broadcasting and its impact on

media in West Africa. Finally, the question of what policies and legislation are available to promote pluralism/diversity in the media and how to find a space for serious, critical, independent journalism was put under the spotlight.

The presentations isolated deformed legal regimes, difficulties in dealing with regulatory authorities and unclear rules of government as being the major challenges impeding investment in and expansion of the media in Africa.

Participants during this session noted that socio-political problems arising from the historical status of state-control/monopoly of media, an authoritarian outlook to governance, governments' mistrust of private media (viewing them as a challenge to governmental control) and fear of investors being slapped with libel/defamation suits have also contributed to the slow growth of the media. These coupled with political instability characterised by rapid changes in government resulting in loss of investment have made the media industry very unattractive.

Restrictions imposed over size of transmitters together with cumbersome processes for registration and acquisition of broadcast licenses and frequencies inhibit effective reach of media. Added to this, the prohibitive cost of high tech equipment coming in from the advanced countries creates an unclear future for the development of the media in Africa. Media owners thus have a great difficulty in keeping up with the rate at which new products are being manufactured.

African media are further weakened by inadequate human resource. They are challenged by the lack of adequate numbers of trained persons including On-air talent and technical and support staff.

The high incidence of poaching, even by the BBC, also affects the media industry. Journalists in the private media in particular have a penchant for leaving to other radio stations after having received extensive training from the public services broadcaster.

Poor management of training institutions leads to poor standards of trainees

Strategies for the way forward include:

- Guaranteed political stability to allow for accelerated investment
- Entrenched democratic governance
- Independent regulatory bodies
- Increased GDP and controlled inflation rate
- Confidence of the business community in the media sector

During discussions critical issues such as the following came up:

Questions

1. How can the media impact the society?
2. Concerning the issues on programming and article writing, how can the media ensure effectiveness and efficiency?

To promote growth and forestall the collapse of the media industry, the following recommendations were made:

- There is need to focus on in-house training to curtail the lack of credibility.
- New models of ownership should be explored and encouraged.
- Broadcast programme content must aim at helping listeners make informed choices
- Increase advocacy for transforming state broadcasters into Public Service Broadcasters.

3rd plenary

MEDIA TRAINING – MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF GROWING NEEDS TODAY

**Chairperson: Dr. Bonnah Koomson – School of Communications Studies,
University of Ghana**

**Presenter: Mr. Kojo Yankah, President, Africa Institute of Journalism and
Communication (AIJC)**

**Discussants: Prof. Joseph Mulbah
Mr. Boakye Dankwa Boadi**

This session looked at the challenges facing media training in terms of funding, current training requirements of the media community, university training, post-graduate studies, journalism programs for children and young adults and continued professional training for practitioners. It also took cognisance of the role of private institutions in the sub-region.

Participants noted that the West African sub-region currently has a growing demand for freedom of expression, freedom for self-determination, freedom from oppressive regimes, and enforcing the right of the people to eliminate underdevelopment with its attendant problems of high levels of illiteracy, ignorance, malnutrition, injustice and unemployment. Corruption, nepotism and a general lack of transparency and accountability are combining to weaken the resolve for democracy it is not surprising therefore that there is a clamour for a responsible media.

There is a wide gap between the few educated elite and the large masses of the people.

With the growing impact of information and communication technology, the gap continues to widen. However, over commercialization in the media is denying the people information and education on issues of development, and the gap continues to widen. There is therefore need for well trained media practitioners to fill this gap.

These challenges demand that the media industry re-engineers itself with an eye on retraining its practitioners as well as introducing new practices in order to empower the vast majority of the people to participate actively in the running of the business of government.

Although journalism training has generally benefited post-secondary students in universities in most parts of West Africa, the trend has been that most of such graduates prefer to enter the job market for public relations, advertising and marketing.

The challenges in the media training institutions include the following:

- a. Salaries offered in the media have been disappointing or the media environment has not been challenging.
- b. Post-conflict countries such as Sierra Leone and Liberia, where training ceased to exist for more than a decade have virtually no opportunity yet for fully established training institutions.
- c. Lack of facilities and qualified teachers due to poor funding has prevented a more practical and beneficial approach to training in the media.
- d. Some post-secondary institutions and universities have limited facilities resulting in graduates with very little practical experience.
- e. Media houses have no budgets for staff retraining.

During discussions, some of the questions that were critically examined were as follows:

1. Who is a journalist?
2. How well are journalists being prepared to meet the growing demands of the society?
3. How versatile are journalists to operate in the environment?
4. What type of training is required? Is it university training or the short one-off (usually two-week long) training that donor organisations usually provide for journalists?

To meet the demands of the media industry today, the entire training regime must change to reflect new attitudes, new curricula, well equipped schools and new management practices such as:

- a. the need to recruit and retain well-educated and professionally experienced

- teaching staff;
- b. providing a strong core liberal arts curriculum accompanied by a relevant ICT content to make students computer literate;
- c. students must produce a monthly student journal;
- d. a knowledge of the continent - its uniqueness, problems and how to apply journalism and technological skills to problem solving;
- e. training must be contextualised (i.e. situated within the context of societal needs)
- f. Specialization

These will result in producing journalists who possess the requisite skills and are also theoretically grounded professionals with a good understanding of the role and effects of modern trends in journalism and communication in a changing society.

Today's challenges call for creativity, passion and commitment to the growth of the journalism industry in the area of training. It also requires maintaining a well-qualified and well paid teaching staff, up-to-date equipment, and constant research.

It was concluded that approaches to media training have to change radically. Media training should be considered a business which needs to be well managed. Allowance should be made for research and development, and developments in the international arena should be closely monitored. There should be a fair balance between theory and practice in the training schedule, and the academic content has to be deepened to ensure that journalists possess the requisite analytical and technological skills to educate, inform and empower people. African journalists should thus be well exposed, intelligent, knowledgeable and confident to address the broader issues confronting Africa today.

4th plenary

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON MEDIA SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

Chairperson: Mr. Ben Akoh – Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA)

Presenter: Mr. Edetaen Ojo, Executive Director, Media Rights Agenda

**Discussants: Mr. Malcolm Joseph
Mr. David Tam Baryoh**

The discussion during this session provided a critical analysis of the role of Media Support Organizations (MSOs) and their current operations in the region. It touched on the co-operation between support organizations and focused on opportunities for networking as well as challenges they face in striving to maximize their efforts. The potential impact that economic conditions such as funding and sponsors may have on the integrity and effectiveness of MSOs were also examined.

