

## **BUILDING CAPACITY FOR MEDIA DEVELOPMENT**

Barrat Lecture Theatre, Rhodes University,  
Grahamstown, South Africa, September 7-8, 2008

### **Minutes of the founding conference of the African Forum for Media Development**

#### **Day 1: September 7, 2008**

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##### **Opening Session**

David Hoffman, the President of Internews, a US-based international media development NGO and chairperson of the GFMD opened the meeting. He welcomed all participants to the “home of Nelson Mandela” and thanked MISA and Highway Africa for hosting the meeting. Mr. Hoffman also thanked the funders for their generous support. He proceeded to outline the rationale for the meeting (*see the background and introduction of the AFMD elsewhere on this page*).

Mr. Hoffman pointed out that the meeting would conclude with the election of two African delegates to serve on the GFMD’s steering committee. These would also be the elected representatives of the AFMD at a global gathering in Athens in December 2008.

Ms. Jeanette Minnie, coordinator of the conference, has been serving along with Edetaen Ojo of Media Rights Agenda as an African member on the founding (voluntary) steering committee of the GFMD since 2004. She made apologies for Mr. Ojo who was unable to attend due to his inability to secure a visa to enter South Africa despite serious attempts. Ms. Estella Nelson from Liberia experienced serious travel difficulties due to a problematic flight booking. Ms. Minnie proposed that such complications be taken into consideration when deciding on venues for future meetings, and said that perhaps a country such as Kenya should be considered as a future venue to overcome long and costly flight routes and where visa arrangements could perhaps be more easily made. She further elaborated on the difficulties suffered by Mr. Faruk Osman Nur from Djibouti at the hands of South African immigration officials on arrival in the country causing him to lose his connecting flight. He eventually took a bus overnight from Johannesburg to Port Elizabeth to reach the conference. She thanked him for his resilience. Ms. Minnie also noted that delegates without South African embassies in their countries had applied for visas in Ghana with the assistance of the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) in Ghana. She thanked the MFWA’s Ms. Jeannette Quarcoopome for her tremendous assistance in that regard. Mr. Gabriel Baglo of the IFJ was also thanked for his frequent assistance with translation from English to French during email and telephone communication with some delegates.

Ms. Bettina Peters, Director of the GFMD, provided an overview of the GFMD. She explained that up to this point the GFMD had been managed by a steering committee of 15 media development organisations working at international, regional and national levels. The steering committee had appointed her as the Director of the GFMD in July 2007. She operated from a small secretariat in Brussels. Ms. Peters pointed out that the launch of the global campaign was motivated by the need to recognise media as an intrinsic component of democratic development. Further to that, it aims to:

- advocate for the recognition of media development as a development sector in its own right and as a critical part of overall development strategies;
- advocate for free, independent, pluralistic and viable media systems to be recognised as a primary pillar for advancing social, economic and political development;
- increase support for media development (more and new donors);
- share information about best practice, projects that worked; and to
- improve tools in the monitoring of and impact evaluation of media development work.

The GFMD had proceeded by bringing the media development community together through a number of regional consultations. At the time of the Grahamstown conference several regional consultations had been held including in:

- Latin America: Cartagena, March 2008-09-07
- Eurasia: Paris, April 2008-09-07
- Asia: Colombo, July 2008.

A Middle East and North African Forum would also be established in the near future. The regional consultations were charting the way for the Global Forum meeting, scheduled in Athens from 7-10 December 2008.

Ms. Peters explained that the GFMD's activities for the coming three years included several services to the media development community. Included was the hosting of a website to serve as a platform for exchange, to showcase work of media NGOs in the regions, to include databases of donors, media development groups, resource materials and advocacy and advice on best practices. The GFMD would also facilitate joint strategy development and advocacy wherever possible and provide access to the donor community for smaller media NGOs

"We want to build regional structures for media development; link up with partners to build a media development community together and to increase the impact of what we do", she said, adding that it was difficult to measure the impact of media NGOs as so many factors come into play.

According to Ms. Peters forum partners would directly benefit from access to information about the work of other partners in the network. Forum partners would also receive the opportunity to showcase their work, learn about new tools and programme ideas, improve knowledge of project design, monitoring and evaluation and build new partnerships through participation in the forum.

Indirectly, the GFMD would facilitate the building of a "real community of media development practitioners" who receives recognition for media development in order to put media freedom and independence high on the development agenda and thus increase overall donor support.

## Session One: Mapping and concepts of media development in Africa

Moderator: Prof. Fackson Banda, SAB Ltd-UNESCO Chair of Media and Democracy, Rhodes University

Presenters:

- The UNESCO/IPDC Media Development Indicators – Prof. Guy Berger, Rhodes University
- The African Media Barometer – Kaitira Kandjii, MISA
- The IREX Africa Media Sustainability Index – Mark Whitehouse, IREX
- Spheres of influence model – A.S. Panneersalvan, Panos South Asia
- The African Media Initiative (AMI) – Jeanette Minnie, Zambezi FoX

### **Unesco/IPDC Media Development Indicators**

**Prof. Guy Berger, Rhodes University**

Professor Guy Berger critically interrogated the UNESCO/IPDC Media Development Indicators and commenced his presentation by questioning the lack of a clear definition of the concept of ‘Media Development’ in the study. He argued that **media for development** could be seen as interventions required to start, speed up and redirect media and are thus an ‘activity’ or ‘process’. On the other hand, **media development** could be viewed as an ‘ideal outcome’.

He pointed out, for example, that the Unesco indicators were grouped into to five categories:

1. Legal environment
2. Plural ownership
3. Democratic performance
4. Capacity (skills and organisations)
5. Public Access

Categories 2,3,4 appeared, according to him, to be more ends than means, while categories 1 and 5 are rather means to an end. Thus, he felt that Unesco’s indicators were blurring the difference between media development as an end, and as a means to an end. He voiced concern that whilst the Unesco approach was intended to serve as a diagnostic tool, the approach did not provide a definition for media development, but instead presented a circular logic.

Berger concluded his presentation by noting that delegates should avoid conceptual circularity and normativity, examine new potential for defining media development, seek to problematise old media baggage and focus more on journalism development as opposed to media development.

### **African Media Barometer**

**Mr. Kaitira Kandjii, (MISA)**

Mr. Kandjii explained that the African Media Barometer (AMB) was the first in-depth and comprehensive description and measurement system for national media environments on the African continent. The AMB was a collaboration between MISA and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, who were co-owners of the AMB, as well as its implementing partners. MISA’s focus is largely on the 11 countries in SADC where it has national chapters: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The AMB is a self-assessment exercise conducted by a team of concerned and informed citizens in each particular country. The benchmarks used have to a large extent been derived from “The Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa” which was adopted by the African Commission for Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) in 2002. The ACHPR is the authoritative organ of the African Union mandated to interpret the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, which is binding on all member states.

The development of the AMB was motivated by a concern over the omission of free and independent media in the good governance criteria of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), the lack of civil society involvement in the APRM and the fact that – at least in Africa – there was no mechanism to assess and compare developments in media development in African countries.

The development of the AMB commenced with the production of assessment criteria and fine-tuning of the 42 indicators, which were in turn divided into sectors focusing on (a) freedom of expression, (b) the media landscape, (c) regulation in broadcasting and (d) the professionalism of media practitioners. The AMB involves a national panel consisting of up to 10 persons, with one half directly involved in the media (practitioners, academics and owners) and the other half from other areas of civil society (human rights, gender, church groups, trade unions, etc.).