Media Support Organizations provide capacity building and support for the media in many ways including:

- Support and transfer of skills in different areas and sectors of media practice, such as editorial skills, business management skills, and technical skills among others through organizing short-term and medium-term training programmes;
- Provision of equipment to the media - print and broadcast - (particularly for community radio);
- Provision of qualitative research to support the work of the media and media decision-making (systematic media monitoring, baseline research, media mapping, audience research, etc.);
- Assistance to media and media professionals under attack (e.g. legal assistance and defence, material assistance, medical assistance, safe havens, etc.);
- Addressing welfare issues and conditions of work for media professionals (particularly professional bodies, unions and associations);
- Provision of access to capital for media organizations (e.g. MDLF, SAMDLF).

There are quite a number of networks among which are the West African Journalists Association (WAJA), Southern Africa Journalists Association (SAJA), Organizations of Media in Central Africa (OMAC) and World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC)-Africa. However, many existing networks are weak and ineffective for many reasons, including the absence of efficient and cost-effective communication infrastructure in many countries, difficulty in communicating across different linguistic settings and competition and rivalry among members arising from scarcity of resources.

The challenges confronting the potentials of MSOs are many and diverse. These include the issues as to:

1. Whether MSOs have a constituency?
2. How much involvement do their beneficiaries have in planning, implementing and evaluating projects developed for their benefit?
3. Are MSOs accountable and to whom? Is it the beneficiaries, donors, public, government or the media owners?

In their bid to net-work MSOs and the media are faced with a number of challenges:

- In many cases there is either little or no impact. It is almost always the case that training given to journalists could have been done by experts in Africa;
- Projects are not workable because the donor agencies/funding organisations do not understand the political terrain of those countries involved.
- Some MSOs provide equipment to media houses but do not give training on how to operate this state-of-the-art equipment;
- There is the problem with the tyranny of donors. Most often the experts sent down for the training are found to be interns’
- There is the problem of duplication of functions;
- There is lack of monitoring and evaluation on the part of donors
- Media industry is incapacitated as a result of financing

It was therefore recommended that:

- There is need for networking and collaboration;
- Research in this area is important to know what the audience want;
- Donors and support organisations must involve local institutions in policy and strategy formulation.

CONCLUSION

The two-day consultation endorsed the media's role as guardian of the public sphere, but observed that in African countries this role has traditionally not been well understood by most governments. This accounts for the low levels of investment in media infrastructure to date. While development partners' support to media has tended to be project-based and small-scale, media practitioners have themselves not lived up to expectation.

In West Africa in particular, many governments continue to perceive media, especially the private media as anti-government working daily to oppose government programmes policies. If the right mechanisms are put in place, the media's role as catalysts for social growth and development would be better served.

Strengthening Africa's Media Consultation Process

Anglophone West Africa Sub-Regional Consultation Meeting

Accra, September 18 & 19, 2006

List of Participants

No	Country	Name	Designation
PRACTITIONERS			
1.	GAMBIA	Mr. Momodou Lamin Jaiteh	Point Newspaper
2.		Ms. Agnes Eyatunde John-Thomasi	Information & Communication Officer FAMEDEV
3.		Mr Ebrima Sillah	Journalist & BBC Correspondent
4.	GHANA	Mr. Boakye Dankwa Boadi	Chief Editor/Lecturer (part-time) Ghana News Agency/Ghana Institute of Journalism
5.	LIBERIA	Mr. Wellington Geevon Smith	STAR radio 1997 Deputy News Editor
6.		Mr. James Wolo	Media Development Coordinator, Media Monitoring and Development

			UNMIL Public Information Section
7.	NIGERIA	Mr. Ayodele Akinkuotu	Editor Tell Magazine
8.		Ms Gold Oruh	Director News NTA Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)
9.		Ms. Nike Coker	Head of Production & Programming Cool FM - Abuja
10.	SIERRA LEONE	Mr. David Tam-Baryoh	Executive Director, Centre for Media Education and Technology (C-Met)
OWNERS			
11.	GAMBIA	Aminata Dibasse	Business Development Manager/Broadcaster West Coast Radio (private radio)
12.		Mr. Madi M. K. Ceesay	General Manager The Independent Media Company
13.	GHANA	Mr. Anthony MacEyeson	Programmes Manager (Community Radio)
14.		Mr. Charles Vandyke	Business Development Manager Multimedia Broadcasting Co.
15.	LIBERIA	Mr. Frank Sainworla	Assistant Station Manager Veritas Radio (private radio)
16.		Mr. Teddy Pewee	Director of Television Clar TV

			(private TV)
17.		Ms. Juliana S. Buoro	Deputy Director-General/Broadcasting Liberia Broadcasting System Monrovia, Liberia
18.	NIGERIA	Mr. Jika Attoh	Manager, CEO COSMO FM (private radio station)
19.	SIERRA LEONE	Ms. Hannah Foullah	Manager FM 98.1 (private radio)
20.		Mr. Christian Keili	Editor/Publisher Salone Times (private newspaper)
21.		Mr. Issac Massaquoi	Project Coordinator/Lecturer Community Radio Network (CORNET-SL/Mass Comm. Dept, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone
SUPPORT ORGS. & SPECIAL INTEREST MEDIA ACTORS			
22.	GAMBIA	Ms. Sarjo M. Camara	Executive Member Gambia Press Union/Foroyan Newspaper
23.	LIBERIA	Mr. Malcolm Joseph	Executive Director Center for Media Studies and Peace Building (CEMESP)
24.	NIGERIA	Mr. Lanre Arogundade	Coordinator International Press Centre
25.	SIERRA LEONE	Alhaji Ibrahim Ben Kargbo	President/Managing Editor Sierra Leone Journalists Association New Citizen Newspaper
26.	GHANA	Dr. Bonnah	School of