Panellists engage in a qualitative discussion of the individual indicators and conclude by allocating quantitative scores to each of the indicators – in a secret ballot – that measure the degree of achievement. The recorded discussion and scores are combined in a detailed report which informs the programmes of MISA and FES’ advocacy and media development strategies.

See <http://www.misa.org/mediamonitoring/ambreports.html>

## **The IREX Africa Media Sustainability Index**

### **Mark Whitehouse, IREX**

Mr. Mark Whitehouse presented the IREX Media Sustainability Index (MSI) which provides in-depth analyses of the conditions for independent media in 76 countries across Africa, Europe, Eurasia, and the Middle East. Since the Eurasian MSI was first conceived in 2000, in cooperation with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the MSI has evolved into an important benchmark study to assess how media systems change over time and across borders. The African MSI has shown the durability and applicability of the objectives and indicators designed for the original MSI. Minor changes in the panellists and moderator instructions ensured the results embrace uniquely African features, including the prevalence of radio - notably community radio - found in many countries.

The MSI assesses five “objectives” in shaping a successful media system:

- Legal and social norms protect and promote free speech and access to public information.
- Journalism meets professional standards of quality.
- Multiple news sources provide citizens with reliable and objective news.
- Independent media are well-managed businesses, allowing editorial independence.
- Supporting institutions function in the professional interests of independent media.

The scoring is done in two parts. First, a panel of experts is assembled in each country, drawn from representatives of local media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), professional associations, international donors and media-development

implementers. The panellists are then assembled to discuss the objectives and indicators, and to devise combined scores and analyses. The panel moderator, in most cases a host-country media or NGO representative, prepares a written analysis of the discussion, which is subsequently edited by IREX representatives.

The panellists' scores are reviewed by IREX in-country staff and by Washington, DC media staff, which then score the countries independently of the MSI panel. Using the combination of scores, the final scores are determined. This method allows the MSI scores to reflect both local media insiders' views and the views of international media-development professionals. See <http://www.irex.org/msi/index.asp>

## **Spheres of influence model**

### **A.S. Panneersalvan, Panos South Asia**

Mr. Panneersalvan, the Director of Panos South Asia (PSA), introduced a monitoring and evaluation tool developed by Panos, referred to as the 'spheres of influence model'. He noted that Panos was concerned that all existing media development indicators are donor based, have an "instrumental" view of the media and are rooted very much in the Westphalian notion of the nation-state. He suggested the inherent fluidity of media and its trans-border ramifications were not reflected in the available indicators. As such there is no scope to measure the defiance, the agency and the resistance to power exhibited by the media, media organizations and individual journalists and as a result the intrinsic value of media development itself as a developmental activity is missing. The Panos model therefore emanated from the need to create a toll of accountability and impact assessment from within the sector that recognises that media is a catalyst in the overall development paradigm and not an agent like the state or the executive or any other delivery-oriented CSOs.

The Panos South Asia (PSA) model focuses on defining and measuring spheres of influence. Panneersalvan explained that the PSA works with media and its primary engagement is with ideas and voices and opinions of people to determine their own developmental and political agenda. There are no tangible deliverables for them but PSA does play a catalyst role in bringing about change in society; hence the need to measure its spheres of influence.

PSA's impact and its *raison d'être* is measured by computing its spheres of influence in three time frames:

- One Decade Influence
- Sustained Thematic Engagement and its sphere of influence
- Impact of Specific Projects

The spheres of influence are constituted by (a) PSA's reach within the media, (b) its ability to bring forth multiple voices, (c) its ability to persuade its work in tandem with civil society actors, (d) its ability to bring academia and media together for informed narratives and (e) the overall impact of this combined engagement in bringing about change.

Panneersalvan noted that the PSA is conscious of the fact that there is not one sphere of engagement, but rather multiple spheres of engagement. Monitoring and evaluation will thus measure the PSA's influence in five spheres, namely media, communities whose voices are articulated through PSA's programmes, civil society partners, academia and state actors.

The governing principle of the PSA tool is acknowledgement that all existing monitoring and evaluation tools measure the end of the programme evaluation which negates the basic principle of long-term investment. According to Panneersalvan the end of the programme, for all media-related activities, is actually the beginning of the

transformation process. PSA will therefore not look into the impact of any given programme before the lapse of at least two years.

## **African Media Initiative**

### **Jeanette Minnie of Zambezi FoX**

Ms. Minnie introduced the African Media Initiative (AMI) which was unveiled in Mozambique on May 2, 2008, at a meeting of representatives drawn from the African media. She explained that AMI aims to stimulate economic development and improve governance by strengthening an independent, pluralistic media across Africa. It will deliver a coherent set of interventions to change the landscape for media in Africa. It proposes setting up an African Foundation to manage a five-year US\$135 million programme to unlock both donor and private resources to develop African media by accelerating development in three interdependent areas:

- **Professionalisation in the field of skills and knowledge in media professions (US\$42m)**

Ethical and professional standards of journalism and media management need strengthening. AMI will improve the quality of media production through capacity building to improve levels of professionalism, including strengthening of professional and ethical systems, upgrading existing training programmes, and enhancing collaboration among journalism trainers and the media industry. The programme will be carried out by leading regionally based African training institutions working jointly with the media industry, and using new information and communication technology (ICT) and online methodologies to deliver work.

- **Developing Media Markets US\$58m**

The development of pluralistic media markets in Africa is constrained by limited investment flows and low advertising revenues. AMI will set up a new investment and lending facility targeted at emerging and medium sized independent media to provide funding to underwrite small/medium long term debt which cannot be mobilised through local markets or financial institutions; or assisting by bringing smaller investments to market by bundling them, or assisting them to corporatise their operations. It will provide 'pump-priming' to set up independent, self financing audience and content management systems by industry in 10-12 countries - essential to underpin increased commercial (advertising) revenues. It will provide a research and advisory capacity to provide investors, practitioners and advertisers with access to reliable market analysis and a database covering a uniform and wide range of aspects of media institutions on the continent.

- **Media freedom and policy environment: improved 'enabling environment (legal and policy) landscape for media US\$15.3m**

AMI will promote media legal reforms at national and sub regional levels that fall within the scope and aims of the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa and the Windhoek Declaration on an Independent and Pluralistic African Press. It will scale up support for the monitoring of media freedom and test the legal efficacy of national and pan-African human rights protection instruments. It will strengthen independent media councils to adjudicate complaints about the ethical conduct of the media. It will establish an Eminent Persons Group consisting of notable African individuals of high standing to help broker

communication between the media and governments to break down barriers and speed up reforms, and strengthen the use of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) to assist this reform process.

The AMI programme targets different groups of beneficiaries, drawn from different geo-political contexts in Africa. It is targeted at beneficiaries in all the four geo-political regions of Africa – Southern Africa; Eastern Africa, including the Great Lakes region; North Africa; and West Africa. Special care will be taken to ensure a linguistic balancing of interventions. AMI funding will be open to bona fide organisations which meet specified governance criteria and meet AMI criteria for funding.

Minnie said that after much consideration it was decided that the most appropriate institutional format for AMI would be to register it as a not-for-profit foundation in an African legal jurisdiction. It would be chaired by an eminent African leading a board of seven Africans and three international experts. The operational backstopping for the foundation could be provided by an existing organisation or contracted out, or AMI could set up its own office. The final decision would be based on cost and practicality.

## DISCUSSION

Participants noted that the SADC Tribunal and African Court have so far proven to be ineffective targets for advocacy. It was felt that structural flaws and limitations to the powers of said institutions made them inept or unable to offer positive outcomes. This being the case, there remains overwhelming consensus that the aforementioned institutions must nevertheless be utilised as targets in advocacy strategies. It was felt that their perceived ineffectiveness was possibly also the result of a lack of skills on the part of citizens and civil society organisations to effectively lobby these institutions.