		Koomson	Communication Studies Training Institution
27.		Mr. Kojo Yankah	President Africa Institute of Journalism and Communication (AIJC) (Training Institution)
28.		Mr. Kweku Rockson	Ag. Director Ghana Institute of Journalism (Training Institution)
29.		Alhaji Abubakar Siddique Ahmed	Station Manager Radio Unvers, University of Ghana, Legon
30.	LIBERIA	Assoc. Prof. Joe Worlorbah Mulbah	Chairman Mass Communication Department (Training Institution)
OBSERVERS			
31.	COTE D'IVOIRE	Mr. Chris Simpson	IRIN Radio
32.	GHANA	Mrs. Janet Adama Mohammed	Project Director IBIS West Africa
33.		Mr. Thomas Hughes	Deputy Director International Media Support
34.	LIBERIA	Mr. Raymond Zarbay	Senior Trainer/Producer Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN Radio)

35.		Mr. Anthony Vanwen	Producer/Trainer Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN Radio)
36.	SENEGAL	Mr. Ben Akoh	Information & Communication Technology Program Officer Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA)
37.	UNITED KINGDOM	Jane McElhone	Program Manager Network Media Program Open Society Institute
STRENGTHENING AFRICA'S MEDIA SECRETARIAT			
38.	NIGERIA	Mr. Edetaen Ojo	Executive Director Media Rights Agenda
39.	ETHIOPIA	Mr. Josiah Max B. Jarrett	OIC, Information and Communication Service of ECA Secretariat Strengthening Africa's Media
FACILITATING ORGANISATION			
40.	GHANA	Prof. Kwame Karikari	Executive Director Media Foundation for West Africa
41.		Mrs. Jeannette Quarcoopome	Program Officer - External Relations Media Foundation for West Africa

42.		Mr. Saidou Arji	NAFEO Coordinator C/o Media Foundation for West Africa
43.		Ms. Beatrice Amoah	Program Officer – Research and Publications

Appendix 2: Presentations (Full Texts)

MEDIA TRAINING – MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF GROWING NEEDS TODAY

*(Presented at the Anglophone West Africa Sub-Regional Meeting,
Accra Sept 18-19,2006)*

By

Kojo Yankah, President, Africa Institute of Journalism & Communications (AIJC)

The West African sub-region is currently in the throes of a growing demand from the people for freedom of expression, freedom for self-determination, freedom from oppressive regimes, and a right of the people to eliminate underdevelopment which comes with it high levels of illiteracy, ignorance, malnutrition, injustice and unemployment. Corruption, nepotism and a general lack of transparency and accountability are combining to weaken the resolve for democracy. At the same time, the people are asking for a responsible press.

There is also a yawning gap between the few educated elite and the large masses of the people, which gap continues to widen with advances in science and technology and particularly with the growing impact of information and communication technology. Over commercialization in the media is denying the people information and education on issues of development, and the gap continues to widen. This gap exists despite the well-acknowledged richness of the natural, human and intellectual resources of this sub-region, and it is my submission that it is the business of a well trained media to fill this gap.

Unlike in the Cold War eclipsed environment where the media in West Africa was generally an appendage of government, with the exception of a few, the challenges today, and particularly those of tomorrow demand that the media industry re-engineers itself with an eye on retraining its practitioners as well as introducing new practices in order to empower the vast majority of the people to participate actively in the running of the business of government.

Until today, there have been very few accredited private journalism training enterprises in West Africa. Journalism training has generally benefited post-secondary students in Institutes and Universities in most parts of West Africa established by government. Universities in Senegal, and Nigeria have produced Bachelors degree graduates, and in some cases, as in Ghana and Nigeria have offered post-graduate and masters degree courses. The trend has been that most of such graduates prefer to enter the job market for public relations, advertising and marketing. Either the salaries offered in the media have been disappointing or else the media environment has not been challenging.

For children and young adults in pre-secondary levels, there is virtually no opportunity yet fully established.

The situation is even more critical in post-conflict countries like in Sierra Leone and Liberia, where training ceased to exist for more than a decade. The current low level of

journalism standards in these countries is not accidental.

Where training programmes exist in the sub-region, lack of facilities and qualified teachers due to poor funding has prevented a more practical and beneficial approach to training in the media. In some institutes and universities, access to computers is limited, and radio and television studios and campus newspapers are a luxury. So that the first time a student gets access to these equipment is when he or she secures internship with a media house. This is woefully unacceptable and defeats the whole essence of training.

The result is that we have produced journalism graduates with very little practical experience before entering the industry.

In the face of the mushrooming of private radio stations and newspapers in the past decade, the media industry in West Africa has found itself lacking in well-trained media personnel, with stations recruiting untrained staff, and worst of all creating no budgets even for remedial training. It is fashionable for journalists these days to attend courses that are not only free but which also pay allowances for attending.

To meet the demands of the growing media industry today, the whole training regime has to change. New attitudes, new curricula, well equipped schools and new management practices should be adopted. A few private training institutes are emerging in West Africa, among which is the Africa Institute of Journalism & Communications (over which I am proud to preside). The AIJC, the first independent, private and accredited media training institution in Ghana, is currently training post-secondary students from various parts of Africa for the two-year Diploma certificate. Two batches have been graduated and their impact is already being felt in some media houses. Beginning October 2007, AIJC is introducing the 4-year bachelor's degree course, with even more modern innovations.

To meet the growing challenges, AIJC has dedicated itself to

recruiting well-educated and professionally experienced teaching staff.

Secondly, the Institute provides a strong liberal arts core and a relevant ICT content to bring its students in the first semester straight into the 21st century. All students are expected to be computer literate by the end of the first semester.

Thirdly, the goal of AIJC, which we consider relevant to today's needs, is to produce students who are not simply skilled artisans, but who are theoretically grounded professionals with a good understanding of the role and effects of modern trends in journalism and communication in a changing society like ours. At AIJC, our students produce a monthly student paper, the *Accra Business News*, and also edit and produce their own souvenir annual journal, *AIJC Memoirs*. And they will soon come out with their own professional quarterly journal to compete on the market.

Fourthly, we are training students to know the uniqueness of Africa, its problems and how to apply journalism and technological skills to solve the problems. We emphasize the importance of journalists knowing their environment, their cultural heritage and their continent.

Finally, we are in constant touch with the convergence that is already taking place between media and technology and are preparing ourselves to offer Degrees in four separate disciplines, namely Journalism (Print or Broadcast), Visual and Digital Communication (to include Photojournalism, Graphics and web design, Multimedia and Video production), Development Communication and Strategic Communication (ie

Advertising and Public Relations).

Today's challenges call for creativity, passion and commitment to the growth of the journalism industry in the area of training.

The underlying challenge to all these required initiatives is FUNDING. With banks charging 28% interest on loans, and with our philosophy not to bar qualified students with prohibitive fees, we are forced to go out into the international and local non-governmental community to seek support. We have a fully stocked computer laboratory connected to the internet 24 hours, seven days a week; we are constantly adding on to our stock of books with modern editions in our library, and we are currently sourcing funding to establish a radio broadcast studio with an FM broadcast facility. With time, we shall need a TV studio for training, and we shall have to construct our own permanent campus.

If one considers that training requires maintaining a well-qualified and well paid teaching staff, up-to-date equipment, and constant research, the question of funding becomes even more crucial.

In conclusion, I am emphasizing that approaches to media training have to change radically. Training should be considered a business to be well managed. Allowance should be made for research and development, and developments in the international arena should be closely monitored. The convergence that information technology has imposed on the media should be addressed and incorporated into any serious training for today and the future.

There should be a fair balance between theory and practice in the training schedule, and the academic content has to be deepened to ensure that our journalists possess the requisite analytical and technological skills to educate, inform and empower our people. The journalists we produce should be well exposed, intelligent, knowledgeable and confident to address the broader issues confronting Africa today. Only then shall we claim to have met the demands of the larger society from which we come.

Thank you.

Mr. Boakye Dankwa Boadi

Chief Editor/Lecturer (part-time)

Ghana News Agency/Ghana Institute of Journalism

Media refers to all the means of communication, such as news, radio, newspapers, and television. All these provide the public with news and entertainment among others and usually, along with advertising. There is a corps of professional engaged in the media who desire to make positive impact in the evolution of knowledge-based society. This assumption is necessary because looking at the media it is clear that there are anarchists among media practitioners. Some practitioners appear to relish in disturbing the hornets nest.

Thus media practitioners come in various colours and certain concept. There are those who see the profession as a means of making livelihood while others see it as a calling that must be practised with very high standards. Definitely, those who see it as a means of

livelihood would approach the profession in a different way from those who uphold the principles of high professional standards.

The Fourth Republican Constitution of Ghana goes at length to protect the media especially, the state-owned against governmental control. Some politicians have started complaining about what they term as “the tyranny of the media.” Indeed the media is having a field day. But the question is how the media is facilitating the cause of the evolution of a knowledge-based society when they churn out half-truths and go all out to peddle rumours and opinions as facts?

An Accra High Court in passing judgement in a libel suit brought against one newspaper said it could not tell the media what they should write but would show them how unwise it was to for them to have written what they wrote, if they (media) were brought to court.

This should show media practitioners that the red lights have started blinking and the earlier they mended their ways the better it would be.

MEDIA PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE-CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Aminata Dibassey

Good morning dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, I first bring you greetings from the Gambia and I would like to express apologies on behalf of Mr. Peter Gomez who was due here but could not due to unavoidable circumstances.

Media as we know plays an important role in a society and the significance of communication for human life cannot be underestimated. Without it no society can exist much less develop and survive.

I like my colleague Mr. Kargbo, have placed great emphasis on freedom and independence because I believe it is the greatest challenge we face.

There are several instances where we have seen journalists threatened, arrested or even killed for exercising their profession. Recently a Gambian journalist was detained and later on sacked from the National TV station for covering one of the opposition parties ‘s electoral campaign even though it is a provision of the Independent Electoral Commission that each party receives equal airtime.

I would not also forget to mention Deyda Hydera of the Point newspaper was murdered on the 16th of December 2004 and up to this point, justice has no taken its course.

Media as an institution should serve the interest of, and be in control of, the working class and the society in general, respond to the wishes and needs of their audiences and journalists are responsible professional whose aims and ideals should coincide with the best interests of the society but in today’s society this is not always the case, certain media institution have fashioned themselves to the order of the day and due to fear and intimidation have been unable to operate independently. I am not denying the fact that in

the interest of development ends, the state has a right to intervene in, or restrict media operations and devices of censorship, subsidy and direct control where necessary but this should be in accordance to the law of the land and the media whilst exercising its freedom I believe should also be open to restriction according to economic priorities and development needs of the society.

The government and the press each has a different task to accomplish ;if the government is to serve the people in whatever way it thought best, then the press also has a duty to go out and investigate impartially exactly how the government is performing its role.

It is often said that the media has a vital role as the watchdogs and guardians of liberty. The Watergate incident in the United States is cited as an example of a time when a free press functioned at its best, exposing high level of corruption and the abuse of power. It is also said that without a free press the whole affair would never have come to light. The press has similarly been able to expose the lies and deceits of several American presidents' administration during the long war in Vietnam, when government officials tried to cover up or conceal US policy. This investigative role is less often seen in our part of the world and its easy to see why; the problems of political instability are too great and the institutions of government too fragile. Freedom of the press, it is argued, can so easily be used to promote the claims of those hungry for power. The Mass media are given a different task, that of development –of facing up to and attempting to overcome the massive problems of poverty, ignorance and disease.

Nevertheless there is an unsolved dilemma here. The government seeks to use its powers over the media to exhort its citizens to greater efforts and at the same time to prevent the media either from questioning or being significantly critical of political authority. Yet such power is unlikely to be used for very long, if at all, in a disinterested and public spirited way; it is more likely to be used for the furtherance of political ends than in the service of public enlightenment. This is true even when it might be of advantage to the state to encourage the kind of media independence that will lead to greater public understanding of problems.

The new media of Africa are torn between two alternatives, neither of which very attractive .The kind of freedom is allowed for the press under the Nigerian constitution leads to numerous problems. Nigeria's mass media have in one way moved in the direction of limited commercialism on the one hand and intense political competition on the other. What will the effect of this be on a society of such enormous differences in wealth and poverty, health and disease, privilege and disadvantage? It is still too early to say how Nigeria will fare.

Other governments have taken an entirely different approach. They see a necessity to control their news media, restrict commercialization, limit political competition, and suppress or discourage the expression of political opinions at variance with those of the ruling group or party. Here we encounter the notion of journalism for development. This is one of the greatest challenges our media faces today and there is therefore the need to address this situation

Other major constraints on the media in Africa are neither political nor social but economic. Africa's press is now stagnating and in some places even going into decline. The cost of newsprint, machinery and ink, all of which have to be imported has forced certain papers to cut their circulation. Some newspapers are heavily subsidized if they charged their readers the real cost of production and distribution they would further reduce their sales. Few countries can afford the considerable expense.