A participant urged Mr. Kandjii to elaborate on his perception that South Africa was experiencing a “closing up” of its democratic space. Kandjii explained that a culture of fear was pervading South Africa and that this was driven by political dynamics. He noted that the ruling party - the African National Congress (ANC) - is prone to pressure within its own ranks and that citizens generally avoided being perceived as “politically incorrect”.

It was suggested that the IREX Sustainability Index and the African Media Barometer be regarded as “photographs” of media environments in various countries as they appear to adequately describe the free expression situations in countries where they are applied. Participants however wished to know about follow-up processes after the assessments. Kandjii explained that the AMB process was designed to result in clear proposals for follow-up work and strategies to be undertaken by both media development agencies and partners in other CSOs.

It was noted that IREX was funded by the World Bank who were involved in defining policies often contested in Africa. Mr. Whitehouse responded that the purpose of the Media Sustainability Index was to raise awareness of the problems and successes in Africa with academic and donor communities. He noted that USAID used the reports to inform their funding priorities. In addition, the reports were intended for advocacy in countries.

**Session Two: Intergovernmental and civil society partnerships and mechanisms to strengthen media freedom and access to information in Africa**

Moderator: Jeannette Quarcoopome, Media Foundation for West Africa

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS: “Africa at the cutting edge of media development – how and why”** William Orme, Policy Advisor, Independent Media Development Democratic Governance Group, United Nations Development Program

- Building media development partnerships in Central Africa – Donat M’baya Tshimanga, Journalistes en Danger (JED), DRC.
- Building partnerships to address the safety and working conditions of journalists – exploring new linkages – Gabriel Baglo, IFJ Africa Director
- Linking media educators and the media in Africa – George Lugalambi, Makerere University, Uganda.
- Partnerships to link media for democracy and media for development in Africa – Luther Bois Anunkur, Panos Eastern Africa

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS: “Africa at the cutting edge of media development – how and why”**

**William Orme, Policy Advisor, Independent Media Development Democratic Governance Group, United Nations Development Program**

**Building media development partnerships in Central Africa**

**Donat M’baya Tshimanga, Journalistes en Danger (JED), DRC.**

Mr. M’baya made specific reference to central African countries which he named as: Burundi, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Kinshasa), Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Rwanda and Chad, pointing out that they have been the site of substantial conflict in recent years.

Preponderance of military dictatorships after independence has crippled peace efforts. As such fragile peace exists in some of the aforementioned countries, leading to the erosion of the social fabric and a pre-dominance of social inequalities, insecurity and hunger.

“Unbalanced” media activities by government radio and television have deepened social inequalities, he said. Central Africa has not experienced the liberalisation of media after independence.

M’baya noted that the media is being manipulated for political interest. The Rwandan genocide and the role of the media during that genocide remains a clear example of this. Poor working conditions of journalists, lack of regulation (or in some cases over-regulation) has crippled the adequate functioning of the media.

Media support organisations do exist, most notably the Union of the Profession of Journalists in Central Africa, OMAC in Bujumbura, JED in the DRC - but their operations are limited.

M’baya proposed the development of a regional strategy for Central Africa -`

and one which is supported and resourced by development agencies and partners in media development.

### **Building partnerships to address the safety and working conditions of journalists – exploring new linkages**

#### **Gabriel Baglo, IFJ Africa Director**

Mr. Baglo opened his presentation by reminding the conference that there are still journalists jailed for libel in Eritrea, Niger, and Gambia and that journalists and media houses in many countries of the continent are victims of wars and political violence.

He proposed specific actions that support journalists in carrying out their work, among them the need to amplify the campaign for all African journalists to be released from jail - campaigns addressed to African countries and to the African Union in order for them to implement *the Declaration of Principles of Freedom of Expression in Africa* and to accept and enshrine the role of the media in society as a sector on its own. The need to support journalists who are fleeing for their safety and security needed to be supported financially until such journalists could again find “a sense to their lives” (have become stable again in terms of an ability to earn a livelihood).

Baglo presented a strong argument to support his call to build strong journalist unions that can attend to journalists’ working conditions, address workplace issues, ethical journalism, advocate for journalists’ rights in the workplace and in court when necessary.

He was of the opinion that investment in media development to strengthen media businesses is crucial; however this should take place together with building strong journalists’ trade unions in the media industry to guarantee the sustainability of media development, and ethical journalism.

Baglo emphasised the importance of networking between journalist unions and media support organisations.

## **DISCUSSION**

A delegate launched a discussion on how development organisations could ensure that journalists coming out of media training institutions would be adequately prepared for the demands of the industry. He noted the tendency in the past to compartmentalise the profession into print journalists and broadcast journalists. He felt that in the age of convergence journalists needed to be multi-skilled and was sceptical about the capacity of media training institutions to fulfil this need. He proposed that training institutions take on an integrated approach to ensure that students entering the market are better able to perform in a competitive market where media companies are utilising multi-media platforms. He also proposed a closer link between media training institutions and corporate media.

A delegate noted that media function in a wide variety of operational contexts. He noted that states remain unique in terms of their immediate socio-political environments and proposed that media development organisations should aim to build partnerships that link ‘media for democracy’ and ‘media for development’. He further noted that the sustainability of private commercial media should be supported for its capacity to serve the public interest.

A delegate pointed to the situation in Sierra Leone where the trade union is reportedly managed by media owners, not journalists, and wished to know how Unesco (in terms of its development indicators) would respond to such a scenario. It was felt that journalists are rendered powerless and are open to abuse by media owners. It was noted that one of the Unesco indicators is the ability of journalists to associate freely, domestically and internationally. Development organisations and their supporting agencies should therefore facilitate the establishment and skilling of unions and associations that provide journalists with a platform to lobby and advocate their interests.

### **Session Three: Media development in conflict and post-conflict zones**

Moderator:

- Creating independent media platforms and institutions in high-risk, low-resource environments – Claudia Anthony, UN Radio, Sierra Leone
- Hate speech, nation building and peace journalism – the role of the media
  - Maureen Kademaunga, Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe
  - Polydor Moboyayi, OMEC, DRC

#### **Hate speech, nation building and peace journalism-the role of media**

##### **Maureen Kademaunga**

##### **Advocacy Officer, Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ)**

Ms Kademaunga noted that the recent Zimbabwean election period was marred by serious political tensions and politically motivated violence. The period between March and June 27, 2008, witnessed the perpetuation of hate speech by the ruling party through its mouthpieces The Herald, The Chronicle, the Sunday mail and Zimbabwe state television, she said. The MMPZ's media monitoring updates which were issued during this period included a focus on the hate speech that dominated political reports in state media. It found that irresponsible and ungainly behaviour by both the state media and the politicians ignited a margin of terror against innocent people, which resulted in the loss of lives and the maiming and displacing of people.

The MMPZ thus focused its attention on the role that the media played in actively promoting the violence that characterised the campaign process. It found that:

- The ruling party deliberately suffocated independent media and harnessed the remaining state-controlled media to set the agenda and generally to channel disinformation to the public.
- Opposition candidates conducted their campaigns with scant access to relevant public domains. They also became the object of hostile editorialising whenever they received coverage in the state media.

Kademaunga said that hate speech - bigoted language that attacks or disparages a social group or member of such a group - has a vast ability to influence and control the thinking of ordinary people. The consequences of hate language in a polarised and charged political environment such as exists in Zimbabwe will ultimately manifest itself in the form of assaults, abductions, torture, murder and other acts of unbridled aggression.

Hate speech in state media was used to excite hostility and social tension by bringing into contempt any persons associated with the opposition or any known critic of the

government. It should be appreciated that hate crimes were a corollary to hate speech. Bigotry does not simply breed hate but sometimes also encourages crimes motivated by bias. Hate speech propagates hateful motives and thoughts come to be expressed through actions. Worse still, the impunity with which such crimes are perpetrated has encouraged the government-controlled media to make their own inflammatory comments and they are never called to account, nor are the victims of their statements given the chance to reply.

Kademaunga explained that the perpetrators of such language may be categorised in many groups, namely a diversity of both regular and occasional columnists, commentators and pundits. The other group consist of professional news journalists and fulltime media writers who are competing for political positions as editorialists and news commentators. The tone of many of their articles and editorials, together with many letters to the editor written by unknown persons purporting to be speaking on behalf of the government and the ruling party, was mocking and biting and meant to injure dignity, feelings and the self-respect of those identified to be “enemies of the state”.

She questioned whether it is legitimate or practical to effectively control and punish public expressions of hateful ideas when democratic betterment consists of striving to expose the truth. The argument goes that there is a fine edge between the fair regulation of hate speech or hate conduct and the unconstitutional suppression of speech or ideas.

According to Kademaunga, the Zimbabwean experience, where the state directly violates the constitution and violates freedom of expression, the answer to that question will be an emphatic yes for regulation of unacceptable language propagating intolerance of one group to the point where their rights are no longer tolerated and violence against them is justified. Apart from proscription or prohibition it is possible over a long term to introduce in the newsrooms themselves increased appreciation of diversity and some positive measures to combat intolerance.

The Zimbabwean media recently developed a code of ethics developed and administered by the Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VCMZ). Thus, it should be able to regulate occurrences of hate speech in the media much better than the statutory laws or the criminal code. Together with a clear condemnation on the part of the bodies of state, public institutions and the society. this in general would not only reduce the necessity of prosecuting such phenomena, as is presently prevalent, but also diminish the long-term damage of hate-speech on society.

Kademaunga concluded her presentation by emphasising that media has a critical role to play in nation building and promoting peace. It is therefore imperative for media development organisations to focus on building a culture of social responsibility and accountability amongst media practitioners. And also to continue putting pressure on governments to put in place legislation that promotes and protects impartial and non-partisan journalism.

### **Polydor Muboyayi**

#### **President, Media Observatory Congo (OMEC), DRC**

Mr. Muboyayi gave an account of nation building and peace journalism in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). He used several examples to illustrate how both political and religious discourse has led to the slaughtering of civilians by rebel and military personnel.

Muboyayi referred to the recent elections stating that politicians – as owners of media institutions - habitually used the media for their political interest going as far as to threaten a return to open conflict if the election outcome was not favourable.

Journalists were manipulated to pen hate speech, to demonise opponents and to uncover or cover up (whichever necessary) scandals of financial malpractice. The following was necessary:

- Raising awareness of election codes of practice, professional ethics
- Strengthening of the capacity of the media professionals to report on elections
- Daily monitoring of mass media.

However, in a country as diverse and sometimes impenetrable as the DRC, and where millions of people do not have access to mass media, campaigns in favour of peace are not easy to lead. The sensitization of media professionals and the practice of peace journalism would be a start towards a more responsible and responsive media. Muboyayi emphasised that peace in the DRC remains fragile and requires the commitment of all the Congolese.

#### **Session Four: Building regional networks within the GFMD - experience from other regions**

Moderator: David Hoffman – GFMD chairperson

- The Experience from Asia: Roby Alampay, South East Asian Press Alliance
- The Experience from other regions: Bettina Peters, GFMD

#### **The Asian Experience**

##### **Roby Alampay, South East Asian Press Alliance**

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Mr. Alampay explained that the South East Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA) was commissioned two years ago to look into the viability of media development in Burma. The study revealed that Burma was not the “black hole” of information it was perceived to be. Whilst gmail and other global email networks were banned, he said, it is available everywhere – at a cost. Access is cheap for a tourist, but rather expensive for the local population. Whilst exiled news operations were blocked, as well as gmail, hotmail and yahoo, most of these services could be accessed through Polysol.com service.

With respect to the study, the South East Asian Press Alliance met with editors and media practitioners of the over 400 privately owned journals and magazines to find out about their media development needs. At the top of the list was the need for training of journalists (fellowships, training, training or trainers, translators), secondly business management skills training and thirdly, technical equipment in the form of power generators.

According to Alampay the matter of censorship was mentioned after a long list of other prioritised matters. A key lesson from Burma is to help the media to be independent. Alampay noted that Asia, just like Africa, is very diverse: bound by simplicity, not by language or religion. However common ground between countries are the media development challenges and issues. He suggested that African partners develop a wish list (which he projected onto a screen) to act as a working document and point of reference.

## PARALLEL WORKING GROUPS

Conference delegates were divided into three parallel working groups and asked to discuss the following:

1. The key roles (mission) of the AFMD
2. The key issues for media development in Africa
3. Sustainability and capacity building of media CSOs in Africa

## GROUP REPORTS

### Group 1:

**Proposed Vision:** A free, vibrant, professional and sustainable media in Africa.

**Proposed Mission:** To promote an active and effective forum for networking among organisations committed to media development in Africa. (This is a refinement of the broader mission which is 'to serve as an active and effective forum amongst organisations').

**Proposed Roles:** Three roles related to mission:

- To harmonise information sharing in order to minimise duplication and conflict
- To enhance networking and joint programming amongst partner organisations involved in media development
- To work in partnership under a common voice in engaging donors and governments on media development issues in Africa.

**Key issues:**

1. *Capacity (or lack of capacity) which has five dimensions:*
  - a. professional capacity related to training, general professionalism, ethics, the practice of journalism as a profession;
  - b. lack of capacity within media organisations themselves in terms of financial management, managerial capacity, lack of capital;
  - c. lack of capacity in media support organisations with respect to training, capacity to advocate for the media, monitoring issues;
  - d. weak infrastructure to support development of media infrastructure;
  - e. media content - especially in areas of development, specialised reporting, etc.
2. *Problem of legal and institutional frameworks.* Need to advocate for better laws; seek governments to observe international laws and put in place regulations that conform to international standards.
3. *Safety and security of journalists:* Effective strategies to support journalists in danger. Where necessary establish emergency funds, legal funds, remedies for 'legal' ambushing of media workers
4. *Lack of investment in media:* This could be solved through state incentives for investment in the media, e.g. a community media fund, subsidies for media support.

## **Sustainability and capacity building of media CSOs**

1. To sustain their activities media CSOs need to tap into local sources of funding; look for funding from national sources and other indigenous organisations;
2. Programme development and management of governance of media CSOs. Many media CSOs have problems in management and governance in terms of transparency and accountability.

### Additional comments from group:

- *Professional standards:* What is the meaning of such professional standards? There is need to look into the constitution of and capacity of regulatory bodies. Self-regulation is a problem on the whole continent. These two points should receive closer scrutiny

## **Group 2:**

The regional body should develop founding documents to discern the values it subscribes to. Issues, especially around gender equality and equity that are fundamental to any forum dealing with media development in Africa, are currently not well articulated.