Radio also suffers from this trend in economic life of the continent. Its development both at the transmission and receiving end has slowed down. In the case of where I come, the greatly increased cost of fuel used on generators due to irregular electricity supply is a concern.

The lack of resources impoverishes Africa's media weakening their potential and restricting their achievement. Few African countries have the resources or expertise necessary to design, establish and maintain communications systems which would represent a true and appropriate reflection of their own culture. Poverty makes cheap foreign merchandise all but irresistible and through this the less developed country is led to rely not only on the technology of the west but also on its films, television programmes, international news agencies and more. All of these are cheaper than any comparable material which may be produced at home.

Overlooking the challenges we face today, there are also opportunities which can help a great deal in developing the media professional practice.

One of such opportunity is the ability of the media to serve as an agent of modern consciousness. Qualities of consciousness are based on every day experiences wherein the media bombards the public with models of behavior that are adequate to technological thinking, the themes become independent of their primary bearers and become a component of a modern world view. Through mass publications, films, radio and television, cognitive and definitions invented in the city are very quickly proliferated within the society as whole.

Another opportunity is the ability to help in national development. Free and desirable information is generally desirable and this helps in mobilizing human resources. There must be information designed to encourage productive attitudes, social patterns and customs and An improved overflow of information provides a climate for national development .The media can widen horizons, focus attention that is attention can be kept on development, raise aspirations, help although indirectly to change strongly held attitudes or valued practices, enforce social norms, help form taste, help substantially in all types of education and training. I therefore strongly encourage that a developing country should not hesitate to invest in a well considered program of mass-media development and use nor hesitate to make use of new technical developments in communication, in cases where these new developments fit the countries needs and capabilities.

Because media content is public, it has the opportunity to serve as modernizing institutions; making men modern. Modernity at the level of the individual include

tolerance, faith in science and technology an openness to change The mass media ,if they disseminate modern values, have generally positive effects on developing countries.

This is where I would round up. Thank you Mr. Chairperson.

Challenges of Media Ownership in West Africa Today **Private Commercial/Community Radio by**

Mr. Charles Vandyke

LEGAL ISSUES

- Deformed legal regime
- Difficulty of dealing with regulatory authorities
- Unclear rules

SOCIO-POLITICAL

- History of state-control
- Authoritarian outlook to governance
 - Perception of private media as possible challenge to government control
 - Possibility of investor being attached in a case of libel or slander
- Possibility of change in government resulting in loss of investment
- Barriers to rebroadcast of local content
- Challenges of Globalization-the CNNs, DWs and BBCs of this world have free range

TECHNICAL

- Control of transmitter size to restrict effective reach of media
- Cumbersome processes
- Cost of equipment
 - Changes in technology –
- Unclear future path
 - Digital Radio
 - Different technologies in USA, Asia and Europe – which way do we go?

HUMAN RESOURCE

- Lack of adequate numbers of trained persons
 - Technical
 - Journalists and other On-air talent
 - Support
- Incidence of poaching - even by the BBC
- Inadequate training institutions and programs locally

- Training institutions are not properly resourced and in some cases, managed
- High cost of training – takes of as much as 10% of total revenue at the Multimedia Group

ECONOMY

- Confidence of the industrial and commercial sectors in the future
- Ability to support the media industry

WHAT IS NEEDED

- Political stability
- Democratic governance
- Real freedom of the regulators from government control
- Economic growth
- Confidence of the business community

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON MEDIA SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

By Edetaen Ojo

This presentation provided a critical analysis of the role of Media Support Organizations. It touched on the co-operation between support organizations and networking and challenges to the potential of support organizations to maximize the different kinds of support. Finally, the presentation examined the potential impact that economic conditions such as funding and sponsors may have on the integrity and effectiveness of Media Support Organizations.

Presentation

Media support organizations come in all shapes and sizes and their work cut across different areas, sectors and issues. They reflect the continuing tensions between “media development” and “media for development” as well as provide expert support to media to concentrate on doing their work.

Media Support Organizations provide capacity building and support for the media in many ways including:

1. Support and transfer of skills in different areas and sectors of media practice, such as editorial skills, business management skills, and technical skills among others

- through organizing short-term and medium-term training programmes;
2. Provision of equipment to the media - print and broadcast - (particularly for community radio);
 3. Provision of qualitative research to support the work of the media and media decision-making (systematic media monitoring, baseline research, media mapping, audience research, etc.);
 4. Advocacy for appropriate legal, institutional and regulatory frameworks for media;
 5. Monitoring media freedom, attacks on the media and advocacy for and defence of media freedom;
 6. Assistance to media and media professionals under attack (e.g. legal assistance and defence, material assistance, medical assistance, safe havens, etc.);
 7. Addressing welfare issues and conditions of work for media professionals (particularly professional bodies, unions and associations);
 8. Provision of access to capital for media organizations (e.g. MDLF, SAMDLF).

There are quite a number of networking among which are the West African Journalists Association (WAJA), Southern Africa Journalists Association (SAJA), Organizations of Media in Central Africa (OMAC) and World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC)-Africa. However, many existing networks are weak and ineffective for many reasons, including the absence of efficient and cost-effective communication infrastructure in many countries, difficulty in communicating across different linguistic settings and competition and rivalry among members arising from scarcity of resources.

Challenges to the Potentials of Media Support Organizations

- Do we have a constituency? If so, who/what is our constituency?
- How much involvement do our beneficiaries have in the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects developed for their benefit?
- Are we accountable? Who are we accountable to? – Beneficiaries? Donors? Public? Governments? Ourselves?
- Doubtful credibility – if the media do not trust us, who are we serving? How can we build credibility with our constituency?
- How do we determine whether we are effective in our work? Are we making any difference? Do we even care about this?
- How do we demonstrate conclusively and convincingly the impact of our work?
- Most of our projects are short-term because funding is too short-term
- Because our funding and projects are short-term, we are hamstrung in doing long-term strategic planning
- Short-term funding means we can only execute projects with very limited possibilities of making a real impact
- In consequence, our impact or potential for impact are very low.