**Proposed Vision:** A free, vibrant, professional and sustainable media in Africa.

### **Proposed Roles:**

1. The role of facilitator is key to managing the information flow/exchange of information, probably through the set-up of a database that provides information, amongst others on:
  - a. the media landscape in each country
  - b. list of media organisations in each country, their leanings, their activities;
  - c. information on tools/best practices used by others to see how these tools can be localised.
2. Providing solidarity across borders.
3. Facilitate joint lobby and advocacy campaigns on specific issues in Africa, e.g. media laws, critical issues that affect the media within Africa;
4. Need to develop a code of conduct for support organisations (role of the forum)

### **Key issues:**

1. There is a need for sustainable funding for media in Africa. Support organisations should make an assessment of how funds are currently distributed; necessary to establish the level of support that is adequate.
2. Media content is no longer diverse. Look into support initiatives to ward off this trend.
3. Develop an understanding of the different roles and contributions made by all sectors of the media, including mainstream, alternative and community media
4. Technology: countries are at different levels of development. Some countries already advanced and able to provide citizens greater access (universal public access to media). Media development strategies should be relevant to national infrastructures and conditions

5. Ownership and control of media. This requires greater interrogation. Guidelines (affecting policy and regulation) should be developed
6. Media cannot play its proper role because of lack of standards/guidelines/benchmarks with respect to wages. Such standards/guidelines are even more important at national level to guard against the exploitation of media workers;
7. There are different skills within different media, probably in the same country. This opens the debate on capacity development strategies. How do media organisations in the same country support each other?
8. In Africa there is a juniorisation of newsrooms. This is a major issue as senior journalists have left the newsrooms. Mentorship programmes no longer exist and there is an overall reduction in fellowship schemes.
9. Tabloidisation of the media

### **Sustainability and capacity building of media CSOs**

1. Need for those who assist support organisations to undertake a needs assessment to ensure the nature and level of support that is adequate. No one-size-fits-all approach. Support organisations are not meant to be launching pads for political ambitions.
2. Donors should not set the agendas of media support organisations. Preach a bottom-up approach.
3. Invariably there is talk about sustainability. There is also social and institutional sustainability of support organisations who need to sustain themselves beyond their financial needs.
4. Training: there is need to look at sharing of curricula between training institutions to produce fairly proficient levels of training. Possibly the database for training and media support organisations can avoid duplication.
5. Support organisations: greater synchronisation of activities at national, regional and Africa levels; who is doing what and what kind of support is given?
6. There should be some kind of approved standards that govern the work of support organisations

#### Additional comments by group:

The group spoke about migration of skills and the payment of media workers, the prohibitive cost of trainers. The database should include the names of resource persons and shared resources with respect to consultants and training fees.

|                 |
|-----------------|
| <b>Group 3:</b> |
|-----------------|

**Proposed Vision:** A free, vibrant, professional and sustainable media in Africa.

**Roles:**

Build capacity of regional networks

**Key issues:**

1. Viability of press/media enterprises
2. Legal framework for protection of information and training of journalists
3. Lack of research in media sector
4. Financing mechanisms of media development organisations

### **Sustainability and capacity building of media CSOs**

1. The priority must be in the development of local skills. Identification and exchange of best practices between organisations
2. Creation of channels of dissemination of information
5. Improved networking and sharing of information between members of the African network

General comments:

- Rhodes University hosts an Education and Training database for training on media which could be useful to members of the network.
- MISA is currently developing its online interface which will hold a lot of the information that participants are seeking.

## Day 2: September 8, 2008

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### Session Five: Prospects and challenges for independent, non-profit, non-partisan public and community broadcasters in Africa

Moderator: Kaitira Kandjii – MISA Regional Secretariat

- Amina Frense – Southern African Broadcasters Association
- Franklin Huizies – AMARC Africa
- Jeanette Minnie – Southern African Regional Editor of the Open Society/AfriMAP Survey of State/Public Broadcasters in Africa

#### **Amina Frense**

##### **Southern African Broadcasters Association**

The Southern African Broadcasting Association (SABA) is an membership association of broadcasters in 14 countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. Apart from state broadcasters it also includes private and foreign broadcast services in Africa such as MNet and German Television, etc. At its inaugural ceremony in 1993 the inaugural general assembly formulated the objectives and goals of SABA and identified the major thrust areas as:

- News exchange and coverage of important events;
- Programme exchange / co production and training;
- Commercial broadcasting;
- Engineering (New Technologies);
- Broadcasting laws/media policies.

Ms. Frense pointed out that media development and free expression organisations need to question their relevance as their credibility is on the agenda. She noted that such organisations make various assumptions about the media: what media, for whom and how? She explained that the community radio environment is changing with digital technology. At the same time, communities dictate which platform(s) are to be used, i.e. broadcast on radio, television, podcast, etc. And again, technical convergence and digitisation are redefining the way media is made and received. Thus, she proposed that media development and free expression organisations should review their priorities with respect to matters of public access, quality public access and universal access.

#### **Franklin Huizies**

##### **AMARC Africa**

Mr. Huizies noted that the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) regards community radio as part of civil society rather than as a separate tier of broadcasting. He emphasised however that community radio faces several challenges such as sustainability, capacity and local ownership. Nonetheless, there are several success stories in community radio.

In South Africa alone there are 130 community radio stations, 100 of which are broadcasting. There remains however a definite rural urban divide in terms of reliability among the 100 stations that are broadcasting and urban stations enjoy better access to resources.

Huizies informed the conference that AMARC had conducted a long-range participatory action research seeking to identify the barriers that limit the potential

positive impact of community radio and explore ways to increase the effectiveness of community radio in achieving poverty reduction, development objectives, inclusiveness and democracy building in local communities. The key principles of the global review was to:

- increase effectiveness of CR in achieving the Millennium Development Goals;
- recognize *voicelessness and powerlessness as key dimensions of poverty*;
- address the contribution of CR to accountability, equity and civil rights;
- ensure the full and effective participation of women; Be participatory and inclusive of marginalised groups;

Key findings included:

The lack of proper enabling legislation is the single principal barrier to community radio broadcasters in Africa. The absence of friendly legislation; the existence of media oppression and military threats are a generalized barrier to the development of community radio.

- In varying degrees, these factors hinder community radio capacity to develop its positive impact in giving voice to the marginalized, in developing inclusive and democratic societies where governments are accountable and people are empowered to achieve development objectives.
- Likewise, the absence of appropriate legislation recognizing the social contribution of community radio, creates financial sustainability challenges that hinder the possibility for scaling up good models of sustainable community radio.
- Community radio is a distinct media sector and a vital alternative to state owned public broadcasters and commercial private media.
- Communities have sought in community radio a means to express their own issues, concerns, cultures and languages. The expansion of community radio is the result of the reduction of diversity of voices that accompany the formation of media conglomerates that accompanies the globalisation process.
- Community Radio sustainability is a global challenge. In spite of increasing positive experiences of socially sustainable CR, financial and technological sustainability remain a challenge that often distract CR practitioners from dedicating themselves to radio production, increasing community participation and the relevance of programming.
- Community radio faces important sustainability challenges regarding capacity building, and in enhancing local ownership.
- Knowledge sharing on best experiences across regions as well as increased use of new ICTs can make a difference.

AMARC has developed an extensive strategy to respond to the findings.

### **Jeanette Minnie**

#### **Southern African Regional Editor of the Open Society/AfriMAP Survey of State/Public Broadcasters in Africa**

Ms. Minnie discussed the Open Society/AfriMAP Survey of State/Public Broadcasters in Africa and further elaborated on a national campaign in South Africa called the SOS campaign: “Save our SABC – Reclaiming the Public Broadcaster”.