Impact of Economic Conditions on Integrity and Effectiveness

- In many cases, we make little or no impact

- We are unable to hire qualified or adequately skilled personnel for our work because of low funding levels
- We are unstable because many of us get only project funds and struggle to sustain our institutional arrangements
- We are sometimes donor-driven – if we cannot find funding for the things we would like to do, we simply implement the donors’ agenda so as to access resources
- In the process, we sometimes do projects we are neither interested in nor equipped to do
- In some cases, in desperation to access funding, we make unrealistic promises to donors about what can be achieved

In conclusion ...

- Media support organizations are critically important to the delivery of assistance to the media
- They are an important platform for the coordination of media assistance
- They bring expertise and specialization to important task of providing support to the media in various areas
- They enable the media to concentrate on their primary functions
- However, media assistance organizations need to increase their collaborative activities and develop mechanisms for making networking and cooperation effective
- This will reduce duplication and waste
- Effective collaboration and networking will facilitate information, knowledge and experience sharing
- Networking and collaboration will make it possible to share best practices
- Media support organizations also need to build stronger linkages with their beneficiaries – the media
- The beneficiaries should have a greater involvement in designing, implementing and evaluating projects aimed at improving their effectiveness
- Media support organizations should also institute more transparent processes to improve their credibility with various stakeholders
- We should also develop reliable instruments with which we can monitor and evaluate the implementation of our projects
- These will be useful in convincing ourselves of the utility and impact of the projects we implement
- They will also enable us to convince donors and other stakeholders that the funding and resources they provide for our work is money well-spent
- However, to improve the chances of impact, donors need to provide longer term support to media support organizations
- Donors should also develop strategic partnerships with media support organizations so they can work together to realize common objectives
- This will enable media support organizations to be more strategic in the planning.

Appendix 3 Group Work / Report

GROUP ONE

TOPIC: RIGHTS AND PLURALISM CURRENT CRITICAL PRESS FREEDOM

Our discussion focused separately on Rights and Pluralism, looked at their challenges and recommendations.

[RIGHTS]

The struggle for rights has been a major pre-occupation of media practitioners and journalists in West Africa are no exception.

Rights of journalists mainly referred to the legal environment under which journalists operate without interference in any form or manner.

We believe that to ensure this there are initiatives to be taken by journalists and stakeholders in the media business.

CHALLENGES:

1. The existence of legislations that undermine constitutional provisions that guarantee media freedom
2. Violation of the rights of others journalists by unethical reporting
3. The role of Government's Public Relations in Journalist Associations

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Need to expand frontier of media freedom by re-enforcing advocacy for the establishment of a Freedom of Information regime
2. Media should collaborate with civil society organizations to advocate the repeal of legislations that undermine the application of constitutional provisions on media freedom
4. Regulatory bodies and Journalist Associations should establish Peer Review Committee to ensure that practitioners do not violate the rights of others.
5. The role of Public Relations Officers should clearly be defined to determine whether they carry an affiliate/associate title or they should seek elective positions.

[PLURALISM]

CHALLENGES:

1. Is the proliferation of media institutions helping or harming the media landscape?
2. Can the number be marched with substance?

RECOMMENADTIONS:

1. Regulatory bodies and Journalist Associations should ensure professional standards are upheld
2. That community radio stations live up to professional standards in their various locations

GROUP MEMBERS:

1. I.B. Kargbo
2. Wellington Geevon-Smith
3. Aminata A. Dibasse
4. Sarjo M. Camara
5. Saidou Arji
6. Momodou L. Jaiteh

GROUP TWO

Financial Sustainability – Economic Challenges of the Media Industry – What Can be Done ?

BACKGROUND

Issues of **SUSTAINABILITY** have increasingly come to the fore in discussions on the future of African Media. It is crucial that a forum like this comes up with concrete recommendations to address some of the key problems. Efforts to create a more professional media, with better training and higher ethical standards will count for nothing if those media themselves are floundering, failing to prove themselves viable.

CORE PROBLEMS

Participants drew on experiences from Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Ghana and Liberia to highlight obvious, recurring problems for media. These include:

A lack of access to capital

Poor financial practices on the part of media organisations

An unstable environment for business

It was pointed out that banking institutions, both national and international, are notoriously reluctant to fund media initiatives. It was also recognised that there have been more doomed initiatives than success stories, encouraging the banks to be reticent.

From Nigeria it was pointed out that new media entities, be they radio stations or newspapers, often fail to do basic research, not asking the most important questions: *is there a niche for this new service ? What is the existing competition? What are the needs of the listeners and readership? Will you have enough revenue to keep going?*

This lack of ‘market orientation’ is handicapping media development.

So too is a lack of planning. While Nigeria offers good examples of journalists coming together to launch new products, ie *Tell* magazine, most new media ventures are led by those who have no journalistic background. In Ghana, most successful media groups are headed by non-media people.

TAKING THE MONEY SIDE SERIOUSLY...

The clear demarcation between the business and editorial sides of a newspaper or radio was seen as by and large healthy.

But there is an onus on those involved in the media at all levels to take financial issues more seriously, to become more financially literate.

THE MEDIA NEEDS TO BE MORE FINANCIALLY SELF-AWARE.

“There is nothing wrong with a journalist learning to run a business”.

There are several things that can be done to help this process:

- basic training on drafting business plans, allowing media entities to set out their stalls more effectively;
- investment in media management by university faculties and other training institutions, acknowledging there are specialist skills that need to be learned;
- media development organisations, both national and international, to advise on financial strategy, incorporating this into their fieldwork and capacity-building;
- liaising with existing organisations, like the Media Development Loan Fund (MDLF), to look at what structures are available at the moment to get access to financial support;
- to develop new regional mechanisms to raise capital for media in

West Africa;

- more effective regional networking from different media organisations interested in changing the financial landscape for media.

It should be emphasised that this is part of an attempt to break with the culture of dependency. Instead, stations, newspapers and others should look at securing loans, using financial ‘incubation’ mechanisms, being ready to pay back what they borrow.

The group looked in detail at different patterns of ownership. Clearly, there are different strategies for different sectors, “different stokes for different folks”, but obvious common priorities.

BECOMING MORE COMMERCIAL

At state level....On the side of the state-owned media, it was noted that many West Africa state media empires are cumbersome, absurdly labour-intensive, inefficient and unaccountable. Participants urged state media to diversify, arguing that state-owned newspapers, TV and radio stations should all be capable of generating advertising. There was concern, however, about the state media’s advance into advertising forcing a collision with commercial rivals, who might now face lower rates and a diminished share of the market.

For community stations....It was acknowledged that community radios were often committed to a non-profit approach, but it was stressed this did not preclude soliciting adverts. In some countries (Sierra Leone, for example) there are clearly grey areas in the definition of ‘commercial’ and ‘community’. What makes a community radio a community radio?

All stations have to have enough money to survive, pay costs, keep staff, run generators etc....

All stations have to find a listenership.....commercial stations tailor thweir programmes to target audiences, community radios need to do the same. There are obvious good practices a smaller station can follow: networking in the community, creating a brand, looking for small-scale financial contributions. But the balance sheet is crucial. Partner organisations backing community stations should ask: does the community want this stations? Can the station prove itself viable? If these factors are not considered, there will be failure and disappointment.

THE NEED FOR A COMMON FRONT

Regional and national organisations have a key role to play in defining needs, channelling funds and equipment, lobbying for individual stations. **But these bodies must be credible and dynamic, not competitive and counter-productive.**

They may need more support and orientation.

Local and national stations can benefit from partnerships with international and local NGOs. Health campaigns offer obvious opportunities for collaboration, with international agencies perhaps willing to provide technical and logistical support in lieu of money.

GROUP THREE

MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF GROWING NEEDS TODAY

Chinese group's report

Our group known as the Chinese group had the task of deliberating on the presentation of Kojo Yankah, president, African Institute of Journalism and Communications (AIJC) media training—meeting the challenges of growing needs today clearly stating ways in which the media in west Africa can be supported and the way forward.

As per the instruction of the chair, we unanimously elected Professor Joe Mulbah as the chair of our group. When we attempted to elect some one from the Gambia to head the secretariat, they declined and the group again took a unanimous decision to elect your humble servant to manage the secretariat.

Professor Mulbah immediately embarked on his function by leading the discussion. This was done by looking at three general areas in the form of questions and attempting to find answers to them.

Below are the general areas and their answers. May I state that as the presenter, i will be ably backed by members of the group for support in the form of clarifications and additions?

- 1) what are the training needs of west African media today?
- 2) what are existing media institutions doing?
- 3) what new ways of training could be planned?

The training needs of West African media are enormous. they include but not limited to the following:

- ❖ new attitudes
- ❖ well equipped schools to facilitate the training of west African journalists
- ❖ new management policies should be formed
- ❖ access to ICT
- ❖ balance between theory and practice

What are existing media institutions doing?

- at the moment, there exist a shrotage of appropriately structured media institutions to train media personnel to play their role in society.

- however, some media institutions in Africa are awarding bachelor and master degrees, diplomas and in some cases countries that don't have media institutions at the college level are also offering certificates. this is taking place under difficult circumstances
- most media institutions in West Africa currently don't have access to computers and other broadcast and print equipment, making graduates from these institutions to have little or no practical experience before entering the media industry.
- the media environment has not been challenging as there is a lack of facilities and qualified instructors due to poor funding.

What new ways of training could be planned?

New ways of training for the capacity building of the West African media need to be structured in two fold. a) short term b) long term

- ✓ establishment of a focal point for the coordination of media and communication training such as the African council for communication and media education (ACCE)
- ✓ setting up of a west African data base for trainers and training institutions
- ✓ establishing a media trust fund with the following objectives:
 - provision of scholarships for media practitioners in existing media institutions
 - access to African media trainers to address the issue of lack of trained man power
 - such trust fund could as well be used for the continuous exchange of programs among west African training scholars and journalists

This will serve as a catalyst for the growth and development of the west African media.

- ✓ a review of the curricula of west African media institutions with emphasis on content and ethical issues. this will enhance the move for west African journalists to cope with present day realities.
- ✓ a needs assessment should be carried out to know the strengths and weaknesses of existing media institutions.
- ✓ establishment of a link between professional bodies and the training institutions to ensure high standard in the profession

We thank you very much for your attention and contribution.

Committee Members Include:

Prof Joe Mulbah---Chairman (Liberia)
 Raymond Zabay—Rappoteur (Liberia)
 Prof Kojo Yankah—Member (Ghana)

Malcolm Joseph—Member (Liberia)
Boakye Dankwa Boadi—Member (Ghana)
Madi M .K.Ceesay—Member (Gambia)
Ebrima Sillah—Member (Gambia)
Teddy Pewee—Member (Liberia)
Agnes Thomasi—Member (Gambia)

GROUP FOUR

Editorial standards and capacity development

Poor editorial standards and capacity development are faced with critical professional standards in recent times. Participants therefore proposed the following:

1. There is the problem of low ethical standard. The practical solution is to reproduce copies of handbooks and ethics and make it available to all journalists irrespective of position;
2. There is need to train all staff of media institutions to adhere to professional codes ethics. However, where there is this training, its implementation has always been a problem;
3. There should be more research. Investigative reporting should be regular for various institutions as most stories and articles are shallow.
4. There is low level of social responsibility. Politics dominate media issues. The media should be agenda setters
5. Media institutions should tap on expertise of people
6. There is no professional growth because recruitment is not be streamlined. This must be addressed
7. Editorial meetings are rare or non existent. Media outlets must have more in-house training
8. Lack of structures make media houses weak
9. Unity and reconciliation are important
10. House styles are important for every media house. There should be what one should look out for in a report
11. The low level of newsroom management must be corrected

GROUP FIVE

Policy and Regulation: Common regulatory issues and how to address them

The group made recommendations under the following categories:

5. Policy
6. Ownership

7. Regulation
8. Other Recommendations

2. POLICY

The group recommends that there should be a regulatory body for the media which should be an independent and autonomous authority void of political interference and whose funding should be appropriated by parliament.

Decisions about licensing, renewal of licenses, and frequency allocation should be taken through an open and transparent process. However, where applications for licenses are rejected or a license is revoke, the matter should be subject to judicial review.

The regulatory authorities should have representative and independent governing bodies, the elements of which should include an open and transparent appointment process, security of tenure for the members, and funding appropriated by parliament.