Minnie explained that the AfriMap survey had the general objective of providing a detailed description and assessment of public/state broadcasters in 12 Africa countries and to initiate democratic debate and to underpin through solid research media legal reform efforts for the transformation of state broadcasters into public broadcasters.

The comprehensive research in each country uses the benchmarks contained in the *Declaration of Freedom of Expression Principles in Africa* to assess each broadcaster. The state/public broadcasters are also being compared to a commercial and community broadcaster in each country to compare their programming. Audience research is also being conducted to assess what viewers and listeners think about and want from their public broadcasters. The research will be completed in the first half of 2009. The countries covered in the research are: Benin, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The survey will look at both *public broadcasting* as an institution and *public interest programming* which can be offered by all services across the broadcasting spectrum.

Minnie explained that central to the survey is the assumption that development and democracy cannot thrive without open and free public space where all issues concerning people's lives can be aired and debated and which gives them room and opportunity to participate in the process of decision making.

Thus, the main objective of the survey is to assess whether and to what extent the various forms of broadcasting in a sample of African countries are able to create such a public space. Key questions will focus on the status of broadcasting regulation, broadcasting legislation, ownership, signal distribution/coverage and also human and technical resources within the state/public broadcaster.

The survey will pay particular attention to state/public broadcasters because in most countries they have the widest reach and greatest potential for fulfilling this role and delivering on the mandate of public broadcasting. Being mostly funded by public funds in many parts of Africa they should also be held to particularly high standards of accountability.

Minnie proceeded to discuss the national public service broadcasting campaign in South Africa coordinated by a civil society coalition under the banner '**Save our SABC – Reclaiming Our Public Broadcaster**'. The Coalition is a large grouping of organisations and individuals working together to address the crisis in public broadcasting in South Africa. The SABC by law is supposed to be a public broadcaster operating independently of the influence of government or any political parties. The crisis emerged incrementally through a series of high profile incidents including the blacklisting of certain commentators in the SABC and the censoring of a number of controversial programmes. There is widespread perception that there is political (factional) control of the SABC. This perception is exacerbated by some of the persons appointed to the current and former board of the SABC, as well as the fact that the ruling party reportedly decided the final appointment of the board as its party headquarters where it overruled its own MP's in the relevant Parliamentary Portfolio committee in the selection of certain board members. The crisis around the impartiality and legitimacy of the Board has worsened during a series of court cases in which the Board of the SABC is also trying to dismiss the CEO. This began shortly after he suspended the Director of News – widely seen as a loyal supporter of one faction of the ruling party. The Board is perceived as essentially having been appointed by and supporting the same ruling faction. The CEO has claimed that the Board cannot dismiss him, because he argues he has been appointed by the Minister of Communications. The corporatisation of the SABC in late 1999 means that the government is the 100% shareholder of the SABC and in terms of company law the shareholder wields strong powers in relation to governance, budgets and the appointment of the main executives of the SABC. Many of these powers are deemed to be in contravention of the independence of the SABC from government as

enshrined in the Broadcasting Act. The SOS campaign includes non-governmental and civil society organisations, trade unions and academics. The coalition is currently lobbying various stakeholders on South Africa's Draft Broadcasting Act Amendment Bill, which aims to give Parliament the power to remove the board of the SABC. It was recently discovered that although Parliament appoints this board, it has no powers in law to remove any members or the whole board. Only the President of the country or the SABC Board itself can remove the board or any of its members. The Bill is very controversial because although it is recognised that there has been serious governance issues at stake, mass removal of a whole board or certain members would also seriously undermine the independence of the SABC. The coalition has in recent months made a number of submissions to Parliament and the National Council of Provinces on the aforementioned Bill. It has supported the right of Parliament to remove the whole board or certain members, as long as this is based on "due process" – i.e. holding a proper inquiry and proving a good case against the Board or particular members of the Board. The campaign has also pointed out that the crisis around the Board began with the extreme politicisation of the appointment process in which many board members are perceived to have been selected for mostly political reasons, rather than for skill or representivity of the public. The campaign has also held two public meetings and intends extending the campaign across the country. Other focus areas of the campaign include providing broad support to pressure the broadcasting regulator, ICASA, into holding an inquiry into the blacklisting of certain commentators at the SABC over the past two years (which it has so far refused to do), and a complete review and amendment of the Broadcasting Act in which the public should be fully engaged and the possibility of drafting a separate SABC Act. Minnie warned that the SABC was in many respects regarded as a model of public broadcasting in Africa. For this reason it was very important to learn not only from the positive elements of the SABC, but also from what was going seriously wrong in the SABC, particularly in relation to the subversion of the appointment process of board members. This appointment process was carefully construed in the early 1990s to ensure public nomination, public hearings and transparency in the appointment of board members. Despite these measures the ruling party, with a big majority in Parliament, was no longer behaving in terms of the values underpinning these processes, and had found ways to subvert them for party political and factional gain.

## DISCUSSION

A question was raised whether there was a trade union inside the SABC who could assist the SOS campaign in fighting for editorial independence inside the national broadcaster. The value of trade unions was emphasised in this regard. There is a union called BEMAWU who is a member of the SOS Coalition. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), the largest trade union federation in the country, was also a member.

One of the delegates noted that there appears to be a problem that "in a world of fast food, commercialisation and globalisation and Americanisation of the world", we have a cultural problem where the community broadcasters are not developing their own metaphors. They are aspiring to be American broadcasters. They see community broadcasting as a stepping stone. He emphasised the lack of individual voices and the general thrust, among community radio, towards commercial broadcasting.

A delegate remarked that sustainability and governance are prominent challenges of community radio. She expressed the concern that many stations are struggling with governance and with the credibility of the SABC board being questioned, she wondered what lessons community radio and television could learn from this. She proposed that the SABC situation provided an opportune case study for community broadcasters. The participant also proposed that media development organisations be more creative and strategic when tackling the problem of content in community broadcasters.

A delegate suggested that governance problems are generic, found in community broadcasters and in CSOs. He proposed that CSOs should be more actively involved in the governance of community broadcasters. They should develop support networks that can facilitate training and skilling of staff and board members. He was of the opinion that the importance of community broadcasting cannot be overlooked and that development organisations should not give up lightly on those broadcasters that experience growing pains.

**Session Six: Professional and ethical standards of journalism – the case for voluntary self-regulation of the media in Africa.**

Moderator:

- Joe Thloloe – Press Ombudsman, South Africa
- Matshediso Mosalagae – Press Council of Botswana

**Joe Thloloe  
Press Ombudsman, South Africa**

Mr. Thloloe presented the Press Council of South Africa as a case study. He pointed out that there are two parts to the South African system, namely the umbrella body, i.e. the Press Council, which has six representatives of the press and six public representatives; and the adjudicating mechanism consisting of the Press Ombudsman and the Press Appeals Panel.

He outlined the objectives and aims of the Press Council which are:

- To promote and preserve the right to freedom of expression;
- To promote and develop excellence in journalistic practice and ethics;
- To promote the concept of press self-regulation and set up the office of the Press Ombudsman and the Press Appeals Panel; and
- To accept a Press Code enforced by an independent non-statutory, mediating and adjudicating structure.

The adjudicating mechanism is the Press Ombudsman and the Press Appeals Panel. The Appeals Panel also has six press representatives and six public representatives and is chaired by a retired judge.

When a complaint is lodged against a newspaper or magazine, the Press Ombudsman first attempts to mediate and find an amicable solution between the two parties. If this fails, it moves to the next stage which is a formal hearing where, along with two members of the Press Appeals Panel, evidence is heard and arguments made from both sides before a ruling is made on the matter. The process makes provision for an

appeals process. The appeal is heard by the chairperson of the appeals panel and two other members of the panel. Their decision is final.

Thloloe explained that the foundation of the system is the South African Press Code, which was voluntarily adopted by almost 700 publications in the country. The code sets out standards for reporting news – truthful, accurate, fair, in context and in a balanced manner – for commentary and the writing of headlines and the use of pictures. It also prohibits some practices. The primary purpose of this code is “to promote and develop excellence in journalistic practice and ethics”.

The code is in line with the 2002 Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa that states: “Effective self-regulation is the best system for promoting high standards in the media.”

He explained that this system, which has been alive since the 1960s in various permutations, underwent a major renovation in August 2007 when it responded to criticism that it was a self protection society of the media by injecting public representation into it. The press still holds the majority in the council and in the appeals panel to ensure that it remains as a *press* self-regulatory mechanism and does not become controlled from the outside. The judge at the pinnacle of the adjudication mechanism ensures that the rulings are fair.

Thloloe noted that the African National Congress (ANC) – the ruling party - is threatening to impose a statutory Media Appeals Tribunal. The Press Council, the South African National Editors’ Forum and Print Media South Africa are in dialogue with the ANC to prevent a fight about the matter in the Constitutional Court. He pointed out that the ANC, cabinet ministers and government departments continue to use the self-regulatory system to obtain redress from the print media, and in many cases receive rulings upholding their complaints. He could not therefore understand why they were seeking a statutory mechanism by which to control the media.

### **Ms. Matshediso Mosalagae**

#### **Press Council of Botswana Botswana**

Ms. Mosalagae presented a case study of the Press Council of Botswana (PCB) as a functioning self-regulatory body. The PCB was registered in 2002 in response to government attempts to establish a statutory press council through the proposed introduction of the Mass Media bill of 1997. The PCB was officially launched in February 2003, and is currently chaired by Ms Pamela Dube, editor of Botswana’s *The Voice* newspaper.

Mosalagae explained that the PCB Board of Trustees is the governing council, but there are other, very critical independent bodies of the council which are the Media Complaints Committee and the Media Appeals Committee. These are appointed to office by an independent Appointments Panel.

The independence of these structures is guaranteed in the Deed of Trust. According to her the Botswana government’s more recent proposed Media Practitioners Bill, is an attempt to eradicate the transparency and the independent nature of appointing the aforementioned committees, by vesting all power in the Minister to appoint these committees.

With respect to the complaints procedure, she explained that efforts were made to ensure that the process of lodging a complaint with the Media Complaints Committee about a newspaper article, radio or television broadcast is free, easy and effective.

Provision is made for an appeals process. The Complainant or Respondent may appeal against the decision of the Committee within 14 days of the release of the decision. The appeal is heard by the Media Appeals Committee.

Since its inception the Complaints Committee has dealt with a total of twenty-four (24) cases. The cases involved issues ranging from defamation, to inaccuracy, to imbalance. Mosalagae provided a summary of cases adjudicated by the Press Council of Botswana (see full report).

## DISCUSSION

A delegate wished to know how the South African Press Council ensured compliance in the absence of statutory requirements when the decisions posted by the Council are not legally binding. The presenter responded that the vast majority of publications subscribe to the Press Code and that all publications have to date complied with rulings. There is also an independent voluntary Broadcasting Complaints Commission of SA (BCCSA), that deals with broadcasting complaints. In the latter case there has only been one instance in which one community radio refused to appear before the BCCSA, and instead opted to appear before a committee of the statutory broadcasting regulator, Icasa. This in itself showed that the system of voluntary regulation was effective.

Where, for example, a publication is not a member of Print Media South Africa, it is still given the choice to be adjudicated under the system. If not, the complainant can go to court. Where a publication is reluctant to carry out the will of the Council after adjudication, moral weight has been used to force them to comply. Sanctions include retractions and apologies and the publishing of rulings – but no fines.

He noted that politicians are not very happy with the system as they prefer one which they can manipulate. This is the reason for insisting on the Media Appeal Tribunal. He noted however that the voluntary system has functioned despite such pressures.

He explained that the work of the various committees initially took off slowly due to poor support from the media. A further hurdle was the lack of resources to undertake public education about the work of the Press Council and the two committees. But despite this, he said, a significant reduction of lawsuits against the media has been recognised. This is a sign that indeed the media is taking extra caution in reporting responsibly and working within the code of conduct, which was drawn up by the media fraternity, recognizing the centrality of professional media conduct.

A delegate requested more information on the Mass Practitioners Bill of Botswana and its implications for self-regulation. The presenter explained that members of the media were of the opinion that the Media Practitioners Bill was the Minister's attempt to gain control of the private media as she already governs the public media. The Bill also falls short of the principles of independence, political non-interference and promotion of self-regulation (the minister intends to appoint the Complaints and the Appeals Committees). Mosalagae further pointed out that Botswana's Media Code of Ethics was developed and adopted by the media in 2003. The Code has been accepted by the government and has the endorsement of the SADC Parliamentary Forum which intends to develop it into a best practice model for self-regulatory authorities in the region.

She noted that the PCB process was welcomed by the local media, especially the private media, who see it as a way to professionalise the media and as a platform

where disputes can be settled without going through expensive law suits in the courts of law. The PCB is regarded as a tool to advance media freedom and editorial independence. It is not viewed as stifling, since the Code, used in all the adjudications, was an agreed position of the media; it speaks to the professionalism and parameters of reporting. Ideally, PCB would like to have more interaction with the public as there is still little or no knowledge of its work nationally. The challenge is to market the council, and this is where funds play a pivotal role.

On the matter of funding, the presenter explained that Print Media South Africa (the association of print media owners in the country) funds the press council and the press ombudsman's office. This system was created by the print media to regulate themselves. On the matter of legal representation, the presenter noted that the Press Council would welcome a system that did not allow legal representation for the reason that lawyers are expensive. The voluntary self-regulation system is intended to be affordable. The presenter from Botswana supported this position, adding that the media in Botswana is not well funded. In the case of Botswana funding is raised through membership fees (associate membership, individual organisations and newspapers), but also from donors. Funding partners include FES and OSISA

A delegate noted that problems with statutory regulation are common across SADC and proposed an honest assessment to illustrate why voluntary media regulation is the best option.

**Session Seven: New media and its effects on journalism and media development, including Citizen Journalism**

Moderator: Noma Rangana – HiVOS Programme Manager: Citizen Journalism in Africa

- Silas Gbandia, Centre for Media, Education and Technology, Sierra Leone
- Jude Mathurine, Dept of Journalism and Media Studies, Rhodes University

**Mr. Silas Gbandia,  
Deputy Director; Centre for Media, Education and Technology, C-Met**

Mr. Gbandia noted that the Sierra Leonean media and, accompanying practices, have benefited a great deal from new media technologies and practice. And this has in turn impacted a lot on the new approach to citizen journalism, wherein the people report their own news about themselves from their own communities, using available simple media technologies such as hand cameras, cellular/mobile phones and internet blogging. With the new media technologies and the involvement of citizens to report their own news in their own way and about events in their communities, one would say that news is everywhere and that there is nowhere to hide.

Gbandia reported that the rapid growth in information communication technology has broken the monopoly of the earlier world in which official information was offered only through government controlled radio and television - the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service Radio and Television (SLBS/TV). It was therefore necessary to ensure greater transparency and accountability in the governance process as there are

alternative ways of publicizing news and information. People now have the opportunity to respond in time to what they see, hear and read in the main stream media as mobile phones and internet services have placed the power of reporting in the hands of the public. It has created a window of opportunity for the exercise of the freedom of expression as well as the right to participate.