3. OWNERSHIP

The group recommends that media organizations may be owned by any of the following:

- Government - Government ownership of broadcast media should be within the framework of public service broadcasters, which should have independent governing boards and whose editorial functions should be insulated from political interference. Government ownership in the print media sector should in no way undermine the freedom of expression provisions in national Constitutions.
- Private - Private interests and concerns should be allowed to establish media organizations as part of the process of promoting diversity and pluralism in the sources of information for citizens.
- Institutional - Institutions such as Universities and Journalism Training Institutions should be encouraged and allowed to own and operate media organizations for the purpose of training prospective journalists.
- Community - Community media should be encouraged and assisted to flourish. Community media may serve a geographical community, especially in poor or rural communities, or to promote a community of interests. Egs: Farmers, Youth Groups, Women Organisations, etc.

4. REGULATION

There should be regulatory bodies establish for the purpose of licensing broadcast media and allocating frequencies as well as to regulate the technical aspects and the content of broadcast media. Regulatory authorities may require the print media to register but this should not be for the purpose of licensing or permitting them to operate.

Media Law Reform Processes

- Existing anti-media laws and other laws which inhibit media freedom and independence should be reviewed or repealed
- All stakeholders should be involved and consulted in media law reform processes.

5. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- The group recommends that all media laws should be reviewed in order to remove all penal provisions on criminal defamation, false publications, sedition, incitement, insult to political authorities, etc.
- State Monopolies - the state monopolies should be discouraged in the print and broadcast media.
- Furthermore, there should be equitable allocation of frequencies between state owned or run media and private media so that the sector is not dominated by the State
- The media should be encouraged to cater to the interests and needs of rural and poor communities. In this regard, community media should be encouraged to develop and flourish.
- Public service broadcasters should serve the community at large and all sectors of the society should have access to it.
- The media should in principle be self-regulatory and should put in place a code of conduct which should have effective and enforcement mechanisms.
- Media professional bodies or associations should be responsible for registering their members. Lack of registration on the part of an individual journalist should not inhibit his/her practice of the profession.

MECHANISMS FOR ACHIEVING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Advocacy- Advocacy should be undertaken to encourage and pressure respective governments and stakeholders to implement these recommendations at national and regional levels.
2. Networking- Media Institutions, associations and media support organizations should be encouraged to network across national borders and on regional levels to share information and best practices.

GROUP 5 MEMBERS

1. Issac Massaquoi
2. Edetaen Ojo
3. Kweku Rockson
4. James Wolo –Chairman
5. David Tam Baryoh
6. Nike Coker- Rapporteur

'Strengthening Africa's Media Consultation Process Anglophone West Africa Sub-Regional Meeting

Accra, September 18 & 19, 2006

Agenda

DAY 1:

0900 – 10:00: Opening Session

- Chairperson: Prof. Alex Quarmyne – Executive Director, Ghana Community Radio Network
- Welcome & Introductions: Representative of Media Foundation for West Africa
- Meeting Aims, Objectives & Strategy: Mr. Josiah Max Jarret
- Statement by Chairperson
- Housekeeping

1000 – 1120: Plenary # 1: Media Professional Practice – Challenges & Opportunities

- Chairperson: Mr. Edetaen Ojo – Executive Director, Media Rights Agenda
- Presenter: Alhaji I.B. Kargbo – President, Sierra Leone Association of Journalists
- Discussants: Mr. Boakye Dankwa Boadi
Mr. Peter Gomez
- General Discussion

1120 – 1140: Coffee/Tea

1140 – 1300: Plenary # 2: Challenges of Media Ownership in West Africa Today

- State/Public Service

- Private commercial, Community

- Chairperson: Alhaji Abubakari Siddique Ahmed – Station Manager, Radio Unvers, University of Ghana, Legon
- Presenter: Mr. Kwasi Twum – CEO, Multimedia Broadcasting Co.
- Discussants: Mr. Isaac Massaquoi
Mr. Kwaw Ansah
- General Discussion

1300 – 1430: Lunch

1430 – 1550: Plenary # 3: Media Training – Meeting the Challenges of Growing

Needs Today

- Chairperson: Dr. Bonnah Koomson – School of Communication Studies, University of Ghana, Legon
- Presenter: Mr. Kojo Yankah – President, African Institute of Journalism & Communication
- Discussants: Prof. Joseph Mulbah
Dr. Lizzy Ikem
- General Discussion

1550 – 1610: Coffee/ Tea

1610 – 1730: Plenary # 4: Critical Perspectives on Media Support Organisations

- Chairperson: Mr. Ben Akoh (OSIWA)
- Presenter: Mr. Edetaen Ojo, Executive Director, Media Rights Agenda
- Discussants: Mr. Malcolm Joseph, Mr. David Tam Baryoh
- General Discussions

1730 – 1800: Wrap-Up

DAY 2:

0900 – 1000: Opening Session

- Chairperson: Mrs. Jeannette Quarcoopome, Programme Officer, MFWA
- Recap of Day 1 Highlights by Rapporteurs
- Discussion & Clarifications
- Preparation for Group Work

1000 – 1300: Group Work

- Break into 6 Groups, tasked with coming up with 6 concrete and fleshed-out proposals on key thematic issues raised in the Plenary discussions and identified in the electronic consultation.
 - o Rights & Pluralism - Current critical press freedom issues and ways to address them
 - o Policy & Regulation - Common regulatory issues and how to address them
 - o Financial Sustainability - Economic challenges of the media industry: what can be done?
 - o Editorial Standards & Capacity Development – Critical professional problems today: what can be done?
 - o New Media & Convergence
 - o Capacity Building – Training: what are the training needs of media today? What can existing institutions do? What new ways of training could be planned?

* All groups must address also mechanisms for supporting each of the areas under discussions.

1120 – 1140: Coffee/Tea

1300 – 1430: Lunch

[Group Rapporteurs lunch together to prepare presentations for report-back]

1430 – 1600: Plenary # 5: Presentation of Results of Group Work

- Chairperson: Prof. Kwame Karikari
- 10 minute report by each group
- Discussion & Clarifications

1600 – 1645: Coffee/Tea

[Meeting & Group Rapporteurs caucus to prepare consolidated proposals]

1645 – 1830: Plenary # 6: Closing Session

- Joint Chairpersons
- Presentation of Key Proposals: Designated Rapporteur
- General Discussion
- Next Steps: Secretariat Rep/Director
- Close of Meeting: Mr. Josiah Max Jarret

- - Cocktail - -