Gbandia suggests that the new technology has in a way bypassed press censorship. The subjects of discussion are no longer limited. Anything could be texted around or viewed on the internet.

On the flipside, the new media has given way to the flow of news and information that is lacking in quality and content. Propaganda messages which sometimes lack substance are past around through mobile phones and internet. This therefore questions the objectivity of citizen journalists, Gbandia said.

Despite some of the criticisms advanced against citizen journalism, it has greatly enhanced the development of the media in that news producers and recipients are now interacting. The increase in the number of radio stations across the continent and especially the establishment of mobile phone companies have opened up the flow of information, but also the active participation of the audience in what information goes around. It is therefore necessary that journalists include citizen journalism in the practice of their profession.

### **Mr Jude Mathurine**

#### **Dept of Journalism and Media Studies, Rhodes University**

Mr. Mathurine presented a broad discussion of ‘new media’ and its effects on journalism and media development, with particular emphasis on Citizen Journalism. He noted that ‘new media’ challenge media assistance assumptions by introducing ruptures within the old media continuum, while offering both opportunities for continuities and reform in the media development project. He argued that citizen journalism could be used as a participatory form of public interest communication that – if properly managed and supported – could influence deliberative democracy and participatory development.

He elaborated that the transformational impact of citizen journalism lies in its capacity, among others to:

- activate public, sectoral and special interest views at grassroots level;
- contribute to the rise of multi-perspectival news – a greater diversity of perspectives – than media organisations could ever previously afford
- Another advantage of the new media technologies is the potential for radical democratic approaches to citizen participation and engagement with each other and with their governments
- to move users to the centre of agenda setting (rather than the elites);
- to encourage the free flows of ideas, content and representations of communities and cultures.

Mathurine concluded his presentation with a detailed proposal on how media development bodies may enhance the media environment and improve the access, quality and means of public communication by facilitating democratic participation in productive growth.

- Media development bodies need to develop intelligence about new media issues that impact on cycles of media production, distribution and consumption at local levels within countries.

- Media assistance and development organisations need to consider that they too need to converge.
- Support for small media is paramount. Small media are most vulnerable to shocks resulting from changing consumption and advertising patterns.
- ICT for development programmes and media development programmes need to be sharing information.
- Citizen journalism programmes need to involve mass media practitioners because new media social platforms changes the balance of time that people - particularly young people - are prepared to spend with the media. Mass media cannot keep people informed or help inform the polity if it does not keep up with the mindset and new trends of young media consumers.
- Collaborative approaches to media support for democratisation should be encouraged to provide critical support for mixed media systems that deepen democratic participation at various levels.
- Consideration needs to be given to support for the broadcasting industry's approach to "new media".
- The significance of donor sponsored conferences such as Highway Africa is that they offer an opportunity to network and discuss the current and future challenges of digital technologies to mass media. Those who support media development ignore these at their peril.
- Mass media organisations need to be empowered at various levels to use, create and develop new Open Source media technologies that communicate with the majority of African users.
- Media development bodies need to be lobbying around national policy and regulation in their telecom and mobile sectors.
- Empower the educators. Donors need to focus on media education and educators.
- The focus of new media education and training in Africa needs to be based on realistic future local scenarios and intelligence which means encouraging and fostering academic research in these areas.
- Journalism educational institutions need to focus not just on theory or the technology, but on praxis which will empower Africa's future journalists and engender a vanguard of critical digital citizens.
- We need to empower our self regulatory mechanisms like press councils to consider how they will deal with complaints emanating from newspaper's Internet and mobile multimedia offerings.
- Media development institutions must begin exploiting open media forms and harness new and old technologies to continue telling stories to and about ourselves – particularly in our own languages.
- We must always consider the relevance of technologies to human needs by truly understanding how users receive and send communication.

## DISCUSSION

A delegate requested more information on how radio fits into discussions of new media and citizen journalism, especially since it is still the largest capturer of audiences? Mathurine responded that a matter of some importance is the impact of digital migration. He noted that the potential impact of digital migration on the lower

end of the market is great: what happens when community radio stations on FM channel switch to digital broadcasting and poor people do not have the resources to buy digital radio sets or decoding set top boxes to receive digital and high definition television signals? He proposed that development agencies make an effort to develop pro-democracy lobbies and engage in the digital broadcasting space.

Delegates were urged to review their concepts about sustainability and resource/revenue generation. Mathurine stated that neither online newspapers nor mobile companies were making profits from the mass advertising model. The new source of revenue, in his estimation, is content.

It was further suggested that media development organisations look beyond the digital divide and focus on content generation/creating messages on the channels that African people do use. The digital divide is between countries, within countries, between classes, etc.

It was further noted that there are no surefire guidelines on how to become or encourage more active blogging. Mathurine noted that if one investigates citizen media platforms one would find that they are probably produced by between 1-2% of the total audience. To write a blog you need the time, experience and resources.

Some delegates were sceptical about the perceived impact of new technologies on democracy. Citing the example of Sierra Leone where there is no access to internet outside Freetown, one delegate felt that whilst new media provided opportunities for democracy, such opportunities were undermined by the increasing divide between rich and poor countries and specifically between men and women.

Some delegates felt that cellphone technology, as opposed to internet, provided a more interesting development curve. In Uganda, for example, people use cellphone technology more than anything else. In South Africa, on the other hand, where cellphone penetration is high, resources in terms of air time is low. In most cases Ugandans consume information via cellphone and are not the generators/creators of information. The question of the nature and flow of information would thus arise.

### **Session Eight: Election of two African representatives to the GFMD's Steering Committee**

Moderator: Bettina Peters of the GFMD

After some debate and a vote by hands the delegates decided to make two separate sets of nomination and to conduct two separate elections - one for an Anglophone representative and one for a Francophone representative. The nominations below were recorded and duly seconded.

#### **Persons nominated and final votes:**

Anglophone nominees and votes:

Jeanette Minnie            No of votes: 19

Lumko Mtimde            No of votes: 8

Francophone nominees and votes:

Gabriel Baglo            No of votes: 20

Diana Senghor            No of votes: 7

**Election outcome:**

GFMD African Steering committee representatives: Jeanette Minnie and Gabriel Baglo

**Closure and conference media statement**

Ms. Peters introduced a communiqué prepared for submission to the upcoming Accra High Forum where inter-governmental organisations and NGOs involved in development issues in general were discussing the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA). The convenors of the High Forum were the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU) and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OCSE). The communiqué outlined the AFMD's priorities in relation to media development issues. The AAA was a significant event and the convenors were for the time recognising the role of the media – but to only a limited degree in relation to the media's role in governance and development in society. However, they were only focusing on media for development, and not on development of the media in its own right as an integral institution in any democratic society. She said the GFMD, while recognising that media for development was very important, would like to urge these organisations to understand and accept these distinctions, and to contribute financially to the development of the media in its own right to a much more significant degree than it had done in the past. For this purpose the GFMD had drafted a short letter to the AAA which she wanted the AFMD to support. A few of the AFMD delegates and one GFMD representative would also be present at the AAA meeting, and would request an opportunity to talk to and to elaborate on the communicate. The conference supported the communicate (see elsewhere on the site).

Peters thanked the conference delegates for their participation and urged them to remain active in the GFMD and regional online forums. She expressed the wish to see as many of them as possible participate in the second Global Forum of the GFMD in Greece in December 2008.

End//